

Meeting at the Corner of Wisdom and Power

A Keynote Panel with:

- *Paul Christiansen, Eastside Friends Meeting*
- *Zane Freewyn, Multnomah Monthly Meeting*
- *Hazel Jordan, Olympia Friends Meeting*
- *Adam Billen, South Seattle Friends Meeting*
- *Jane Snyder, Multnomah Monthly Meeting*
- *Jerry Graville, Lopez Island Monthly Meeting*

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Paul Christiansen:

Good afternoon, Friends. The title of the panel discussion today is: “Meeting at the Corner of Wisdom and Power.” That probably takes a little explanation. Some years ago, I was trying to meet somebody I had never met before. We were trying to connect at the University District farmer’s market in Seattle. Some of you know the place. We’d never met each other before, but we were introduced by a “capital F” Friend. And we couldn’t find each other for a long time because I was standing outside the market, waiting for this person to show up, and this person was circling around inside the market, waiting for me to come and find them. But eventually, we almost simultaneously thought we should look someplace else. And we found each other.

Somebody is chuckling in the back of the room. I think they know how this story turns out. It was a life-changing meeting for me. I thought of that story as we were preparing for this panel because I’ve had a vision for a little while of older Friends and younger Friends not quite connecting. And it goes something like this: The older Friends really, really want to make the younger Friends welcome, so they are holding open a parking space for the younger Friends to pull in and park. And they’re looking around and they’re saying, “Where are they? Where are these younger Friends? We saved them a space.”

Meanwhile, the younger Friends have arrived, and they’re looking at the older Friends and they’re saying “Do you know how expensive cars are? We can’t afford cars. The planet definitely can’t afford cars. Why did you save us a parking spot? We brought our bikes. Where’s the bike rack? Where’s the bicycle infrastructure?”

But what about the wisdom and the power? Over and over again, talking with older Friends and younger Friends, I have heard the same thing. And remember: this is from both groups. That they feel that their group has a lot of wisdom. They have so much to teach the other Friends. But the other group has all the power. That’s both groups.

Older Friends look at younger Friends and say “How much life and vitality and strength you have that we no longer have! We’re old. You are so young and vibrant. You have all this power.”

The younger Friends look at the older Friends and say “You decide what the meeting does. You tell us what to do. And if we say, ‘Could we try this instead?’ you say, ‘No.’ You have all the power.”

I hope that this discussion among Friends of many ages will help open that up, will help us to see that everybody has wisdom and everybody has power. And it’s going to work a lot better if we can meet at the corner of wisdom and power and actually find each other and go forward from there.

We are joined by the three Friends in the room, and we are also joined by two Friends online, Adam Billen and Hazel Jordan. We’re going to do this in age order, meaning, I am starting with Zane, the youngest, and we’re going to work our way up.

Please hold your questions. In the classroom, I teach about three levels of listening. At one level, you just listen. The next level up, you listen and then you make sure you’ve understood, but you don’t contribute anything yourself. At the third level, you listen, you make sure you’ve understood, and then you respond. We’re going to start off operating at level one. And I will note that It’s really hard to listen and not respond. But healthy relationships, sometimes that’s absolutely what needs to happen. And we are in relationship, Friends.

We’ll start with this first query. Panelists, near and far: What do you wish other generations of Friends knew about your experiences as a Quaker? And about how you see your own generation’s experience?

Zane Freewyn:

Hello, my name is Zane. I am a member of Multnomah Monthly Meeting, and Paul has asked me to come here today as the youngest on the panel. I am very grateful because it is showing that people have been listening after we came forth with what we felt were some problems we faced last year – and in previous years.

Younger Friends, like me and Hazel, have had very different experiences as Junior Friends, because of COVID, but very similar experiences with how we have interacted with and been a part of the greater meeting. I personally feel like the Junior Friends have had a lot of confusion and lack of knowledge about the way Junior Friends works, that people like Paul and Mim have helped us get through. They don’t have all the answers, but they have supplied us with a good number of them. But we don’t have someone who is an older Friend, who has given answers to us. Part of that is because we don’t have as much of a connection with older Friends, but we also haven’t been looking past Mim and Paul for answers.

