

Pacific Yearly Meeting
Ministry Committee
Report to Representative Committee 2024

Overview

- Following the advice of Finance Committee, we recommend returning to a financial assistance model for enabling people with restricted financial means to attend our annual gathering, replacing our experiment with “pay as led.” We are committed to the principle that attendance at our annual gathering should not depend on financial means.
- We continue to seek paths toward membership that would serve those who are not served by the monthly meeting membership process. One likely path is for the yearly meeting to take a worship group under its care; details of care of the group and its attendees and membership for attendees would have to be crafted. Email Gail Eastwood eastwood@asis.com if you’re interested in knowing more or participating.
- We laid down the Religious Education Subcommittee assigned to this committee by plenary some years ago.
- We continue to work with our Racial Justice Subcommittee around next steps in our healing journey towards racial justice in our midst.
- We’ll be gearing up the planning for our annual gathering in the coming months, centering around the theme of Transformation.

Financial assistance for our annual gathering

Finance Committee has reported to us unsustainable losses after our two-year trial of “pay as led.” We recommend returning to a financial assistance model to enable people who could not afford to pay the full cost of attendance.

Details of the proposal are still being worked out, but the general outline is that people will be asked to go first to their monthly meetings, applying for assistance from the larger PacYM community if the monthly meeting cannot fulfill the need. We acknowledge that some meetings have lesser financial resources than others and we expect that all monthly meetings will encourage members and attenders to apply, will meet their needs in accordance with their meeting resources, passing the requests on as necessary. The YPCC will handle requests from YAFs without meeting affiliation; Ministry Committee will be responsible for administering funds requested by others. Costs at Whittier College, the selected location for PacYM 2024, will be dramatically lower than Mount Madonna (the location of PacYM for the past two years) which will hopefully enable us all to navigate the finances in accordance with our equality testimony.

Direct Membership in the Yearly Meeting

We are aware that our monthly meeting model of membership does not serve all of us. Factors include distance from a monthly meeting, mobile lives especially of younger Friends, mobility and health limitations, membership held in a meeting that is diminishing to the point of not being viable as a meeting. One likely path to membership we support is for the yearly meeting to take a worship group of such Friends (perhaps virtual) under its care. Our *Faith and Practice* allows this. *Faith and Practice* does not flesh out how the processes normally handled by a monthly meeting whose care a worship group is under would work for such a worship group. Most likely, membership, marriage, clearness committees, anchor committees and so forth, would be delegated to Ministry, which could appoint a subcommittee for the care of the worship group. We will bring a proposal, once formed, to plenary. In the meantime, we welcome your thoughts, and invite expressions of interest, as well as your thoughts about what might work for you and/or people in your circle.

Religious Education Subcommittee

Several years ago, the yearly meeting laid down the Religious Education for Children Committee because Nominating was unable to constitute a functioning committee. The work of the committee was assigned to a to-be-developed subcommittee of Ministry Committee, adding adult religious education to the charge. Ministry Committee has been unable to constitute a functioning subcommittee for this broad charge, so we are laying the effort down.

In the meantime, other avenues of religious education for adults have opened up through Zoom offerings both within our yearly meetings (from yearly meeting committees and from individual meetings reaching out to others) and in the broader Quaker world. We don't see this working for children, JYMers or young adults, who for the most part require in-person contact. Children's Program Committee and the Youth Programs Committee have picked up on some of this work.

Racial Justice and More

Our Racial Justice Subcommittee brought to the yearly meeting the first step in racial healing, a process for bringing to attention the harm being done in our midst to people of color. We then saw people with other identities—disabled, LGBTQ+, mentally ill—coming to our committee with their awareness of harm inflicted. We have started to realize the insidious harm done to the community through the unawareness of harm to people of color and others. We have an inkling of the power of deep listening in sacred space to begin the work of healing of such harm. What step comes next in our journey toward healing? We seek a transformation that illuminates the love amongst us.

Preparation for annual session

We have studied and continue to study the thoughtful comments left for us on the evaluation survey. Many good practical suggestions will help us with the planning

for this year's gathering—thanks to all who contributed. (And it's not too late to weigh in!) We hear a longing for more focus on the life of the spirit.

As we settle into planning the many facets of the gathering, we may be looking around for people to take on specific tasks. Putting on an event of this size at a new location is always a challenge, takes a good team to iron out all the issues that arise before and during the gathering.

Some of the other topics before us

We continue to give attention to a variety of other matters, including

- Simplifying and deepening business at yearly meeting.
- Focus on spiritual development and fellowship at the gathering, including the Zoom community.
- How to make our representative system work, when numerous meetings don't send representatives to our gatherings.
- Assimilating and responding to the fact that we have meetings on our roles that seem to be disappearing, some that don't appear to have enough energy to lay themselves down.

Committee members: Barbara Babin, Rita Comes Whitney, Gail Coonan, Gail Eastwood (clerk), Paul Jolly, Kathryn Neale Manalo, Lee Sisson

Report submitted by Gail Eastwood