

Eldering Subcommittee of Ministry Committee Report to Annual Session 2022 Pacific Yearly Meeting

Clerk Laura Magnani has called us to the deep work of building beloved community, trusting spirit to find new ways of living our faith. The Eldering subcommittee of the Ministry Committee of Pacific Yearly Meeting is taking part in that call, growing the elder capacity throughout our yearly meeting; offering and arranging spiritual accompaniment for people in clerking and other demanding roles; and holding the plenaries of Annual Session in prayer.

We have now offered a total of five eldering workshops on zoom for monthly meetings, adding Davis and Redwood Forest this year. We continue to be encouraged by the active engagement and positive feedback from the participants. We expect to continue offering these workshops in the coming year and are hopeful that we will expand our offering to Meetings in the Southern Quarter as well. So monthly meetings, we await your invitation!

In early spring we were delighted to hold our yearly retreat in person at Rocky Knoll, the home of Doug Hamm and Dorothy Henderson. We were able to hold several hybrid sessions with Chamba, Valerie and Robin joining us on zoom. Those of us present were grateful for the hospitality not only at Rocky Knoll, and the Bishops, but at the home of Susan Hopkins who offered her guest house for two retreatants. In our retreat we were able to deepen our relationships with each other and take the time to wrestle with eldering issues that our once-a-month subcommittee meetings don't allow.. And importantly, returning to an in-person retreat meant (for most of us) the communal act of indulging in the requisite M and M peanuts.

Our retreat is bearing fruit for the coming year as we expand our support for the ongoing eldering in the yearly meeting; respond to requests for elder support outside of our yearly meeting; and deepen our faithfulness in this work with each other. We have begun to consider how to reclaim what it means to elder as we consider creating a new workshop.

In our workshops we have frequently been asked how to support meetings and committees when Friends act or speak in ways that are hurtful to others. How can we speak hard truths with love in ways that lead to repairing community and relationships? Or maybe the question is how do we bring God into the difficult areas and seek Truth together? We are in the planning stages of a second workshop for our monthly meetings that will allow us to wrestle with these questions in community. We look forward to the coming year for the challenges and gifts it will bring.

The Eldering Subcommittee members are:

Gordon Bishop, Grass Valley; Elaine Emily, Strawberry Creek; Valerie Nuttman, Santa Cruz; Mica Estrada, Strawberry Creek; Nancy Wilkinson, Strawberry Creek; Chamba Cooke, Grass Valley; Paul Harris and Dinah Bachrach, Redwood Forest; Robin Durant (Ministry Liaison), Orange Grove; and Dorothy Henderson, Grass Valley. Clerk;

Respectfully submitted,
Dorothy Henderson, Clerk