

332th Annual Sessions
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Held at Arch Street Meeting House
Friday, July 27, 2012 Morning Session

The 332nd Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends reconvened at 10:00 a.m., Friday, July 27, 2012 at the Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The announced theme of our 2012 Sessions is "Living the Holy Experiment."

1. Clerk Thomas Swain (Middletown MM, Concord Quarter) introduced himself and asked those at the clerk's table to introduce themselves. They included Jada Jackson (Trenton MM and Burlington Worship Group) Rising Clerk; Steve Olshevski (Radnor MM) and Sallie Jones (Birmingham MM) alternate clerks; Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia MM) General Secretary of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting; Jane Keller (Pennsdale MM) recording clerk and Jim Herr (Lancaster MM) assistant recording clerk. The clerk introduced transcriber Lori Stefanowicz.

Visitors Paul and Albertine Arora of Amsterdam MM, Netherlands YM were welcomed.

2. The clerk announced a change in the agenda. This morning we will discuss the Faith and Practice Revision and the report from the Sessions Planning Group. In the afternoon, the agenda will include the Treasurer's report, the 2013 Budget and the Interim Meeting report (6.7.8)

3. Sallie Jones presented the epistle from the Religious Society of Friends in Norway. Their gathering was held May 25-28, 2012. The theme was Spiritual Gifts: Building Community. Thomas Swain attended and brought sympathy and greetings. The epistle is attached.

4. Friends then entered a period of silent worship with the focus on the query "How does God call us to minister in the World? What are the challenges?"

5. After worship, Friends returned to our business agenda. Martha Bryans (Uwchlan MM, Downingtown) clerk of the committee for the Revision of Faith and Practice addressed the body. Members of the committee were invited to the facing bench. The work of these members, Annette Benert (Lehigh Valley MM), Howard Cell (Germantown MM), Joan Broadfield (Chester MM), Ann Yasuhara (Princeton MM), and Gretchen Castle (Doylestown MM) and of former members was noted with gratitude. The work is still in the drafting and testing stage. It was noted that the committee will post on the web the versions in the present *Faith and Practice* alongside the revisions for Friends' comparison, but that will not be done until the drafts have been brought before the body.

Joan Broadfield read the one-page draft of "The Light Within" (Draft 5.31.12) to the body. The draft is attached.

Howard Cell called Friends' attention to specific queries for discussion of the draft. Friends picked partners to consider the queries. The written answers were collected by the committee. An e-mail address will be posted on the PYM website for other responses. A Friend expressed appreciation for this most important work.

6. The Clerk called attention to the report from the Sessions' Planning Group. Ken Park (Providence MM) clerk of the Sessions Planning Working Group, called the members of the committee to the facing bench. They include Lane Taylor (Plumstead MM); Paula Cell (Germantown MM); Howard Cell (Germantown MM); Hollister Knowlton (Evergreen Worship Group); Emma Leibman (Chestnut Hill MM); Triscia Coscia (Yardley MM); Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Chestnut Hill MM); and Jocelyn Park (Providence MM). Margaret Mansfield (Mt. Holly MM) and the clerk of the Young Friends Committee were thanked in absentia. Nancy Gibbs (Valley MM), Director of the Arch Street Meeting House and her staff were thanked for their help with this year's planning. The work of Clerk Thomas Swain and Alternate Clerk Sallie Jones were also noted.

We need to determine the location and the date for 2013. A short form will be sent out to gather Friends' input. We were asked to consider opening our Meetings and Quarters to traveling ministers.

Cost of Sessions came under discussion. The Sessions Planning Groups recommended to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting that the general cost of convening Annual Sessions, i.e. all costs other than accommodations and meals, be covered through the General Fund.

The costs this year were detailed. The cost of using First Reformed Church for the children's programs, the shuttle buses, the transcriber, rented chairs and space, technology and registration, financial assistance, and other items was approximately \$30,000. Children did attend for free thanks to a grant from the Education Funding Group. The price of being at DeSales is about the same. All the space and technology are already there making set up easier there.

Friends discussed the recommendation. Why pass these expenses on to all Friends? Sessions are important for in-reach and outreach and we should make it possible for as many people to come as possible. FGC tries to offer more scholarships and has a first-time attenders matching grant available. FGC matches what the individual's Meeting offers. A Friend pointed out that the first-time attenders and guests do have their fee paid here. Various costs were compared between holding Sessions in Philadelphia and at an institution like DeSales University. Many Friends felt that encouraging attendance at Annual Session is a priority.

Clerk tested the minute for approval; there was considerable support but not unity. The Clerk asked to hold over the minute. Friends approved beginning with this discussion at the meeting for business at 1:30 this afternoon.

7. The minutes were approved.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Keller, Recording Clerk
Jim Herr, assistant Recording Clerk