

# Intermountain Yearly Meeting *of the* Religious Society of Friends

Minutes of the annual sessions held Sixth Month 20 & 21, 2020

*ALTHOUGH FRIENDS HAD SELECTED FORT LEWIS COLLEGE IN DURANGO, COLORADO FOR OUR GATHERING SITE, THE EMERGENCE OF A SERIOUS VIRUS EPIDEMIC PERSUADED US TO HOLD THE EVENT ACROSS THE INTERNET INSTEAD. DESPITE MILES OF PHYSICAL SEPARATION, FRIENDS OF INTERMOUNTAIN YEARLY MEETING (IMYM) FELT OURSELVES DRAWN TOGETHER IN WORSHIP AND ATTENTION TO SHARED CONCERNS.*

## **Session I: 6/20/2020**

During the opening worship, Gale Toko-Ross, co-Clerk, read a passage on Stewardship from the Advices and Queries in our *Faith and Practice*. Bill Lennon, acting in a tech-support role, explained the process for requesting to speak via Zoom. Valerie Ireland, co-Clerk, described the additional procedures for those making audio-only connections.

### **Land Acknowledgment & Clerks' Welcome**

Gale read out an acknowledgment of the people whose traditional lands and homes our Meeting now occupies:

¡Bienvenidos, Amigos! – Welcome, Friends!

Intermountain Yearly Meeting acknowledges that our Yearly Meeting encompasses Friends who live and gather on the ancestral lands and traditional territories of many indigenous nations.

For thousands of years, Indigenous people have hunted, farmed, traded, fought, lived, loved, and prayed on the ancestral lands and traditional territories of many of these nations. Spanish and American colonizers assaulted and enslaved them, stole their land, and tried to eliminate their languages, cultures, and ceremonies. The Indigenous peoples resisted and persisted, and they still belong to this land as sovereign nations. We humbly seek to learn from these peoples and to join them in pursuing justice. We honor their elders and their youth, who work and study to make their world a stronger, more just place for their nations and our world.

We invite Friends to lift up the names of the indigenous nations that inhabited this territory before this land was colonized. As we do this, we will screen share a list of some of the nations that formerly (or currently) resided in the states we now occupy. We will also take a few minutes for Friends to acknowledge these peoples; please unmute yourself, give your name, and lift up the tribes that have made their homes where you now reside.

We will see how Spirit moves us to revise and improve this land acknowledgement as we go forward.

Intermountain Yearly Meeting covers states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah - plus parts of West Texas, Wyoming & Idaho, areas covering the territories of these people:

Arapaho (Hinono'eiteen), Apache, Arikara, Bannock, Blackfeet, Cheyenne, Cocopah, Comanche, Crow, Goshute, Gros Ventre, Halchidhoma, Havasupai, Hualapai, Hopi, Jcome, Jano, Kiowa, Maricopa, Mohave, Navajo (Diné), Nez Perce, Paiute, Papago, Piegan, Pima, 19 Pueblos, Salish (Flathead), Sheep Eaters, Shoshone, Sioux, Tohono O'odham, Ute, Yaqui, Yavapai, Yuma, Zuni

## Memorial Minutes

Valerie Ireland, Presiding co-Clerk, read a minute from Tempe Monthly Meeting in memory of Robert (Bob) Dolphin, Jr. She then read a minute from Albuquerque Monthly Meeting in memory of Marian Bradley Hoge. Gale Toko-Ross, Presiding co-Clerk, read a minute from Pima Monthly Meeting in memory of Donald Wayne Helms. [\[Attachment A\]](#)

### **Clerks' *State of the Yearly Meeting* Report**

The co-Clerks offered a summary of their responses to the *State of the Meeting* reports received from the majority of our monthly meetings. [\[Attachment B\]](#)

#### State of the Yearly Meeting 2020

Reading the state of the meeting reports is a bit like reading a memoir from another time. Since most of the reports were written the world has changed for the weird. We are living through things none of us have ever seen. There has been a lot of struggling in the last few months. This has deepened our connections as we find new ways to support one another. This was true in many ways.

Some meetings are struggling with the challenges of members who have been affected by, or died from CoVID-19; others are working to care for, and lift up the concerns of both younger Friends, and our elders. Some meetings struggle in newer, more intense ways with social justice concerns such as Standing Up for Racial Justice, migrant and sanctuary work, the concerns of our indigenous allies, LGBTQ+ rights, addressing climate change, as well as the ever present racial and income inequality that permeates all of these issues.

Now we're all doing that work in a whole new world. Now we count on Spirit to guide us. We count on others to help us even as we seek wisdom and discernment in how to continue moving forward. The call to action is more compelling than it has been in a century, or maybe ever.