Because of COVID, the Junior Friends have not had as much of a community around each other as before. During COVID, only four of us attended the online Annual Session. We haven’t been able to help each other as much because we haven’t been there for each other. And we are also unsure of, not only how to be there for each other, but how to reach out and ask for help.

We have had many struggles between generations because we don’t connect in a similar fashion. As Paul mentioned the parking space earlier, we have things like social media. We have knowledge, and we know how to find information online. And with that, we learn to

ask the computer for help, and we don't ask other people as much. And because of details like this, we grow separate from each other. Mainly generational differences.

I have seen many similarities between different generations, but the closer they are, the more they have had in common, and the more they are able to communicate and relate. I think we need to find a way to communicate and relate, and with that, it will bring a greater sense of community.

Hazel Jordan:

I'm zooming in from Maryland right now. When I think about my personal experiences as a Quaker, I feel like I have a lot of different experiences. I was raised in Olympia Friends Meeting. We had a consistent youth group at that time, and I had friends that I'd see there that I still call friends, who would go to yearly and quarterly meetings together. And we had consistent support from our meeting. We had a variety of different elders from different generations who we would interact with. I also got the opportunity to go to FGC, and I clerked there, and had a clerking workshop where I learned a lot about Quaker processes and the different ways that clerks can show up for their communities. A younger Friend just texted me today that she was going to clerk for FGC. And that made me so happy – that she has been able to find community in the same communities that I am part of. But it doesn't always work out that way.

I feel like my sense of community and my sense of Quaker process have come from that upbringing, in which I felt, as a child, that I was surrounded by loving elders and treated with respect and given a space to become myself. And as I've grown, that relationship with elders has changed. There are ones who I feel maybe more connected to and I can look at memories with rose colored glasses. But there's also a lot of ways where I want to reach out and support elders who have taught me and cared for me.

In reflecting on my generation as a whole, I have a lot of interactions with people at my university at Earlham College, where I'm part of Quaker Fellows, and I help lead meetings for worship. Those groups are based off of support and listening to each other. In college meeting for worship, when we have planning meetings, we spend the whole time listening, asking questions. Learning from each other, coming from our shared values of loving, tender kindness. Showing up for each other as a whole and creating a space where we feel welcome and heard.

I think if I had a takeaway that I'd want other Friends to know, it's to not be afraid to make friends. And to start with simple connections. Thank you.

Adam Billen:

Hi everyone. I'm Adam, from South Seattle Friends Meeting, but I'm zooming in now from Washington, DC, where I go to university. As I was reflecting on this query, I was trying to remember my experiences from high school among Friends. Because I have largely drifted away from Quaker communities. Not intentionally, but just kind of by circumstance. So, I thought I would just go through my brief history with Quakerism describe my experience.

So, like Hazel, I grew up in South Seattle Friends Meeting. When I was young-young, like elementary school, baby, toddler, there were structured spaces for people my age. First Day School, or even literally day care. I was there intentionally for a reason. But as I drifted out

of middle school, that space wasn't there anymore at my monthly meeting. At the same time, I started finding really tight spaces among Friends at quarterly meeting, yearly meeting, and at camp with Junior Friends. That's what kept me tied to Quakerism. I wasn't going to weekly meeting anymore. But I was spending something like 18 or 20 full days of my year as a busy high schooler with Quakers, which is a lot for someone that age. Which is what kept me tied to the community.

But then as I drifted out of high school, I think a bunch of challenges arose, and they are some of the reasons that you don't see a lot of young people directly following me. The fact that I'm living far away from Seattle, means I'm not at yearly meeting now. I'm in college; I'm working for the first time – so I'm busier in that sense. So that's kind of how I drifted away a little bit. There's a Quaker meeting on my campus, but only during the fall, like once a week, and usually it's only about two people.

But reflecting on my time in high school and being with other Quakers, I think maybe 80-95% of young Quakers my age were raised as Quakers. Probably many older Quaker also grew up in the faith, but I think, among young people, it's a lot higher. And I think that there is something unique about that. Even now, even though I'm not in the Quaker community as much, those values that I was raised in inform everything in my life. Everyone in my life knows I'm Quaker, and how that affects how I'm in relationship with them, and how I'm in community with them. I think that's something unique about young Quakers who grew up in the faith but have perhaps drifted away from it. That is, even if we aren't in active community, those values are still a driving force for our lives.

