

## Epistles from Yearly Meetings Around the World

The four of the following epistles will be shared at the beginning of our plenary business meetings. Please enjoy all of them.

1. Epistles from the First Gathering of the Quaker Religious Education Collaborative in East African Yearly Meeting
2. Aotearoa-New Zealand Yearly Meeting
3. Australia Yearly Meeting
4. Cuba Yearly Meeting
5. Ireland Yearly Meeting
6. Epistle from the General Meeting of Friends in Mexico
7. Great Plains Yearly Meeting

Many more Epistles are available at:

<http://fwcc.world/epistles-from-quaker-groups-from-around-the-world>.



# *Quaker Religious Education Collaborative*

*Joining Hands in Service to Quaker Religious Education*

**EPISTLE FROM THE FIRST GATHERING  
OF THE QUAKER RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE IN EAST AFRICA  
CONVENED AT THE FRIENDS THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE KAIMOSI, KENYA,  
16-19 JANUARY 2019.**

TO FRIENDS EVERYWHERE

Dear Friends,

We send sunny greetings from East Africa Sunday Church School Teachers (Quakers) who gathered in the serenity of the place where Quakerism started in East Africa, and where the 76 year-old Friends Theological College (FTC) is located.

We had 24 active teachers from the following Yearly Meetings:  
Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya  
(Chavakali, EAYM-Kaimosi,  
Kakamega, Lugari, Malava,  
Musingu, Nairobi, EAYM-North,  
Tuloi, Chebuyusi, Vokoli



Our Facilitators from the Quaker Religious Education Collaborative (QREC) came from New England Yearly Meeting and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. We developed a community of equality among all.



During the Plenary and Group Sessions we looked at emerging issues affecting the Sunday Church School Ministry in Africa, and sorted out possible suggestions to consider about these issues. Facilitators also shared about the Godly Play method of Sunday School Teaching, and Faith & Play, Quaker stories that have been developed for Friends who use Godly Play. Printed materials about these religious education resources can be accessed in the FTC Kaimosi Library.

It is our resolve that the records of these proceedings be shared across the world.

In our deliberations, we reiterated that the Sunday Church School is a dynamic and vibrant Ministry that should be nurtured and respected. Thus we urge the Yearly Meetings to give space and support to this very delicate and vital Ministry (the Congregants: the Children and their Teachers).

As we learned about the Faith & Play stories, we realized the sad fact that Quaker history in Africa is not properly documented. We want to collaborate with the FTC Kaimosi, Marian Baker, and the Earlham College Archives to document the histories of Quakers in Africa so that we can write the stories of important African Quakers, to share with our children and the rest of the world.

We, Teachers in Africa, in collaboration with QREC resolved to set up a Steering Committee. We suggest that FTC Kaimosi might act as our coordinating centre temporarily. We also suggest an exchange program to expose our Teachers and Children from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean to cross cultural experiences. This workshop appeals to the Leaders of the Friends Church in Africa to fund the operations of the Sunday Church School Ministry. We further appeal to the Quaker Leadership to urgently create specific space for Children's worship that will run concurrently with the main Church service.

Conclusively, we had moments of refreshment and spiritual nourishment of this important form of ministry.

We appreciate the immense efforts of the facilitators, the kind reception of the hosts, FTC, and those who made this gathering possible, Obadiah Brown's Benevolent Fund.

Prepared by:

ERICK SIFUNA (Friends Church of Uganda Yearly Meeting (Quakers)

JUDITH NANDIKOVE (Nairobi Yearly Meeting)

MILLYCENT MBAKAYA (Kakamega Yearly Meeting)

DEDAN KATAKA (EAYM-North Yearly Meeting)

COLLINS OCHIENG (Tanzania Yearly Meeting)

ALFRED WASIKE (FTC Kaimosi/Uganda)



God bless you all

## **Epistle of the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand**

### **Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri**

Held at Burns Lodge near Dunedin (Ōtepoti). 25 to 28 May 2018.

Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou

Dunedin Monthly Meeting welcomed 62 Friends to Mosgiel. We heard the legend of Te Matamata the taniwha; a mythological water creature. Tangata whenua (local Māori) recognised the hills above Mosgiel as forming the taniwha's body. Captain Cook, when he first sighted the place, saw only an interesting saddle between 2 hills on the skyline. What are we open to seeing here? This resonated with part of the theme of our preparatory retreat for the Meeting; of being willing to recognise our shadow.