Quakers have a lot to offer in these endeavors. Our new challenge is to develop ways to be nimble. Nimble in assisting Monthly Meetings in the responses to the requirements of the time. Nimble in assisting those within our meetings who may be suffering. Our meetings will be called to meet current and coming economic challenges. Our meetings will be called to the newest racial and indigenous justice actions, which are only new in that they are so very visible and they are global. We will be called to navigate a radically different CoVID world. And we are called to work smarter and harder regarding the ongoing lack of climate justice that underlies and exacerbates every one of these issues.

How can we help? Can we help with money? With our presence? With our lobbying Congress? We must certainly work diligently to change our federal government. We can. We can do all these things.

But this is not where we lay our hope. Our hope is in front of us. Our hope is in the Spirit, and in our seeking and discernment as it has ever been. Our hope, my hope is in us, the Friends in this Zoom room.

An amazing radical Sikh woman, Valarie Kaur, explains our situation.

What if this darkness is not the darkness of the tomb, but the darkness of the womb?  
What if our America is not dead but a country that is waiting to be born? What if the story of America is one long labor? What if all of our grandfathers and grandmothers are standing behind us now, those who survived occupation and genocide, slavery and Jim

Crow, detentions and political assault? What if they are whispering in our ears ‘You are brave’? What if this is our nation’s greatest transition?

What does the midwife tell us to do? Breathe. And then? Push. Because if we don’t push we will die. If we don’t push our nation will die. Now we will breathe. Now we will labor in love, through love and your revolutionary love is the magic we will show our children.

Friends, we look at you and we believe that we are indeed unstoppable, that a new world is possible, and Friends, you...we...are ready to push...and labor...and march...and midwife this new world.

What is the state of our yearly meeting? We are ready. We are here now...together. We will listen and be stalwart allies, we will be nimble in our actions,

Because dear Friends,

The state of our meeting is revolutionary love. Everywhere. And love will prevail.

Submitted in Light,

Gale Toko-Ross

she/her/hers

IMYM co-clerk

Valerie Ireland

she/her/hers

IMYM co-clerk

### **Unfinished Business: Committee Name Change**

At last year’s sessions, Friends considered changing the name of the Watching Committee to the Listening Committee, with general agreement expressed. Because the decision to do so did not appear in the 2019 Minutes, the Clerk asked Friends now to formally approve this change.

**Minute 20200620(a)**: Friends approve changing the name of the former Watching Committee to the Listening Committee.

### **Epistle**

Ann Marie Pois (Boulder), for the Listening Committee, read an Epistle from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. [Attachment C]

### **Nominating Committee**

Nancy Rice (Clerk) gave a brief report for the IMYM Nominating Committee, sharing the list of positions still open, acknowledging the service of Nominating Committee Friends, and reminding the meeting of the Volunteer Service Form appearing on the IMYM website (Insert one link for the report, one for the roster of positions, and one for the Volunteer service form).

**Minute 20200620(b)**: Friends accept the Nominating Committee report. [Attachment D]

The meeting adjourned for a fifteen-minute break.

### **Interim Worship**

Friends entered into worship ahead of a break in our deliberations.

### **Session II: 6/20/2020**

Friends resumed our meeting in a spirit of waiting worship.

### **Treasurer**

Jerry Peterson, Treasurer, presented a report (URL), explaining the various categories of yearly meeting expenses – the largest portion (>60%) goes out as donations to other organizations. He then quickly reviewed highlights for this fiscal year, concluding that IMYM has financial

reserves well in excess of current need, at least partly because the ‘Pay as Led’ experiment for the annual gathering more than paid for itself. He reminded Friends that once it is safe to meet again face to face, they may apply to the Clerks for support of travel for intravisitation. Valerie announced that Monthly Meetings had been advised to withhold their equalization funds, and to consider their assessments as ‘Pay as Led’. within the yearly meeting. He explained that the decision to abandon the planned residential yearly meeting and hold our annual sessions with Friends connecting across the internet required some unusual expenses and created some unexpected savings. He also noted that because we face continuing uncertainty about the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, fiscal planning for next year will proceed with doubt. He encouraged Friends to retain their trust in our officers and the Representatives Committee as IMYM faces unanticipated new challenges and opportunities.

**Minute 20200620(c)**: Friends accept the Treasurer’s report. [[Attachment D](#)]

### **Finance Committee**

Vance Marshall, Clerk, read a report from the Finance Committee [[Attachment D](#)]. Extraordinary expenses for travel arose due to inclement weather during the Arrangements Committee’s winter meeting. The Representatives Committee recently approved adding \$5,000 to the yearly meeting’s contribution to Mountain Friends Camp. The Finance Committee recommended that we maintain the requested assessment at \$64/member in 2021, emphasizing that monthly meetings may take a ‘pay as led’ approach to assessments.