And the value that I see in older Quakers is that, to put it simply, you guys have been Quaker longer. And you guys have solved more problems as a community together, answered more questions in ways that we just haven't had the time to yet. And I think we saw that value a lot in Junior Friends. We would always have an adult Quaker to turn to. For a long time, it was Paul. Having someone there to turn to when we were facing something for the first time was of huge value. Maybe we had the spiritual grounding and the values grounding to do worship sharing together, but to have someone there who had gone through some particular thing before, and could talk to us about how they had processed it with other Quakers, that was of huge value. I think that's something immensely valuable for young people.

In terms of how I want to engage with that going forward, I'd really just talk with older Quakers, just normally, like you guys talk to each other. I think a lot of times, we miss each other by feeling like we're thinking about different things or different big questions, but really, I think we're all coming to faith and spirituality to explore and think about the same things. I think if we can just connect on that basic level, that would be nice. I feel like sometimes, older Quakers were missing me on that level. For example, sometimes at yearly meeting, an older Quaker would tell me, "We don't do this this way," and I'd feel like they were making an assumption that I didn't understand the basics of the faith, and I felt miffed. Older Friends could keep in mind that I've been Quaker for 21 years, and I've got those basics already. We really want to connect with you guys on the level that you are connecting with each other – as part of that normal, larger community.

Jane Snyder:

I'm the first person speaking here who was not raised in Quakerism. Joe and I came to Quakers 52 years ago, right after we got married, because neither of us wanted to continue in the way we had been brought up. The things that attracted me to the Quaker meeting were that I could see the peace testimony – this was during the Vietnam era – I could see the peace activism, and that was important to me. I could see two different forms of equality. First, the testimony on equality that all people are equal regardless of their race and other factors, but also because every person can receive wisdom from the Divine directly into their heart. That's another form of equality, that helps us understanding our process and our form of leadership. If the young person who's new can receive the information directly into their heart, they don't need to have a lot of stuff explained to them.

And when I started taking on positions of leadership in meeting – I was clerk in my mid-twenties – nobody gave me a bunch of spoken information. But, when I looked out from the clerk's table, I could see several beloved Friends with more experience holding the meeting, and holding me, and I felt like that was respect for the equality of my ability to understand how things worked. And I deeply, deeply appreciated it.

Of course, I made a lot of mistakes, but people were super understanding and nice about it. The first time I clerked annual session, I was 31 years old and breast feeding and everything went absolutely crazy that year. It was the year we were renting from conservative Baptists, and they didn't like our welcoming policy towards gays and lesbians, and we essentially got kicked out. But the whole process was one in which Friends held it in the Light though all the extra meetings we had. We weren't in unity as North Pacific Yearly Meeting, so there was that piece of the work to do, and then there was work we had to do with the Baptists. I felt upheld to the extent that anyone could be upheld in circumstances like that, and was very grateful.

Jerry Graville:

Hello, I'm Jerry Graville from Lopez Island Friends Meeting, and this has been great so far. I really appreciate hearing from everybody, and I really appreciate this opportunity.

I grew up in Junction City, about 45 miles from here. Small town. Community has always been really important to me, very much a part of who I am, and what I'm doing in the world.

My wife and I moved to Seattle in 1981, and after trying a couple of churches, we landed on University Friend's Meeting. As a lot of people have said, it was like coming home. There are still a lot of people here, as I look around, who were there then, and that place and this community are so dear to my heart. There's just been so much growing through my own life with Friends, from my late 20s until now this year, I just turned 70. So, it's like wow, where did that time go?

But what was really significant to me was having people all around in our meeting. And then quarterly and yearly were that way for me and the family, too. We had kids who were born in '81, twins who grew up in this yearly meeting, and now they're 42. . . So, a lot of the connection that I had with the yearly and quarterly, I also saw through their lens. They would talk about experiences similar to what some of the younger Friends have said here

today, about how important the community was to them. So, it was important to us to give them that experience as much as possible.