We acknowledged the indigenous people of this rohe (region); Kai Tahu and Kati Mamoe. Departed Friends were acknowledged with a waiata tangi (song of lament). We also acknowledged the Burns family who built the homestead and from whom the Lodge takes its name.

Visiting Friends from Australia Yearly Meeting, Britain Yearly Meeting, and North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) in the United States were welcomed.

Music, poetry and song contributed to our sense of unity in the Spirit in this Yearly Meeting. We experienced depth in time and sound in the ancient music produced by the yidaki (didgeridoo) of the Yolgnu of north-east Arnhem Land. Peter Webb, the musician, explained that the Spirit lies dormant in the yidaki, then awakes when the yidaki is played, drawing up the voice of the Earth. Our time together was also enriched by classical duets played on a grand piano in the Chapel, singing along with the Wayfaring Strangers, poetry read by the Quaker Learning and Spiritual Development Committee, and worship with voice and instrumental pieces composed on the themes of Walking Cheerfully, Simplicity, Truth, Justice, Equality, and Peace.

We commend the Annual Quaker Lecture, given this year by Elizabeth Duke, a Member of Dunedin Monthly Meeting: "Can Religion Speak Truth?" Elizabeth explored the question "what is truth?" and gave a definition of religion as "doing spirituality together", which resonated with us. Truth goes far beyond statements or beliefs; we know it experientially in our relationships with one another.

The theme of truth revealed in relationships continued as our Meeting worked through issues that included how to support and engage with our young people. They have contributed to our gathering. We want to listen to them, rather than assume we know what they want.

Development of a new website brings challenges and opportunities; we want to be a visible and authentic on-line presence.

Four Friends spoke movingly of their personal experiences of the transformative power of the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) in Aotearoa New Zealand, and internationally. These stories brought us to the state of a gathered meeting. We saw how generosity and nurturing enable potential to be released. In the words of reflection from Rosie Remmerswaal's presentation, "The truth has its own power, let it go through you. You can't do it wrong."



## Yearly Meeting 2018 Epistle of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

Yearly Meeting was held 7-14 July, 2018 at Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, on the lands of the Awabakal people. At this spacious, rural campus we benefitted from 120 years of the vision, work and prayers of the Seventh Day Adventist church. The generous catering of vegetarian food kept us sustained for work required at Yearly Meeting. The buildings are linked by red-bricked curving paths, where crested pigeons pecked on the lawns under jacaranda trees.

We travelled by multiple forms of transport for long distances, over many days to get here; the Queenslanders in thick coats, scarves and colourful beanies and the Tasmanians in cotton shirts.

Friends graciously released our Presiding Clerk, Jo Jordan, to be with her suddenly seriously ill husband and appointed new Clerks to ensure the orderly working of our business.

'The State of Society' address summarised activities and posed questions around five words: Community (the positives and the difficulties), Prophecy (what we say), Witness (what we do), Evangelism (sharing our faith) and Condition (our spiritual state).

Each day has been grounded in worship together. An early morning Meeting for Worship or Bible reading and sharing group was offered daily before breakfast to help prepare people for the day. We held a Meeting for Remembrance in gratitude for Friends who have passed this year and we were reminded that we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses, including our own family ancestors and Quaker forebearers.

The Winter School theme was 'Turning Points' which we explored in poetry, writing, art, circle dancing, life stories, empowerment and advocacy training, in a day retreat based on George Fox's "condition" or 'optimal decision making'. Junior Young Friends (JYFs) went to a permaculture farm where they participated in service as well as learning about Permaculture Principles.

In this time of turning, of the need for transformation of our Society, we note our ageing membership, the small number of children, the vigorous group of JYFs. We heard from Young Friends about how distances lead to isolation and how the current AYM structures are not optimal for their participation. Technology enables us to communicate more easily over vast distances. We celebrate the new AYM website and proliferation of online Meeting for Worship and committee meetings.

We delighted in hearing an overview of Epistles from places as diverse as Belgium, Uganda, Alaska, Young Friends of Northern Ireland and many more. Community was the most common theme. We well understood their joy of being together but also their anguish about the state of the world: the suffering, inequality, dispossession, dislocation of so many people; also, the inspiring work in peace and non-violence which gives us great hope.