**Minute 20200620(d)**: Friends accept the Finance Committee’s report.

The Treasurer presented a budget proposal for the coming fiscal year (10/1/2020 to 9/30/2021), describing the challenges of planning in times of profound uncertainty. Most of the items are carried forward from this year, with allowance for continuing with a robust videoconferencing account and increased financial support of Mountain Friends Camp.

One Friend suggested that we’ve outgrown the ability of volunteers to keep things running smoothly, and that the time has come for IMYM to hire staff to provide administrative services. One Friend requested a line item to support travel of IMYM delegates to the sessions of other yearly meetings. This request will require significant forethought, and a detailed proposal might be brought to the Representatives Committee and Finance Committee for inclusion in next year’s budget.

### **Closing Worship**

The meeting closed in silent worship, to convene again tomorrow – God willing.

### **Session III: 6/21/2020**

On this second day of sessions, Friends resumed our meeting for business via videoconference.

#### **Memorial Minutes**

Valerie Ireland read a minute from Colorado Springs Monthly Meeting in memory of Sherry McMahon, Gale Toko-Ross read a minute from Boulder Monthly Meeting in memory of Samantha (Sammy) Pauzé, and Valerie Ireland read a minute from Fort Collins Monthly Meeting in memory of Mary Carol Randall. [[Attachment A](#)]

#### **Epistle**

Peter Anderson, Listening Committee Clerk, read excerpts from the epistle of Aotearoa Yearly Meeting in New Zealand. [[Attachment B](#)]

#### **Budget Proposal**

Jerry Peterson, Treasurer, reminded Friends of the need for research and deep consideration of each new budget recommendation, and of the consequent benefit of advance notice. One Friend spoke in favor of setting aside an unspecified amount from IMYM reserves to assist indigenous groups who are suffering disproportionately from the CoVID-19 pandemic. We were reminded that local Meetings may choose to make such support available. The Clerk suggested that fully researched requests for new expenditure be brought forward from monthly meetings to the IMYM Finance Committee. One Friend made us aware of a charitable foundation established at Johns Hopkins University specifically to provide funding in response to the current health crisis. One Friend suggested that we use the revenue surplus from this year's IMYM gathering plus an equal amount from the IMYM financial reserves to respond to the urgent need to address disease and injustice in the world.

#### **Peace and Social Concerns**

David Henkel, Clerk, presented a report from the Peace and Social Concerns Committee (URL). The Committee calls imploringly for a list of contacts at each monthly meeting so they can carry out their charge to facilitate communication and cooperation on appropriate issues across IMYM.

**Minute 20200621(a)**: Friends accept the report of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee. [[Attachment D](#)]

### **Session IV: 6/21/2020**

Friends resumed meeting after a time of seasoning the issues surrounding the budget.

#### **Memorial Minutes**

Gale Toko-Ross read a minute from Boulder Monthly Meeting in memory of Alura 'Elsa' Sabath, Valerie Ireland read a minute from Boulder Monthly Meeting in memory of Richard Segel, and Gale Toko-Ross read a minute from Santa Fe Monthly Meeting in memory of Joan Spencer. [[Attachment A](#)]

#### **Epistle**

The Clerks announced that the Listening Committee's draft of our own outgoing epistle will go to the Representatives Committee for approval at their next meeting.

#### **Consent Agenda**

As time was short, Friends agreed to accept several reports as distributed via our website's Documents in Advance.

**Minute 20200621(b)**: Friends accept the report of the Mountain Friends Camp Director. [Attachment E]

**Minute 20200621(c)**: Friends accept the report of the *Faith and Practice* Revision Committee. [Attachment D]

**Minute 20200621(d)**: Friends accept the report of the Representatives Committee. [Attachment D]

### **Emergency Needs Funding**

Friends who met during a short session of threshing urged that each Monthly Meeting consider asking the IMYM Treasurer for a refund of \$14/person from their 2020 assessment (or reduce their 2020 assessment to IMYM by \$14/person if payment has not yet been sent) in order to relieve suffering among those most in need in their local areas. They especially encouraged consideration of the needs of First Nations or other grave needs in Meetings' locales. They reminded Monthly Meetings that IMYM requests – but does not require – full payment of its assessments. Intermountain Yearly Meeting considers assessments to be “paid as led”.

### **Budget Approval**

**Minute 20200621(e)**: Friends approve the budget for 2021 as submitted.

### **Ministry & Counsel**

Valerie Ireland read the report of the Ministry & Counsel Committee, which raised two complex issues.

At the recommendation of the Representatives Committee and the Ministry & Counsel Committee, IMYM fall queries will encourage monthly meetings to undergo deep discernment over the question of direct membership in the yearly meeting. This question may take more than one year to discern.