I just am so honored and moved to have made this spiritual journey as part of this faith community. It hasn't always been easy. There have been some struggles, some hard stuff. But there's been this real connection of honoring each other, of being close to each other, challenging each other. And, again, seeing it through the eyes of our kids as they went through all of those phases, and connecting with other parents. That was a huge part for us, other kids who were the same age as ours, and their parents were a part of yearly meeting, quarterly meeting, and our faith community. It was a real strong way to connect.

My wife and I, our family, have had the privilege of being in this yearly meeting, mostly this quarter, and having moved around a bit. We were in Seattle at University Meeting, and then we moved up to Bellingham for five years. Then we went to Stehekin - very remote - at the end of Lake Chelan for two years. And then we moved to Lopez and we've been on Lopez for twenty-six years. Each of those places has been so important to us because we chose a lot of those places because there was a Quaker community there. Except for Stehekin. But that contact, that context, and that ability to kind of ground, recreate communities as we moved over the years, that is what really kind of sustained and enlivened and enriched me so much in my spiritual journey.

Now it's our first time back after a couple of years of COVID - and COVID really hit that sense of community. It's so nice to be back here and see a lot of familiar faces. We were just talking at meals a couple of times about how important it is to be in person again. Zoom was great, but you didn't get a lot of that connected stuff. I like our theme this year, "Connecting and Reconnecting The Beloved Community." My Quaker experience has been very, very rich. That connection that we've had through the years, through the different stages of life, it really has been a solid, beautiful place.

One Friend told me once, not that long ago, when we talked about our history and all that I just described, they said "You know, you guys create community wherever you are. As you move, you create community." I was like - Wow, what a compliment. But I think that community is what you put into it, what you draw from, and the connection that you can make with people, that really enliven, enrich, and nourish everyone who comes.

Jane Snyder:

I would like to go back to the part of the conversation about parking lots versus bike racks. We have three daughters who are now, 40, 41, and 43. They grew up in North Pacific Yearly Meeting, and none of them participate now. And we're not the only ones who have a story like that. When I go through the list of Friends in Bridge City Meeting, I count about thirty individuals in my daughters' age group who don't come to meeting. Some participate in other religious. But most don't participate in the life of any religious body.

Joe and I just had a unique opportunity to be with some faith leaders sharing on that topic with Desmond Tutu's daughter. And she 'fessed up right away. She said "I have three heathen children." So, what is it about the parking lot and the bike rack? Our kids will tell you one of the things that keeps them away from religion is student loan debt, because most people in the younger generation are working every weekend. So, one thing we could

do – if we could wave a magic wand – would be to eliminate student loan debt, which might make a difference for our community building.

But I think another aspect of this is that maybe some of the younger people have felt like they weren't trusted by the older people to assume leadership. I'm not sure about that, but that could be part of it.

Of course, the way Quakers traditionally build community is through committees. When we don't have a hierarchical leadership structure and we get our work done with committees, that does build community.

I'm hoping that we can find ways to get some power from the bike rack aspect of our community, and listen to the bike rack aspect of our community, and not feel obliged to tell them a bunch of stuff.

Adam Billen:

I think, when I was in the bracket of Friends who were young enough to be in Junior Friends or Central Friends, I always felt a tension between really wanting to spend a lot of time in community with other young Quakers we were there with and spending time with the larger meeting. Being in community with other young Friends was such a specific, unique experience that didn't exist in the rest of our lives. Having a space so intentionally structured and grounded in a shared set of values and spirituality was so special. I hadn't experienced anything like it and I haven't since. So, there's a tension between wanting to be in that space with other young people that are going through the same things that you are going through, that are asking the same questions as you, and that are doing it through the same modality is really valuable. And there's a tension between that and wanting to engage with the larger community. And knowing that the larger community really wanted to engage with us. I think we did always feel that – a really genuine want among the larger community to engage with us. Almost to a point where it was hard for us to sometimes choose between taking this limited time we had with each other and engaging in with the larger community. I don't know if we ever found the perfect balance or not, or if there is one, but that's the tension that I felt at that age.