In the Backhouse lecture, *An Encounter between Quaker Mysticism and Taoism in Everyday Life*, Cho-Nyon Kim spoke to us mindfully of learning to be a Quaker. Through the teachings of Ham Sok Hon he found that Quakerism resonates with Korean cultural and religious traditions of Taoism, Confucianism and

Buddhism. He stressed living his religion in daily life, following a way of simplicity and discipline, balancing faith and practice. We can feel growing connections with the spirituality of our Asian neighbours. We were ready for this message.

Quaker Service Australia (QSA) supports a wide range of projects in Africa, India, East and South-East Asia, including planting of traditional crops, seed saving and permaculture gardening to build local food security, even in refugee camps. QSA is deeply engaged in funding Australia-wide projects to assist refugees.

Many Members and Meetings are engaging more deeply with their local First Peoples and their spirituality. We know this must continue for deep two-way interactions and healing to happen. Speakers at Yearly Meeting generally acknowledge the Aboriginal land on which they live.

Australia Yearly Meeting strongly supports the 'Uluru Statement from The Heart', arising from the gathering of Aboriginal representatives in May, 2017. This seeks constitutional reform for a First Nations' Voice enshrined in the Constitution, and a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history. A letter will be sent to the Australian Prime Minister from this Yearly Meeting strongly urging the Government to move into this process with haste.

We are alarmed that the Australian Government has announced a policy of subsidising increased weapons exports. We are dismayed by the ever-escalating amounts of money Australia puts towards armaments and the war machine, including insidious funding of our underfunded universities by arms manufacturers. Alongside this, budgets for foreign aid, refugees and care for our own citizens shrink.

However, we were uplifted and awed by the Quaker practice that is present in so much work for peace and earth care in Australia, and Asia. This includes Quaker training in empowerment advocacy, sixteen watching briefs to inform us and assist lobbying, Alternatives to Violence Project and Friends' Peace Teams which grow in significance. We welcomed the publication of *From Fear to Hope – Alternative Narratives on War and Peacemaking* by Pamela Leach and pamphlets regarding disappearing Palestine for distribution in our meetings. Peace-making and earth care are closely inter-connected and we encourage Friends to make faithful choices for a flourishing world.

There has been diligent work to revise our *Handbook of Practice and Procedure in Australia* to bring our practices and language up to date.

Twenty panels of the Australian Quaker Narrative Embroidery project graced the College Church Foyer. More were being lovingly stitched during Yearly Meeting. An illustrated book of the project to tell stories of Australian Quaker history, *Australian Quaker Narrative Embroidery*, was launched. We celebrated this work and the outreach opportunities taken up to date and continuously beckoning. We wrestle with our portrayal of Aboriginal history since European invasion.

There was a sense of tenderness and an ability to hold differences without rancour as we dealt with some contentious issues. Friends responded to the Yearly Meeting's request for their service. The Spirit is moving within the Yearly Meeting to help us handle difficult decisions and an increased work load.

*YM18 Epistle Committee*

David Johnson  
Christine Larkin  
Melissa Nininahazwe  
Sally O'Wheel

1. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-08-10/makarrata-explainer-yolngu-word-more-than-synonym-for-treaty/8790452>

## **Epístola de la 91 Asamblea de la Junta Anual de Los amigos “Cuáqueros” en Cuba.**

A todos los Amigos y Amigas, buscadores de la Verdad:

Con la entrega de la llave, la Junta Mensual de Gibara abrió sus puertas a la 91 Asamblea de la Junta Anual de Los amigos “Cuáqueros” en Cuba, que tiene por lema: “Una iglesia que crece en amor y procura la Verdad”; inspirado en el texto de Efesios 4, 15: “*Sino que siguiendo la Verdad en amor, crezcamos en todo en aquel que es la cabeza, esto es, Cristo*”.

La iglesia siente el regocijo de una renovación generacional que comienza a valorar de forma crítica la manera en que realiza su misión, con nuevas propuestas que ayudan a perfilar mejor el trabajo y con mayor compromiso para asumir los desafíos que el contexto nos presenta.

Un motivo de gran alegría es el reconocimiento de los dones pastorales de las hermanas Yadira Cruz Peña y Liyanis Cigarreta Alvarado y el reconocimiento de los nuevos ministros: Jorge Luis Peña Reyes y Kenya Casanova Sales.

Sentimos gozo por la presencia de los hermanos y hermanas de la Junta Anual de Nueva Inglaterra, con la cual hemos construido un “Puente de Amor” desde hace veintiséis años, como respuesta a la Voz de Dios. Para nosotros este Puente es un símbolo de lo que la humanidad puede hacer para construir un mundo de paz, justicia, unidad y amor.

