

Ministry Committee Report to Annual Session 2022 Pacific Yearly Meeting

The future of the yearly meeting

What is the future of our yearly meeting, the future of Quakerism in our region? We read in the state of the meeting reports of many (though not all) meetings that continue to shrink and age, with diminished energy for volunteering in meeting positions. Our Nominating Committee tells us how hard it is to find volunteers for all our positions. What are we called to do as a yearly meeting? Are we being called to do less? Or to do things differently from how they have been done in the past? Where is the yearly meeting headed? How is it changing; how do we want it to change? What's it for? Where is the energy? The Ministry committee has holds these questions in our hearts and minds, and we bring them to you as a hybrid interest group at this year's annual gathering.

Racial Justice

It has been clear to us that one area where Spirit has been at work among us is in our internal racial justice work. Working with our Racial Justice Subcommittee we have become further sensitized to the unintended harm that has been happening in our midst. At last year's annual session the Subcommittee presented a carefully contained process for "step one" of addressing potential harm in plenary sessions, the step of identifying unwarily hurtful speech, breaking the silence and opening the possibility for change. We saw people then taking this step into meeting for worship with messages about speech that is hurtful to people of color.. We found that there can be a lot of discomfort for white people in the listening to such messages. Can we find a way forward to stop harm that has been happening in our midst through unaware blindness and respect for norms of silence and comfortable "unity"? Can we trust that stopping such harm, hearing such truths, will draw us together in deeper love, in the sacred spaces we create?

We think it is possible for God/Spirit/our divine nature/Higher Power to make an attempt to correct our errors. This might especially happen in our sacred spaces, where we are most safe, and most deeply rooted in our connection to each other and the divine.

We invite you to join us in Sunday's plenary to explore a deeper understanding of the nature and power of the gatherings we call meeting for worship. We're providing a document about meeting for worship prepared for this year's annual session. [link to document, and audio if available] It concludes, "When we hear a vocal ministry alerting us of harm being done, we treat it as any other vocal ministry, i.e, it is **a message from God delivered through the individual**. We receive it with an open heart and with gratitude, seeking to follow the Spirit's emergent agenda, to understand what just happened."

May discomfort we experience in speaking about and hearing of our engrained errors lead to an outbreak of love amongst us!

Membership in the yearly meeting

Lately we've heard a few inquiries about possible membership in the yearly meeting itself. This idea is appealing in particular to some young Friends, not attached to a monthly meeting, but still identifying as Quaker and to whom their Quaker community is important. If you or someone you know would like to be in this conversation, email clerk Gail Eastwood, eastwood@asis.com.

Hybrid Annual Session

We have, of course, been focusing on the upcoming first of a hybrid annual session. Doing our pieces to the best of our abilities, we still have questions. What will it be like to gather together in a smaller number, after all this time of inability to meet in person? Surely there will be joy! What will it be like for

Ministry Committee Report to Annual Session 2022 Pacific Yearly Meeting

those on Zoom—will they also be drawn up into the building of the Beloved Community? We look forward to harvesting the fruits of this new way of gathering.

Joys and Obstacles

This year we faced the mid-term resignation of three of our valued members. The joy of the midterm appointment of Lee Sisson has helped to bolster our capacity. We still fall short of the usual number to accomplish the tasks of preparing for our annual gathering or the ongoing work of maintaining liaison with other yearly meeting committees and other elements of our yearly meeting. We have been learning how to connect in the spirit despite the distances between us, and there is joy in that connection.

The Ministry Committee consists of the following members:

2023 (2021) Robin Durant, quakerrobin@gmail.com
2023 (2021) Rita Comes Whitney, [ravrita@gmail.com](mailto:ravrta@gmail.com)
2023 (2018) Gail Eastwood, eastwood@asis.com, clerk
2021 (2019) Eric Sabelman, eesabelman@gmail.com
2024 (2021) Jay Cash, jonahcash@gmail.com
2022 (2022) Lee Sisson, sissonlk@guilford.edu
2023 (2021) Stanford Searl, stansearl@gmail.com