And I think that as we drift out – something that I've heard particularly on the question of committees and leadership – I've heard from some twenty-to thirty-year-old Friends who haven't been active in the faith for some time, that they are still being asked to be on committees, even if they haven't been attending that meeting. And I think, for them, I've heard that that sometimes feels like the opposite of welcoming. Like, if they're not active in the community, then being asked to take up additional responsibilities almost pushes them away. I think there's value in being on a committee, but I think that it's hard, and it has to be people that you know would want to take up that responsibility, and are already in that community with you.

Hazel Jordan:

I think, along with Adam, most of my Quaker communities have been somewhat built for me, structured for me, and we've been given guidance from elders. And now, in this very mobile state of life that I'm in right now, building community with Friends means building community with the people I'm around, wherever I am, and taking those Quaker values

instilled in me wherever I am. And I hope that, one day, someone will tell me that I build community wherever I go.

I think, when I was younger and before I had come into a sense of my own spiritual beliefs, Quakerism for me was just community. It was just a place where I felt loved, where I had these friends, and there was so much joy there together. And I think that basis is a great place to move forward from, maybe into tackling these issues or thinking about communities and how do we build structure. The starting place has to be in building connections and reaching out to each other. One of the things I've come to realize recently is how much food can be a community builder, making meals together. And growing food together. And being able to bring food from different cultures and have a shared meal. It's like a safe place where people can learn about each other and be open and just have so much joy. Really connect in a joyful place, that's what I think is a really good starting place.

And we need to start from a place that gives back. Like others here have said, time and money create barriers to engaging in faith communities, feeling like so much burden is placed on us by the system we live in. Reciprocal care isn't built into that system. So, it takes extra effort to step out of that system and care for each other, or join a community, or actively build community. It takes a lot to do all of that work. So, I think that people have to be able to see something that is given back to them, when we want them to put in all of that effort. If we are engaging in a community, we want to be able to see what is being given back to us. And I think that that is true for any generation of person.

And what do I wish to do to build community? Just to be there in person with all of you. And to see all of the friends that I have made through all the years. Because that person-to-person connection is really palpable.

Zane Freewyn:

I have been able to find community in the quarterly meetings in Washington. So far, I have only been able to go to one, but many Junior Friends attend because they feel like they have a sense of community there. I don't feel like we have as much of a starting place to go off of now. So, we should look outward to the groups that have strong communities. We should let other communities help us.

There are a very different senses of community in annual session, in the quarterly meeting, and in my monthly meeting. For now, I think we should try and start building this community. Even if it doesn't work out, we can always try an idea, then make more ideas and improve them.

As a current Junior Friend, I think that we don't just need to build community with other generations, but also with each other. We've had a lot of struggles recently with COVID, and everything started to fall apart. A lot of the resources and traditions that we used to have, now those have been forgotten or replaced. The pieces of the Junior Friends community we have lost, we can't just create it again. But we can create something different. And I think that creating something different is a good place to start.

Paul Christiansen:

Thank you, panelists. A few things that you said jumped out at me. I heard some young Friends say they feel welcome and heard. I heard one say, "Talk to us like you talk to each other." I heard an older Friend say, "Maybe we shouldn't do much telling 'how to' and lecturing."

Do Friends feel lectured at? Do Friends on the panel feel that they've been condescended to? Do the old folks feel like the young folks are making fun of them behind their backs? Do the young folks feel like they're being put in their place constantly? Do we feel some agism in the room?

Adam Billen:

I don't think I feel like I was – I'm largely talking about my high school years – I don't think I felt lectured at. I think at times I felt like the other person didn't fully understand how much I had already come to a grounding in, that I'd been Quaker for a long time, and that I had those fundamentals down. I felt like there was 100 percent respect for my perspective and my voice and my own spiritual journey, but sometimes there wasn't an expectation that I fundamentally understood things on a logistics-of-worship level. But I wouldn't say that I ever felt lectured at.

Zane Freewyn:

I have been lectured at. It was a while ago. But I have thought about it since then, and I have come to see the format that the information was given to me – being presented to me in a condescending way – it wasn't fun. It wasn't an interesting experience. I didn't learn well from it. But I still need to learn. Junior Friends and Central Friends, we still need to learn. We still need to gain that information from the older Friends. I think part of the reason we sometimes feel lectured at in general is because we remember the one bad time. Because that's how the human mind works. So, we need to find good ways to spread information and teach the younger generations in a kind and caring way. Then I think the general feeling of being lectured at and condescended to wouldn't be around anymore.