Abrazamos en esta reunión a: Cynthia Ganung y Roland Stern, de la Junta Mensual de Wellesley; Frederick (Fritz) Weiss, presidente de la Junta Anual de Nueva Inglaterra, Len Cadwallader, Co-Presidente del Comité Puente de Amigos, Diego Low de la Junta mensual de Framingham y Bronwen Hillman de la Junta Mensual de México y presidenta del Proyecto de Alternativas a la Violencia Internacional.

Los mensajes nos invitan a reconsiderar esencias que nutren la espiritualidad. Esta cita generó una minuta que reconoce el valor del Puente de Amor entre las Juntas Anuales de Nueva Inglaterra y Cuba; y se opone, a las medidas tomadas por el gobierno de los Estados Unidos que limitan el intercambio entre las dos comunidades de fe.

Que el Señor del Amor y la Verdad nos inspire a ser testimonios vivos de este sentir y que como el viento y el mar capaz de llegar a todas partes, se extienda a todos los hombres y mujeres del mundo.

En la Luz, Junta Anual de Cuba



## **Epistle of the 91<sup>st</sup> Assembly of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, “Quakers” in Cuba**

To all Friends, seekers of the Truth:

Handing over the key, Gibara Monthly Meeting opened its doors to the 91st assembly of the Yearly Meeting of Friends “Quakers” in Cuba, which has for its theme: “A church that grows in love and seeks the Truth”; inspired by the text of Ephesians 4:15 “Rather, following the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.”

The church feels the joy of a generational renewal which is beginning to evaluate in a critical way how it carries out its mission, with initiatives that help to improve our work and with a greater commitment to accept the challenges of our context.

The recognition of the pastoral gifts of sisters Yadira Cruz Peña and Liyanis Cigarreta Alvarado, and the recognition of new ministers: Jorge Luis Peña Reyes and Kenya Casanova Sales brought us great joy.

We also feel joy at the presence of brothers and sisters from New England Yearly Meeting, with which we have built a “Bridge of Love” for the past twenty-six years, responding to the Voice of God. For us, this Bridge is a symbol of what humanity can do to build a world of peace, justice, unity, and love.

In this meeting we embrace Cynthia Ganung and Roland Stern of Wellesley Monthly Meeting, Frederick (Fritz) Weiss, Clerk of New England Yearly Meeting, Len Cadwallader, Co-Clerk of the Puente de Amigos Committee, Diego Low of Framingham Monthly Meeting, and Bronwen Hillman of Mexico Monthly Meeting and Clerk of the International Alternatives to Violence Project.

The messages invite us to reconsider essentials that nourish spirituality. This idea generated a minute which recognizes the value of the Bridge of Love between the yearly meetings of New England and Cuba, and opposes the measures taken by the government of the United States which limit the interchange between these two faith communities.

May the Lord of Love and Truth inspire us to be living testimonies of this understanding which, like the wind and the sea that can reach everywhere, may extend to all the men and women of the world.

In the Light, Cuba Yearly Meeting

**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)  
IRELAND YEARLY MEETING**

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July 2018

Dear Friends,

We have had an eventful year since our last epistle with our on-going discernment on same sex marriage, including a Special Yearly Meeting held in March 2018, and now our Ireland Yearly Meeting held in Limerick this July. We have all been, and continue to be on, a journey of deep worship, fuelled by a desire to find an outcome acceptable to all.

We cherish the wide range of views and theological approaches held within our Society and we believe that this diversity enriches all of us. We acknowledge that it has been at times bewildering and painful as we try to reconcile our very different views about same sex marriage with the friends that we love and care for. Our primary concern following our discernment to allow same sex marriage where Preparative or Monthly Meetings feel able to witness this, is to ensure that all the members of our society are able to continue their individual faith journeys in a way that they feel brings them closer to God.

We have tested our procedures around discernment and have taken comfort from the soundness of Quaker methods that help us deal with difficult issues that divide us. Our experience reminds us of what others in far more difficult positions of violent conflict have and continue to struggle through, to arrive at peaceful resolutions and increases our admiration and empathy for those on that path.

During our Yearly Meeting held around the theme “Discerning and Living our Testimonies Together” we were blessed to have so many speakers provide us with thought-provoking and nourishing ideas.

