

**Report from Young Adult Friends
Clerks PYM Annual Session 2017**

Based on an email sent from the clerks to the YAF listserv in June 2017

Dear Friends,

We hope this email finds you happy, healthy, and growing in Spirit. As we approach the season of Annual Sessions, we want to share with you our thoughts and experience about our roles as co-clerks, the YAF community, and its relationship with Pacific Yearly Meeting. What we've written below is what we have observed in taking up these roles, both about the YAF community in its current state, and how we envision the future.

Over the past two years that we have served as co-clerks for PYM YAFs, we have worked hard to discern how best to serve our group. Apart from planning the YAF schedule for Annual Session last year, we also planned the retreat at Redwood Forest and a Clerking Workshop. We have participated in a variety of conference calls with Friends from PYM and elsewhere regarding these events and the status of young adult Quakers in general.

Our feelings during this time have varied from one end of the spectrum to the other. After discussions between ourselves and other trusted F/friends, we want you to know that we have felt many things, but have most recently landed in a place of resolve. We're struggling with a lack of motivation surrounding this work, and feel that the YAFs of PYM are in need of a change.

Much of what it means to be a YAF is to be in transition, not yet settled or committed to certain paths or roles over others, not totally clear on how we define ourselves both as individuals and as a group. In our community, this has both united us and also kept us apart. When we are together at events such as Annual Session, we feel this kinship strongly. We share so much activity and interaction that brings us closer in Spirit. It gives us a sense of what our community can be. When we separate again, this quickly fades. Communication between YAFs is sparse, and people who feel a passion to serve often do not follow through. Since we were nominated to serve as YAF co-clerks, our committee structures have changed from year to year, suggesting that these current structures are not serving our needs.

While YAFs serve in various positions within the PYM community, our connection to the whole of the Yearly Meeting is limited by our intentional separation into a distinct program at Annual Session.

Accordingly, we propose a change to our structure, moving towards an acceptance of our varied roles, allowing each of us more self-determination and our cohort more integration with the greater PYM.

At this year's Annual Session, there will be no separate YAF schedule. Instead, we will highlight portions of the schedule which call for intergenerational time in plenaries, with JYM, or other activities. We would also like to retain some of the structures that bring us together, such as YAF-only dorm space and unstructured time in the evenings when more YAFs are available. We also propose perhaps continuing our check-ins and having a YAF worship-sharing group.

While it is too late for some of the following changes to be made this year, we have considered future changes to the YAF community that we feel would be helpful, both for YAFs and for PYM in general. We suggest laying down all of our committees and roles, including that of clerk or co-clerk, and eliminating all business meetings.

After laying down our structures, an individual or small committee might organize and coordinate YAF activities at Annual Session and throughout the year. One of the responsibilities for this person or committee could be to help arrange a structured transitional or introductory program for YAFs and newcomers to PYM. This would facilitate the move out of JYM and into PYM, as well as create connections and structures for young adults and newcomers to the world of Annual Sessions.

What we see clearly is a need for intergenerational experience, teaching us about Quaker process, and nurturing us into future roles where our gifts are recognized and put to use. A large part of facilitating the transition from youth to adult is getting the right experience, guidance and framework. This merging and integration of YAFs, youth and the greater YM, especially as seen within current PYM committees and AS activities provides us with hope and inspiration for how our gatherings, identity, and relationships may look moving forward.

Before the YAF business meeting at Annual Session is to take place, we propose a threshing session early in the week to hear everyone's opinions on the present and future of the young adults of PYM. This session will include all interested parties, YAF and otherwise, and will hopefully feature elders (both YAFs and others) to hold space while the above ideas are discussed. The young adults of today are the leaders of tomorrow, and it is in everyone's best interest to discern how best to prepare for that eventuality.

Below are some queries we hope you will reflect on before Annual Session this year, whether you are planning to attend or not.

-If you're planning to attend AS, what are your hopes or expectations? What are you here for?

-What is it that makes us yearn to be a part of this group? Why do you identify with Young Adult Friends?

-What might we lose if we change our structure, as individuals and as a group? What might we gain?

-How do the structures that we create facilitate way for the Spirit to be present?

-What have we done and what do we do now that is beneficial to the whole of our community? What can we let go of?

-Who are we as an entity?

We are eager to hear your feedback on everything we have expressed in this email, both for our own edification and to start the discussion ahead of our annual gatherings. Thank you for considering these issues, and we hope to hear from and visit with many of you very soon.

In Service,

JT Dorr-Bremme and Rebekah Percy