

“BEING REACHED BY THE LIFE”

CALL TO 2013 ANNUAL SESSION of PACIFIC YEARLY MEETING

29 July – 3 August 2013 Mt. Madonna Center

Not by strength of arguments . . . and convincement of my understanding . . . came I to receive and bear witness of the Truth, but by being secretly reached by the Life. For when I came into the silent assemblies of God’s people, I felt a secret power among them, which touched me to my heart. –Robert Barclay, 1678

In silent worship each of us has at times been “touched to our heart” as we awaken to our deep bonds with one another and the world, and remember we are part of something much larger than our separate selves. Opening to a comforting, uniting Presence, we are empowered to love freely and live courageously. We cannot manufacture these moments by effort; rather, they come over us when we drop our defenses, get out of our own way, and trust ourselves to “that of God” in ourselves and others. Then we can say with Robert Barclay that we have been “reached by the Life.”

The promise of unity in the Spirit brings us together. From 29 July through 3 August 2013 we will gather into the blessed community at Mt. Madonna Center. You are invited to join us! Look forward to a rich mix of fellowship, worship and worship sharing, play, engagement with the pressing issues of our times, and doing the essential work of our religious community.

I am delighted to report that we will be joined this summer by Diane Randall, the new Executive Secretary of the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). Diane will speak to us in a plenary session on Tuesday 30 July, and will host an Interest Group later that day.

The most prominent item of business facing us is to discern whether we are called as a body of Friends to continue the position of the Youth Program Coordinator, authorized at the 2009 PYM Annual Session for a trial period. Following worshipful discernment, at the 2013 RepCom your Representatives approved the following minute:

REPCOM ACTION MINUTE 2013.01: Representative Committee recommends to Pacific Yearly Meeting Annual Session that the paid Youth Program Coordinator position be continued.

Upon approval of this minute, PYM Representatives learned of a generous offer by Pacific Friends Outreach Society (PFOS). Following 19 years of unsuccessful efforts to establish a permanent site for our Annual Session, the Board of PFOS [a 501(c)3 corporation, distinct from the PYM Corporation] has decided to lay itself down. PFOS offers to transfer its assets of more than \$400,000 to Pacific Yearly Meeting for a carefully stipulated purpose: if PYM approves the continuation of the YPC position, interest from the funds (to be named the Bob Vogel Endowment) will be used to defray program costs (NOT salary) of the YPC position. (If PYM declines the terms of the offer, PFOS will find another worthy recipient for the funds.) This exciting proposal was too new to permit immediate seasoned discernment; thus RepCom approved the following minute:

REPCOM ACTION MINUTE 2013.04: We ask Finance Committee to work with members of PFOS and the YPCSC to explore how we might accept and manage this gift. We ask them to bring recommendations to the Annual Session.

Every significant leading calls for a degree of faith in the face of uncertainties. At the PYM 2013 Annual Session we are not required to resolve every such uncertainty before we move forward. RepCom discussion made clear that implementation will require ongoing discussions regarding financial considerations, committee functions, the time span of the position, and other matters that cannot now be foreseen. If we find unity at the upcoming Annual Session to continue the YPC position, these matters will need our ongoing attention.

As the time draws near for us to gather at Mt. Madonna, I encourage Friends to read carefully the documents posted under “Recent 2013 PYM RepCom Reports” on our PYM Website at pacificyearlymeeting.org—especially the “Youth Program Coordinator Supervisory Committee – Evaluation” and “2013 RepCom Minutes.” I urge Friends to arrive at our 2013 Annual Session with genuinely open minds and hearts, fixed not upon non-negotiable outcomes, but ready to discern our unity in the Blessed Community, allowing ourselves to be “reached by the Life.”

In Friendship,

Steve Smith, Presiding Clerk

Pacific Yearly Meeting