Ben Pink Dandelion, our public speaker for this year on the theme of “Living our Faith Daily: the practice of testimony” talked about our “transformed and transforming lives” where our everyday decisions become regular small acts of discernment “winnowed by the Holy Spirit”. It is when we step back from the “Spirit-led line in the middle of meeting where we gather and hold each other in love” that we fall into pride, mistrust and fear.

The meeting identified that it is our Quaker fear; of doing, or being perceived of doing, the wrong thing; fear of our contribution being too small or insignificant in the greater scheme of things; fear of engaging with our community and therefore maintaining our position of being “apart” that needs to be overcome.

We have been challenged to find ways in which Quakers can make their voices louder. Although we are small in numbers, we have been reminded of the courage of past Friends to seek to make a difference in the world - not all endeavours were successful or wise, such as one journey made by Friends in 1658 seeking to convert the Pope! - but they sought to change society rather than just wait and adapt to what was changing around them.

A more recent example of how a small number can make a big impact is our Yearly Meeting here in Limerick. Up to 200 participants have been provided with food, accommodation, love and a very warm welcome by a small Meeting who are re-invigorating a long history of Quaker engagement in the city.

We have incredible people who work with us on Quaker projects, many of whom are not Quakers, but who embody and live our values and testimonies so well that someone in receipt of their services talks about "Love, that's what you get from Quakers, love".

It is, in fact, Love that has been the dominant message emerging throughout the year. We have a loving God, love our neighbour, love our environment, love ourselves with all our faults and allow ourselves to be courageous and in that way we love and serve God.

"Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand." *Isaac Penington 1616-1679*

"...that we are to be priests one to another, continually coming forward to each other, washing each other's feet: if that is the heart of our practice of testimony, our living of daily faith, our inhabitation of being Quaker, shall come all the more easily". *Ben Pink Dandelion*

"Finding ways to overcome evil with good is the business of our lives" *Charles B Lamb* (paraphrased from Romans C12 v 21).

Signed by the Clerking Team of:

E Heather Bewley (Clerk IYM),  
Clodagh Davis (Assistant Clerk)  
William A Haire (Assistant Clerk)  
Rachel Cave.

May 6, 2018

To Friends everywhere,

The 42nd session of the General Meeting of Friends in Mexico (RGAM) was held on May 5 and 6 at the Evangelical Friends Church in San Nicolas de los Garza in the northern state of Nuevo Leon. Forty Friends attended from Ciudad Victoria Friends Church in Tamaulipas, Mexico City Friends Meeting, Pacific Yearly Meeting (PYM) in California, and from here in San Nicolas. The visitors were very warmly received by San Nicolas Friends. The theme of the gathering was “Are young people called to serve God?”

The RGAM was founded by the Quaker community in Mexico in 1958 to periodically bring together the diverse branches of the Religious Society of Friends here. The RGAM allows these groups to come together to learn from one another, to experience different forms of Friends Worship, and to enjoy one another’s company in a spirit of friendship and shared community.

A group of Young Friends arrived to the RGAM from Ciudad Victoria, including one who is participating in the Traveling Ministry Corps of the Friends World Committee for Consultation. The Friendly observer sent by PYM was also able to bring three Young Friends from California and Mexico, all of whom are active in PYM’s Youth Programs Committee. These young people began to get to know one another and share experiences, and quickly started drafting plans for future ways to bring Young Friends together in Mexico, California and elsewhere.

The challenge of keeping young people in our groups resonates with all of us, although when young people of different groups come together, their differences may stand out. We saw that in all of our Meetings and Churches, young people’s presence is very important and considered a fundamental part of our communities. It is hoped that young people will not only feel part of our communities, but also part of the world family of Friends. Several young people here shared their experiences with Quakerism, and the key role that celebration and fellowship had for them in communities that supported them. They also mentioned the power of having their gifts being recognized in Friends’ communities, and being given opportunities to serve in their Meetings, as well as at Yearly Meetings and other Friends gatherings.

Together, we hope that Young people will not simply be present in our diverse groups, but that they will feel themselves an integral part of the world Quaker community and feel nourished by the Spirit. We recognize that the absence of young people in our midst is not owing to a problem of theirs, and also that frequently elders may learn just as much or more from young people than young people from their elders. We leave this gathering committed to respond to the individual and collective calling to strengthen our Friends’ groups, so that young people may know the divine through our religious communities.

