

Pacific Yearly Meeting
Ministry Committee
Report to Representative Committee 2022

SUMMARY

Since the annual session, one major focus has been evaluating the Sacred Space Process introduced and shepherded by the Racial Justice Subcommittee. We have supported the Presiding Clerk by participating in the hiring of an administrative assistant and participating in the discussion of the possibilities of remote, hybrid or in-person AS this summer. We have maintained communication with subcommittees and other groups, but many liaisons have changed this year. Since annual session, two of our members have resigned in their last year of service; Nominating Committee is looking for replacements for the remainder of this year (hopefully to continue into a new term). If you have suggestions, contact Julie Harlow fhmus@sbcglobal.net or Dan Strickland <danstrickland2001@yahoo.com>.

Action Items: Friends who attended annual session last year are encouraged to participate in the Sacred Space process survey—google form and in our open (zoom) meeting or both. This is the link to the survey to be completed by 11 March 2022: <https://forms.gle/Fd9LzX1mL4z7ktDEA>
The open meeting via Zoom will be on 19 March 2022 at 4pm.

Requests: None at this time.

NARRATIVE:

Along with the Racial Justice Subcommittee (their report below), we have reviewed the responses to the post-annual session survey question about the “Stepping Stones to Sacred Space” process, specifically the use of “ouch, oops, and whoa” to identify potentially harmful statements, and the use of the scripted description of the process before each plenary. The responses were varied and included joy and gratitude to be involved in the process of becoming a diverse and anti-racist faith community, as well as concern that the process could be judgmental and shaming. People found the debriefing sessions valuable. Even in the Ministry committee there are different opinions as we ask ourselves how to proceed.

There is wide agreement that we need to work together to create a just and inclusive community, and that the process is unavoidably difficult. There is a desire to move on to the next step in the process-- towards reconciliation and healing. The subcommittee provided the foundation for a survey to see how people view the process after reflection. A google form of the survey was sent out before Rep Com and will be followed by an open (Zoom) meeting. Friends may participate in both formats if they wish. The responses will help us design the next steps in the process, going beyond creating awareness of micro-aggressions with “oops, ouch, and whoa,” and move towards healing damaged relationships and building trust. We are exploring resources from FGC as well as other groups working on reconciliation.

Administrative Position: With some international negotiating about logistics, Bronwen Hillman was hired as the administrative assistant.

Annual Session: In discussion with Walker Creek Ranch and Mt. Madonna Center, the Presiding Clerk and Friends on an ad hoc committee explored the possibility of a hybrid annual session. Walker Creek

Ranch lacks the connectivity we need. Mt. Madonna has the connectivity, the technology and the tech support. They are willing to work on problems we've experienced in the past.

Subcommittee Updates:

Racial Justice Subcommittee— Aaron Terry, Brenda Chung, Deborah Marks, Diego Navarro, Marlene Coach, Maryanne Michaels, Rita Comes:

Following the 2021 Annual Session the RJSC reviewed our experiences and the survey feedback from the Session. In general, the feedback was supportive of the Subcommittee's work even though there were some areas of sensitivity to racism being addressed during Sessions and improvements needed to our Plenary Stepping Stones to Sacred Space Process preamble, addressing its redundancy while informing first-time plenary attenders.

We have spent time reviewing the RJSC Sacred Space Process and identifying the changes needed for the 2022 Annual Session. We have focused on supporting the Ministry Committee and Presiding Clerk in their upcoming Annual Session 2021 Temperature Check process by drafting an initial survey. We have attended two Ministry Committee meetings to discuss these areas of joint effort. We have received a request to provide more RJSC workshops following our series of five workshops for the Spring 2021. It is clear to the RJSC that holding such workshops is not a priority given the other work we are involved in, however helping train others to hold these workshops is something we may consider.

A query we have been exploring is, what can be done to help Friends shift their understanding of the Stepping Stones to Sacred Space Process? How to help Friends understand it is not about calling out and shaming, but rather calling in and learning about what we do so we can do what we want, which is to build up our beloved community. We provided a letter to the Ministry Committee and the Yearly Meeting Clerk that addresses these queries, particularly in the context of Meeting for Worship. We are grateful to have a Ministry Committee liaison who is on both the RJSC and the Ministry Committee who actively participates in the work of both, which helped bring forth new openings in our work with the Ministry Committee.

Friends of Color Subcommittee: (liaison Rita Comes). Much of the work of the Racial Justice Subcommittee overlaps with the Friends of Color Subcommittee. This committee has not met often.

Indigenous Concerns Subcommittee: (liaison Gail Eastwood) After a change in leadership and an infusion of new members, the committee began meeting in December. They began to reach out to Meetings regarding activities around indigenous concerns. They would love to hear from people in the meetings who are interested in indigenous concerns. Email subcommittee clerk Leslie Zondervan-Droz <lesliezd@reninet.com>.

Eldering Subcommittee: (liaison Robin DuRant) Dorothy Henderson continues as clerk of this committee. The committee provides eldering for a few clerks in PacYM positions. They are considering ways of working with Meetings to provide clerking support and develop new elders as well.

Religious Education Subcommittee: (liaison Eric Sabelman) Lacks a clerk at this time, but there seems to be new energy in the committee.

As requested by the yearly meeting, the committee has begun to address what the yearly meeting needs to move forward as a spiritual community. What do we need to be doing? How can we shape a YM-wide discussion and discernment of changes to ensure that all voices are heard? A related question is the role of RepCom: what is the role and future of this committee in meeting these needs?

Ministry Committee Members: Eric Sabelman (Palo Alto), Rolene Walker (San Francisco), Gail Eastwood (Humboldt, Clerk), Stanford Searl (Santa Monica), Rita Comes Whitney (Palo Alto), Robin DuRant (Orange Grove), Jay Cash (San Francisco)

The Friends of Color Subcommittee consists of Susan Cervantes (La Jolla), Ritt Dudley (Santa Cruz), Nathan Moon (Strawberry Creek), Marlene Coach-Eisenstein (Honolulu, Co-Clerk), and Bertha Peña (unaffiliated, Co-Clerk)

The Racial Justice Subcommittee consists of Brenda Chung, Big Island
Marlene Coach-Eisenstein, Honolulu, **Co-clerk**
Rita Comes Whitney, Palo Alto
Deborah Marks, Strawberry Creek
Maryanne Michaels, Redwood Forest
Diego Navarro, Santa Cruz, **Co-clerk**
Aaron Terry, Honolulu

The Eldering Subcommittee consists of Dinah Bachrach (Redwood Forest), Gordon Bishop (Grass Valley), Chamba Cooke (Grass Valley), Elaine Emily (Strawberry Creek), Mica Estrada (Strawberry Creek), Valerie Nuttman (Santa Cruz), Nancy Wilkinson (Strawberry Creek), and Dorothy Henderson (Grass Valley, Clerk)

The Religious Education Subcommittee consists of Eric Sabelman (Palo Alto), Stanford Searl (Santa Monica), Jay Cash (Strawberry Creek)

Report submitted by Robin DuRant and Gail Eastwood