

332nd Annual Sessions
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Held at Arch Street Meeting House
Thursday, July 26, 2012 Morning Session

The 332nd Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends convened Thursday morning, July 26, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. at the Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The announced theme of our 2012 Sessions is "Living the Holy Experiment."

1. At about 10:10 the Clerk Thomas Swain (Middletown MM Concord Quarter) greeted us and told us that, as we are living the Holy Experiment, we don't know exactly what we are doing, but we are sure we know we will find our way in the Spirit. Thomas introduced himself. Others at the clerk's table introduced themselves, rising clerk Jada Jackson (Trenton MM and Burlington Meetinghouse Worship Group), alternate clerks Sallie Jones (Birmingham MM) and Steve Olshevski (Radnor MM); recording clerk Jim Herr (Lancaster MM), assisted by Jane Keller (Pennsdale MM), and General Secretary Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia MM).
2. Clerk introduced a possible Epistle Committee, Richard Morse (Harrisburg MM), Deb Lyons, Paul Joyce Collins Williams (Swarthmore MM), Albertine Arora (Amsterdam MM, Netherlands YM). Meeting approved this Committee. Clerk proposed the written epistle be presented on Saturday evening, with time for changes before approval on Sunday.
3. Sallie Jones read an incoming epistle from Netherlands Yearly Meeting. They were rejoicing at the approval of a statement at the World Council of Churches that war is illegal, doing away with the concept of a "just war." The Meeting saw this as a demonstration that the still small voice of the traditional peace churches was being heard. They also called for their government to stop being pro-Israel or pro-Palestinian, but choose to be pro-justice. The Meeting heard a report from the FWCC Sixth World Gathering with great appreciation.
4. Visitors from other Yearly Meetings included Paul and Albertine Arora (Monthly Meeting of Amsterdam, Netherlands Yearly Meeting), Winifred Walker Mecherly (Milwaukee MM, Northern YM), Barry Crossno, General Secretary of FGC (Dallas MM, South Central YM), Terrence Williams, incoming Dean of Studies at Pendle Hill, Harvey Gillman (Brighton Meeting, Britain YM), Joyce Johnson Rouse (Nashville MM, Upper Appalachia YM), Tim Varner, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), Loretta Holloway, director of advancement at Pendle Hill.
5. Clerk laid before us the following query for our consideration: "How does God call us to minister in the world?" We heard a response that called us to appreciate that as we recognize God *does* call us, we can best serve each other, the world, and God's Kingdom or the community of the Spirit. Another Friend suggested that the way we hear God's call is through that of God in each of us. Another Friend urged us to listen to our children and find inspiration through them. To give an example of the miracle of Quaker

business process, a Friend told us about Iowa Yearly Meeting's long-term struggle with consideration of a minute on same sex marriage which, over a period of two years, found acceptance. Another Friend said that the Call will transform—it is impossible to answer the call from God and remain the same. A Friend suggested the way to answer the Call is to share our divine gifts. And with this, the Clerk took up the business of Meeting.

6. The recording clerks proposed that, immediately after the meeting approves a decision, they should read back a brief statement of the decision for approval. Full minutes of the meeting will be read at the end of the business session. The gathered Friends will be asked to propose substantive changes, after which the minutes will be approved. Editorial changes and corrections will be presented to the recording clerk following the rise of meeting.

7. Paula Cell (Chestnut Hill MM), clerk of Nominating Committee, referred to the report of her committee (attached). She introduced and thanked members of her committee, some of whom were present. The committee will consider whether its charge shall include governance of Yearly Meeting, including whether the nominating committee might suggest recommending the Clerk for committees.

Meeting approved the proposed nominations for new appointment, reappointments, and resignation to Yearly Meeting Standing Committees and external organizations. **(Minute approved.)**

7. Paula then presented their recommendations for the service of Rising Clerk and Clerk, number of Alternate Clerks and Recording Clerks, and term limits. The primary change is in the selection of Rising Clerk for a one-year term and then a 3-year non-renewable term-limit for the Clerk. In response to a question to the Clerk, Thomas responded that it has taken him six years to learn to be Clerk. However, he did feel the Rising Clerk is well prepared after a year to be Clerk and that a three-year term will be quite adequate. In response to a question of the difference between a Rising Clerk and Alternate Clerk, Jada Jackson said as Rising Clerk she has been much more aware of structuring her life to take on the responsibility of being Clerk. When a Friend asked about an unexpected vacancy, Paula suggested the Nominating Committee could put forth one of the names of the Alternate Clerks to Interim Meeting for temporary appointment. A Friend urged us to recognize that the Committee has followed the Spirit in their proposal as presented. Clerk suggested that the body would still have the ability to change the rules here presented if needed. Gretchen Castle, previous Yearly Meeting Clerk, gave her full endorsement of a three year term.

The body approved the first five points of the Nominating Committee report, with the added statement that we have flexibility in extending term limits when necessary. Friends were able to approve the remainder of the points from the report, which included appointments. **(Minute approved.)**

All of the terms will be defined as beginning at the rise of these sessions of Yearly

Meeting. In our case, this is the first of August and ending on July 31. Clerk thanked Paula Cell and the Nominating Committee.

8. These minutes were read and approved.

9. We adjourned, intending to meet at 1:30 this afternoon.

Jim Herr, Recording Clerk