

Epistle from New York Yearly Meeting

Religious Society of Friends

Seventh Month/July 20-26, 2014

To Friends Everywhere,

At Silver Bay, New York, in this our 319th Summer Session, the Spirit moved mightily among us to transform conflict into loving community. Our Priorities Working Group, charged with listening to Friends around the Yearly Meeting and discerning our priorities and leadings, presented the results of three years' diligent, faithful and spirit-led work. Our plenary speaker, Joyce Schroeder, brought us tools for change. We labored and prayed, testing and strengthening an emerging capacity to experience "disagreement without estrangement" (2012 NYYM Epistle). After tender listening, re-visioning, and with renewed trust, we joyfully approved the NYYM Statement of Leadings and Priorities.

This is the beginning of something, not the end.

Friends who paddled in a river journey commemorating the Two Row Wampum, a treaty between the Dutch and the Haudenosaunee, urged us to "Be caught in the breath that drives us forward as Friends." We felt this manifested in the joyful laughter of children, in the energy of the Earthcare Working Group, in the continuing transformation Young Adult Friends experienced, and in the songs and spoken words of Maggie Edmondson in Bible Study, which reminded us of the need for quiet contemplation prior to action. We seek ways to hold and carry the Yearly Meeting, as the beloved Friends, whose passing we marked this year, did so ably.

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock, Clerk
New York Yearly Meeting