Jane Snyder:

I did have a few experiences when I was a lot younger, of having people Quaker-splain to me. But not too many. And the idea that we have the faith that the wisdom and the truth will come directly to each individual has been very important to me.

Jerry Graville:

I think that, like Jane said, when I was younger and new to Quakerism, trying to sort my way through it – I don't think I ever really felt lectured at. But it did happen that if somebody "elderred" me, if they really let me know their perspective, and then if maybe I shared that experience with somebody else, they'd say, "Well, you know that is one person's perspective. That's not necessarily the belief of this whole community." So, that helped me not to take it too personally and to see if there was some learning or wisdom I could gain for myself.

Hazel Jordan:

I'd just like to echo that the individual relationship with the Divine and the individual relationship with faith and how each of us is walking this spiritual path, those cannot be laid down or guided by another person, but they are our own, and they are based off of our own experiences. As much as we can learn from other people – and I have learned from hearing spiritual experiences from other people – the most value I think I've gotten has been from just being open and stumbling through processes and figuring it out.

Paul Christiansen:

Something I noticed in your sharings were the different experiences that different generations have had. Obviously, older Friends did not get hit by COVID in their teens. Jane mentioned debt being a particular problem for young adults today. Just to pick a couple example. But I also heard about some commonalities across generations.

So, hearing these stories, listening to each other, do you think there really are some things that are just plain different between your generations, things that the others just aren't ever going to "get"? Or do you see more commonality?

Hazel Jordan:

I think one difference that piqued my interest was hearing Jane talk about Friends being active with their peace and equality testimonies, and how that really stood out to you. Today, if I introduce myself as a Quaker, no one really knows what I am talking about. They don't think of really active protesters or really standing up in different movements that are happening right now. I think that might be a difference between generations. The way that we protest and the way that those principles are active, those are very different now. I think people are turning towards smaller communities and building support for marginalized groups within their communities rather than . . . well, I don't really know what those protests looked like. I think that that is a difference, but largely I hear similarities. I hear similarities in our values for community, for reaching out to each other, for wanting to have these connections, and similarities in our spiritual values.

Zane Freewyn:

I think there are some similarities between some of our differences. A lot of the older Friends were around during Vietnam, and my generation has a similar problem of violence with guns. So, there's always that similarity. Driving a car and riding a bike – both are transportation, but there are different reasons for each.

Certain things, like new issues in the LGBTQ community, those are things that older Friends can learn more about. And a lot of us who know about it are willing to teach it, as long as you guys are willing to learn. So, we can always learn from each other, as long as we can communicate.

Jane Snyder:

Speaking of communication, let's talk about mobile phones. The old people did not grow up with these. And we're noticing a lot of people these days don't talk to each other, they talk to their phones. That's a difference.

Jerry Graville:

Reflecting on issues in the LGBTQ community . . . I was reflecting on our years in Seattle in the early 80s. Gay rights was a big topic then, and one that became very close to my heart. University Meeting struggled with that for a good while, so there's a bit of history there. And since that time, there have been changes and developments that we're all trying to catch up with and stay on top of. I think it's a healthy challenge for some of us older folks who see ourselves as progressive, and all that . . . There are times when we struggle to really get a handle on some of the newer issues, some of the subtleties of them, and we need to be schooled, need to be enlightened, and need to be taught, so we can come up to where we would like to be.

Adam Billen:

I don't see anything as irreconcilable. Actually, I think almost the opposite. I think it's easy to see the current moment like it's something entirely new, because whatever the current specific thing is, that is new. But these waves of cultural change are waves. Older Friends went through waves of cultural change in their generations, and they have worked through different issues, perhaps in similar ways. And I don't think that whatever the current moment is makes it impossible to see the similarities. Because when I'm however old, I'm sure there will be something that I'm struggling to figure out how to understand what my grandkids are doing. So, yeah. I don't see anything as irreconcilable. I think there's wisdom in what you guys have gone through in your generation, and which can be applied to whatever is happening now. So, waves of progressivism, then backlash, and etc.

