

Alaska Epistle 2013

This report contains the 2013 Epistle of the Alaska Friends Conference to share with your meetings. Whilst it is not in the text of the adopted Epistle, Alaska Friends at their annual gathering explicitly adopted the Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice from the 2012 Friends World Conference.

Yours In Friendship

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Epistle of the Alaska Friends Conference
Gathered in Annual Session September 20 - 22, 2013
At the Dickerson Friends Center
Wasilla, Alaska

Dear Friends Everywhere,

Over the fall equinox weekend, the Alaska Friends Conference gathered to address the theme Caring for Creation – How are we lead to address climate disruption? Some 40 Friends and visitors traveled from Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau, Kenai and Talkeetna to final the renewing presence in our fellowship. The bright golds and reds of autumn, the crisp fall air, a moose walking through the camping area, the brilliant full moon – all of these remind of that we are stewards of a particularly majestic landscape.

We welcomed the visits of Joyce Ketterer and her husband Rob Esnay from the Nominating Committee of Friends General Conference. Jose Aguto, from the Friends Committee on National Legislation came to support of program theme.

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Anchorage Friends had joined in four work-camp weekends this summer to enhance our meeting site, notably with a new dock, allowing ready access to Dickerson Lake and use of our canoe and paddleboat. We found it especially heartwarming to see the Young Friends out on the lake, in the evening, the morning and several times during the day. A rich and joyful experience of the natural landscape we hope to protect.

Three sessions addressed the many facets of our theme. An evening of welcome and introductions included worship sharing on a query asking of how our own life stories included the sacred encounters with the natural world.

We followed with a morning viewing a tender documentary evoking both the power of the natural process and landscape transformations, as well as our personal capacities to care for the earth. The films spoke of the spirals upward, as nature flourishes with emerging wetlands, grassy meadows and forests. Nature also hosts downward spirals, for which erosions and gullies were the example.

We devoted our major theme session to a series of queries exploring our personal perspectives on right relations with the earth's resources, and our understanding of the related Quaker Testimonies. Jose offered perspectives on the brokenness of our political systems, and the transformative importance of organized people to counter organized money. He described the work of FCNL in promoting bi-partisan dialogue in the Congress as a way to overcome the impasse. We discerned a path forward to communicate with our Congressional delegation. Our letters notes the many examples of harmful effects of climate change in Alaska, lifts up our moral vision of right relations with the earth and caring for those who suffer the effects of climate change. We asked our representatives to step forward convening the dialogue with their colleagues.

As always, we extend our appreciation to Friends who remind us of the Light we lift up across the globe. We join you in this perpetual journey to walk lightly on the land, answering that of God in each person and in God's glorious creation.