We send Greetings in the Light of God.

Epistle Committee of the 42nd session of the General Meeting of Friends in Mexico  
Delia Rodríguez Sena (Ciudad Victoria Friends Church)  
Rebekah Percy and Austin Stanion (Pacific Yearly Meeting)  
Horacio Gil Peña (San Nicolás Friends Church)

Epistle from Great Plains Yearly Meeting 2018 Annual Sessions  
Fifth Month 31-Sixth Month 3, 2018

Greetings to Friends everywhere!

It is with joy we send our greetings to the Religious Society of Friends from our 111th Annual Session of Great Plains Yearly Meeting held in Hominy, Oklahoma and hosted by Hominy Friends Monthly Meeting.

We know we are different, and we choose to be in fellowship together as Friends. We are grateful that our circle of fellowship includes the newer members of Topeka Friends Meeting and the Lubbock Friends of Christ. We are programmed and unprogrammed, pastoral and non-pastoral, and we encompass the spectrum of Friends in the United States—Evangelical, FUM, Conservative, and FGC. Our attendance at this year's annual sessions exceeded 50 persons with a group of twelve children and youth.

Eden Grace, the director of Global Ministries for Friends United Meeting, brought us the message that “we are precisely made to hear God.” She encouraged us to listen attentively to God, presented ways to discern true leadings, and gave us examples of how Biblical characters responded to God's call. She was a much appreciated resource as she involved all ages in her presentations, invited interaction, provided a cross-cultural perspective, and advocated for the full involvement and development of all members in our meetings, especially the young people. In her presentation on the work of FUM, she reminded us that “FUM is an African denomination with 90% of membership in East Africa.”

We benefited from three workshops on Seventh-day afternoon. Lacina Onco, a Shinnecock and Kiowa fellow with Friends Committee on National Legislation, shared with us about the efforts to positively impact Native Americans' lives by focusing on health legislation, specifically the Urban Health Parity Act and Diabetes program. FCNL is also working to combat attacks on the Indian Child Welfare Act and the Violence against Women Act. Lacina reminded us that 4 out of 5 Native women experience violence and that the disappearances and murders of Native women are underreported. We are reminded that God is on the side of the vulnerable.

Connie Adams facilitated an intergenerational demonstration of Faith & Play with the help of the Yearly Meeting children and youth. We are so grateful for the continuing efforts of those who engage in the work of religious education of children and youth.

The Home Missions Committee and Ministry and Council presented a panel on “Visitation, The Ministry of Connection” to discuss their project to increase visitation among our meetings and churches and outreach to other Friends in our geographic area.

As a Yearly Meeting, we continue to outline our project to expand visitation between our member meetings and churches in order to build relationships and fellowship and to support each other through ministry. Another focus of our visitation is to reach out to isolated or unaffiliated meetings and to connect with Friends in our geographic area in a concern for cross-branch relationships among the Religious Society of Friends. We feel that this ministry of visitation should be approached from a place of love and with a commitment to deep listening. The Yearly Meeting is inviting all who feel led to participate and encourages the identification of spiritual gifts of members knowing that God will use each of us exactly as we are to minister to others. While in person visits are preferred, we are encouraged to use letters, social media, phone calls, and video calls to reach out to other Friends. We also seek ways to encourage the development of new and

established leadership within our monthly meetings and churches. We ask what work of the Spirit is your Monthly Meeting drawn to do? Are there old leadings that need to be revisited and are there new leadings that are being revealed?

Beth Green-Nagle led us in Bible study of Acts 2 and 10 when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples and then on the Gentiles, reminding us that the Holy Spirit, given by Jesus as our direct connection with God, is available to all people, for “God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh” (Acts 2:17).

Our times of fellowship were filled with conversation, laughter, music, song, good food, and fun. We especially enjoyed the Osage feast Saturday evening. This was followed by an Osage handgame which included Osage singers around a drum. Most of us joined in the round dances and straight dances which concluded each handgame. What a joy to laugh and dance together! We look forward to gathering together again Fifth Month 30 through Sixth Month 2 of 2019 at University Friends Meeting in Wichita, Kansas. We invite you to join us.

God is not done with Friends on the Great Plains. In fact, God is moving and working through us in our communities, our meetings, and in our relationships. For this we are very thankful.

With a grateful heart,  
submitted by LaVonna Loesch  
Great Plains Yearly Meeting  
Presiding Clerk