The Committee reported its struggle with creating a policy against intentional (or inadvertent) harassment and hurtful communication during IMYM sessions. Having first considered the model of the Friends General Conference Harassment Investigation Committee, they hope to create a less judgmental and more restorative process for our yearly meeting.

**Minute 20200621(f)**: Friends accept the report of the Ministry & Counsel Committee, with Jennifer Bauman Ollman of Pima Monthly Meeting standing aside. [Attachment C]

### **Minute of Exercise**

The Clerks shared these insights and concerns at the close of the meeting for worship with attention to business:

We are to begin a seasoning process regarding alternative paths to membership. This needs to be seasoned at the monthly meeting level, and it may rise to the level of fall queries. Talk about this in your meetings, with special attention to intergenerational discussions. The Ministry and Counsel Committee's report in Documents in Advance contains useful background on this issue, and the Representatives Committee report also has some seasoning. Both could be helpful as a starting point for your discernment.

We heard a charge to look at our actions, rather than simply words, in regards to racism, white privilege and decolonization. There has been a call to create a communications network between meetings, IMYM, and our Peace and Social Concerns committee. The action that is taking place is happening at the Monthly Meeting level. It is important

that we see and support each other's work as we continue this struggle. Isolation is not limited to the effects of the pandemic, and we need to be the mycelia that interconnects all of our important work.

This weird weird year has yielded a rich and surprisingly deep virtual gathering. We thank everyone for their patience and to lift up the amazing tech volunteers without whom this would never have happened.

We also want to note, that it is the IMYM structure of co-Clerks, Arrangements Clerk, and Representatives Committee clerk that ultimately made this do-able. Polly Washburn became our super hero, and the Recording Clerk was valuable with Quaker process in a digital world. Friends, we built that airplane, we flew that airplane, we were all passengers, and we are still here, now, together. Safe journeys!

Valerie Ireland then read a message dated 22 November 2016, from the Council of the Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers at Standing Rock.

“What to do, Grandmothers,” I asked, “in this world that seems upside down?”

“Let us settle in around you now, cover and encircle you in love. Be comforted by our nearness to you. All that you are going through we are going through with you, and none of it is for nothing. Everything has purpose – even these difficult challenges that lie before you.

“Do not be fooled by the fear and drama that is rising everywhere. It is only drama. It is not real and has no lasting value. These are the times we have told you about. They are here now but you can ride them out because you are finely made, strongly and rightly made. You can weather any storm.”

“Pay no more attention to the negativity in the world than you have to. Stand up and be counted when it's important to do so and the rest of the time, turn your mind, heart, and hands to Love. Love one another. Behave in loving ways. Do the tasks that lie before you and do them well. Serve others whenever you can. Instead of worrying about what may happen next in the world, give yourself to service. This will help you and help the world. We ask you to be our presence on earth now, to turn away from fear and instead multiply the energy of love. ‘Help ever. Hurt never’.”

Then the Grandmothers began to sing, “Oh how we love you. Oh, how we love you.”

### **Closing Worship**

Friends ended our time apart-yet-together in a brief moment of centering worship, to meet again as way opens in 2021.

Presiding co-Clerks

Recording Clerk

Gale Toko-Ross & Valerie Ireland

David Nachman

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Donald Wayne Helms.....	Pima Monthly Meeting
Sherry McMahan .....	Colorado Springs Monthly Meeting
Samantha (Sammy) Pauzé.....	Boulder Monthly Meeting
Mary Carol Randall.....	Fort Collins Monthly Meeting
Alura 'Elsa' Sabath .....	Boulder Monthly Monthly Meeting
Richard Segel .....	Boulder Monthly Monthly Meeting
Joan Spencer.....	Santa Fe Monthly Meeting

### **State of the Meeting Reports** – no reports received from *meetings shown in italics*

**Arizona:** Flagstaff, *Phoenix*, Pima, Tempe

**Colorado:** Boulder, Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, *Montrose*, Mountain View

**New Mexico:** Albuquerque, Durango (CO), El Paso (TX), Gila, *Las Cruces*, Quaker House  
Santa Fe, Santa Fe

**Utah:** *Logan*, Moab, Salt Lake City

### **Epistles**

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

Aotearoa Yearly Meeting

Intermountain Yearly Meeting

### **Committee Reports**

Nominating Committee

Finance Committee||Treasurer's Report

Peace and Social Concerns Committee

*Faith and Practice* Revision Committee

Representatives Committee

Ministry and Counsel Committee

### **Organization Reports**

Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)

Friends General Conference (FGC)

Friends World Committee for Consultation Section of the Americas (FWCC)

Friends Peace Teams (FPT)

Mountain Friends Camp (MFC)

Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW)

*Western Friend*