Paul Christiansen:

Okay. We do have a little time remaining. Is there anything that folks in the room would like clarified, or would like to hear a little bit more about?

Catherine Spinner:

I'm Catherine Spinner from University Meeting, where we got to welcome Iris and Jerry. What I'd like to know from each of you. . . Adam, you spoke about people not believing that you knew Quaker basics about process and basic Quaker ideas. . . How did you learn those things? As someone who's taught a lot of young people, I'm curious. But I also wonder, as adults coming into the community, was there a formal way you picked up those things, or was it a matter of conversations?

Adam Billen:

I think for me growing up it was First Day School. We had a Quaker who came in and taught things to us slowly. As we grew up, we started doing worship sharing, worship walking, worship discussion as a group and with other Quakers from the meeting. And I think the most formative thing for me was coming into Central Friends and Junior Friends at yearly meeting. Starting to have the opportunities to clerk ourselves, doing it by actually doing it was the most valuable thing. But I don't mean to say that young people don't have more to learn in terms of clerking, etc., from older Friends. I think we want that wisdom.

Doreen Cornwell:

I don't know how many people heard Lauren Brownley's talk at FGC on Wednesday, when she talked about how FCNL right now has these wonderful programs that engage all kinds of youth. And then the youth go home and look up their Quaker meetings, and the experiences they have in the meetings are not what they were getting at FCNL. So, what do people think would be ways to engage new people, to build community? For people who come in from different ages, including people who are young adults and who have had experiences with Quakers outside of meeting?

Jerry Graville:

I guess our experience is a little different. We came to UFM, which one of our largest monthly meetings in our whole yearly meeting. Some people say it's hard to kind of meet people and connect. Well, we came and introduced ourselves when Iris was about six months pregnant, and then four days before they were born, we had found out we were having twins. Then we got up and introduced the twins, and then maybe it was out of pity, but all these people wanted to come up and meet us and talk with us. But the other great thing – and I don't know if other meetings do this, but it was a great thing for us as new people – was newcomers' potluck. They had some people who had been around for a long time and some new people, and they paired them up, and there were maybe eight of us. I remember Betty and Irwin Hogenauer were in our group . . . Talk about somebody who was really inspiring. Irwin was a CO in World War II and was sent to McNeil Island, a federal penitentiary, for his objection to serving in the military. So anyway, he just had stories and experiences to share. It was just amazing. So, those were some of the ways it worked for us that were a little unusual, but very powerful.

Hazel Jordan:

Olympia Monthly Meeting has a craft night in the winter where people can bring crafts that they know how to do, skills that they want to teach people. Everyone makes presents for Solstice Celebrations and that kind of thing. And there was also a young adult potluck for a period of time. I don't know if it's still happening, but it was, I think, very successful. And I really like the buddy system idea and having that one-on-one connection with someone.

Adam Billen:

In Junior Friends, we always started our programs by going back over our guidelines at the start, our Code of Conduct. One important item on there was: "No exclusive activities." And that for me, doing that, within Junior Friends, has totally changed how I engage with people since then. I try to hold that whenever I'm in a new space. Just making sure that nothing is happening that not everyone is actively invited into and hopefully able to do.

Zane Freewyn:

At Multnomah Monthly Meeting, for the Junior Friends, we would go get coffee about once a month. And also, about once a month, we would have a game night on zoom for the Junior Friends and their families. It wasn't made for introducing new people to the meeting, but it's made to maintain the community while we were still dealing with COVID. And it's stuck

around, and it has been one of the few ways I have been able to stay connected to a lot of the Multnomah Junior and Central Friends.

Paul Christiansen:

Alright Friends, we are nearing the end of our time here. Just a final thought. To borrow a phrase that I bet most of you have heard in one context or another: You can't be what you can't see. Jerry, I was struck by what you just said about being paired up with inspiring elders and learning from their example. Because Jane, the reason I thought I might have a chance at being a clerk is because of the story that you told me, that you had clerked the yearly meeting at age thirty-one. I have never seen that. But you told me that you'd done it. So, it can be done. But I had to see it.

So, what are we showing each other? And what opportunities are we giving each other to show, especially people of a different age group? That's a final query for you all. Take it with you. Do with it what you will.