

## Epistle from Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns

16 of Second month, 2015

To all Friends everywhere,

Members of Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns gathered in Burlington, New Jersey from Friday, February 13 through Monday, February 16, 2015. The ninety-eight participants ranged in age from 2 1/2 to 82 years old including three teenagers, a mix of allies and people from other faiths. We met in the Burlington Friends Meeting and Conference Center which was originally founded in 1784, 231 years ago.

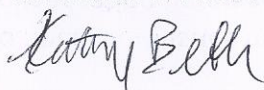
The theme, "Love Works 24/7" was developed by O and John Meyer over the course of three sessions. We came closer to embodying the concepts by becoming more aware of when and how we are channeling love. We first identified ten personal characteristics, claimed them and experimented with who we would be without each one. We then examined a mild conflict interaction to see how the other person reflected back a part of ourselves, teaching us how to better love those characteristics within us. We then learned how to apply these skills to difficult experiences to create space for Spirit to enter and transform the interaction.

Agenda items included responding to needs for justice in confronting racism. The conversation began with an invitation to reflect on the collaboration between FLGBTQC and the participants at the People of Color Center at Friends General Conference Summer Gathering. We approved a minute that empowered a working group to continue in this work. Ministry and Council seasoned guidelines for multicultural interactions given to us by Mariana Ruybalid and read them to the gathered body, with the intention to continue implementing these skills. We spent time in worshipful discernment to continue our ongoing work for radical inclusion.

Some business items exceeded the allotted time for discussion, and we accomplished a number of other things. We are considering support of the Quaker Statement on Climate Change in unity with numerous other Quaker organizations, monthly and yearly meetings. Long-range planning issues for sites, duration and accessibility for future Midwinter Gatherings were discussed. The Nominating Committee was challenged to find Friends who felt led to accept service in open committee positions. The Quaker Lesbian Conference, which received support since it began meeting in the 70s from the organization that would become FLGBTQC, has discerned that the need that called it into existence has ended. As QLC lays down this historically significant ministry, the Quaker Lesbian Conference has donated part of the remaining funds to maintain the QLC and FLGBTQC archives at Swarthmore College, and donated the remaining funds to FLGBTQC.

We celebrate that our community is about 40 years old, and we feel that Spirit has been preparing us for the upcoming challenges along the way to God's Beloved Community.

On behalf of FLGBTQC,



Kathy Beth and Justin Connor, Co-clerks