

Pacific Yearly Meeting
Peace and Social Order Committee
Report to RepCom 2024

2023-2024 has been a busy year for the Peace and Social Order Committee (PSO) committee. We have met monthly, planning and implementing interest groups for Annual Session 2023 and beyond, looking forward towards Annual Session 2024, continuing our project of collecting and disseminating minutes of concern from monthly meetings, and collaborating with the Subcommittee on Racial Justice.

In 2023, we sponsored three interest groups at Annual Session. “Finding Friends in Unlikely Places” was presented by Bobby Trice of the Friends Committee on National Legislation. “Finding Your Voice, Building Relationships, and Changing the World” featured a panel of FCNL Advocacy Team members and FCNL staff, speaking about the work of the Advocacy Teams. Presenters from the American Friends Service Committee spoke on “AFSC’s work addressing state violence in California communities.” Additionally, in April we sponsored a three-hour workshop offered by Shannon Frediani on “Quaker Spirituality and Somatic Practices,” and in September we sponsored a three-hour workshop offered by Bobby Trice of FCNL, entitled “Listening in Tongues: Skills for Engaging Disagreement from a Quaker Perspective.”

Our PSO Committee is in unity to extend the present experiment for minutes of concern for two more years. At Annual Session, 2022, a two-year extension of our experiment in gathering minutes of concern from monthly meetings, disseminating them throughout PYM, and putting them on the PSO page of the PYM website was approved. At Annual Session 2024, the 2022 extension of the initial two-year experimental period will expire, and the Peace and Social Order Committee is in unity that the experiment should again be extended for two years. The goal of this initiative is to improve communication among monthly meetings regarding matters of peace and social order, as well as to avoid lengthy wordsmithing in plenary sessions during Annual Session. Meetings are currently submitting minutes of concern using the experimental process. The procedure for sharing minutes among monthly meetings and on the PYM website has been spelled out in the announcements to monthly meetings. We continue to consider how we can best encourage monthly meetings to address concerns regarding peace and social order, to share their initiatives with us, and to consider minutes that have been formulated and submitted by other meetings.

We are in the process of identifying speakers and topics to propose for interest groups for Annual Session 2024. We have been joined in our meetings by Lawrence Alderson and Suzy Cervantes of the Racial Justice Network of Southern CA Quarterly Meeting, who have proposed co-sponsoring a session with PSO. We will again be sponsoring a two-part

workshop by Shannon Frediani in April, entitled: “Quaker Spirituality and Resilience Practices.”

We have proposed that one way to expand awareness of peace and social justice issues at Annual Session would be to allow Quaker organizations such as FCNL, FCLCA, AFSC, Quaker Earthcare Witness, etc. to host tables where materials could be set out for Friends to consider as time allows. Several details remain to be decided, e.g.: Assuming that the PSO committee identifies the organizations that want to host a table, who will be responsible for the on-site logistics (setting up and taking down the tables, assigning tables to organizations, etc.)? How many tables are feasible in the available space at Whittier College? Since it is uncertain how many committee members will be present in person, we need clarity on these issues before we begin inviting organizations to apply.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Guthrie, co-clerk

PSO Committee: Brian Johnston, John Murphy, Michele Shields, and co-clerks Vicki Carroll and Linnea Hanson.