

NWYM of Friends
Initial Restructuring Meeting
Saturday, February 18, 2017
North Valley Friends Church

1. Lynn Holt welcomed us to North Valley and told us where to find the bathrooms.
2. Retha McCutchen, NWYM Superintendent, read from Psalm 1 and invited the leadership team for today's meeting to introduce themselves. Those Friends were Bruce Murphy (Newberg), Lynn Holt (North Valley), Matt Boswell (Camas), Clyde Parker (Eugene), and Catherine Olson (North Valley).
3. Retha clarified that today's meeting is for churches who are interested in learning about starting a new yearly meeting. The Transition Team has been tasked with making decisions about yearly meeting assets and other transition details. Their first meeting is March 18.

Transition Team Members:

Elders - Ken Beebe, John Price, Ken Redford (following sabbatical)

Trustees - Gordon Crisman, David Greene

Administrative Council - Debbie Harrison, George Crosiar

At-Large - Mark Ankeny, Silas Olson, David Peyton, Lorraine Watson

Superintendent - Retha McCutchen

4. Matt read from Psalm 25 and invited us into a time of waiting worship. We held the following queries:
 - What are you/we being invited to release?
 - What are you/we being invited to receive?

Matt then invited us to participate in a spoken prayer, completing the phrase
"May we _____."

5. Lynn clerked a Question & Answer time:
 - a. Retha provided answers to questions she had already been asked:
 - All churches will remain full members of NWYM until the transfer takes place on or before June 2018
 - Recording certificates can be transferred with your church when its membership is transferred from NWYM to the new yearly meeting.
 - NWYM will hold all churches under their 501(c)(3) until such time as the new yearly meeting has acquired its nonprofit status or the transfer date.
 - NWYM staff is staff for the entirety of NWYM during this transition. We are committed to serve you in this process. Such as:
 - Office space, if desired. There are two offices and a conference room in the basement of the yearly meeting office that can be made available.

- Open bank account under the NWYM 501(c)(3) in new YM name - it would be a restricted account. Bookkeeping would be done in the office under the direction of the new yearly meeting budget.
 - Office support and use of equipment.
- b. What happens if we just won't leave?
- Retha said she had no answer to that question.
- c. Why didn't the NWYM AC follow Faith & Practice in deciding to split the yearly meeting?
- Retha: The AC felt they had the authority to make this decision.
- d. Will the minutes of this meeting be made available to us?
- Retha & Lynn: Yes.
- e. The Faith and Practice allows for areas to create their own YM. Let's follow that structure so that we can utilize the support structure of the quarterly meeting throughout this process.
- Lynn: Good point. That's part of the "What's Next" section of today's agenda.
- f. What does it mean to become an independent meeting?
- g. Without feeling the need to commit to having made any decision, let's just name which churches are here today.
- Camas
Hillsboro
North Valley
North Seattle
Klamath Falls
Salem
Eugene Silverton
Tigard
Newberg
Second Street
- h. Though the AC did not have the authority to make the decision to split NWYM, but this person is here today because he feels that it's not his responsibility to fight the decision that the AC made, but rather to get excited about what comes next. We need to make a path for future generations to thrive and grow.
- i. Partially in response to a previous question "What happens if we just stay?" This option seems to be a harmful prospect for many marginalized Friends, particularly those who identify as LGBTQ+. Moving ahead with this split allows those Friends to be in leadership and part of what's ahead. An analogy was shared of one potted plant

being divided and replanted in two different pots. After the initial shock, each plant ends up with more space to grow in new ways.

- j. A shared perspective as a WHF Elder during the disciplinary process with NWYM Elders. WH was continually asked "why do you want to stay?" The answer was that they wanted to continue to be in relationship. It is now clear that the question is no longer "why do you want to stay?" but rather changed to the statement "it's time for you to leave." Whether or not that was the right decision, West Hills can now begin to look forward.
- k. What happens to GFU, Twin Rocks, and our missionaries?
 - Retha: Friends Serving Abroad currently raise their own funds, so hopefully they will still receive the same support.
- l. A big concern is for our missionaries and our kids. Regarding the previous question, those who currently support our missionaries will likely be on one of two sides in this split. It is therefore unrealistic to assume the missionary support structure will be able to remain the same.
- m. Expressed feelings of three pulls:
 - (1) Excited about a future that doesn't include fighting
 - (2) Isn't feeling released from being vocal about the fact that her yearly meeting acted in an inappropriate way by making this split. There needs to be an opportunity to express the disappointment, betrayal, and victimization that is a result of this decision.
 - (3) The NWYM intention was that if a split is inevitable, let's make it happen in a way that isn't as vicious as other yearly meeting splits. This makes this person feel called to support and trust the Transition Team.
 - Views this restructuring as an opportunity for both yearly meetings to follow their own calling.
 - Many have likened this split to a divorce. Divorce hurts the children, but an unhealthy and tumultuous marriage also hurts the children.
- n. It is encouraging to hear from churches who have already made the decision to write open and affirming minutes. North Valley is a divided church in this regard. Whether or not North Valley stays in NWYM, there will be hurt within that church. This person can't give up on the notion that diversity is strength. By sloughing off this diversity we are losing some strength we would and could have otherwise had.
- o. Can a church have dual membership?
 - Retha: That's something the Transition Team should consider.
- p. When we are in an intense learning and growing process, such as we are now, we may all be well served by a little Holy laughter.

- q. A person shared that she holds a fair amount of anger right now and with that, feels that this process is moving far too fast. Maybe if the AC would admit that they screwed up, it would make it easier to move forward.
- r. A person expressed his pain over this split as he thinks Quakers are supposed to be good at putting up with a diversity of opinion. We need to stay together. We need to support our college, summer camps, missionaries, and one another.

~ Cookie Break ~

- s. Lynn asked if we had anything that still needed to be shared.
 - t. Most of the kids this person knows of who have participated in NWYM camps and churches over the years no longer attend a church. When asked why they don't go to church, they respond that they can't attend a church that doesn't love everybody. 4 out of the 26 youth who attended Grad Camp at Twin Rocks last summer came out to their camp counselor or another trusted adult. This is us. This person wants to make a place where they can come home.
 - u. Why can't there be two new names, instead of one yearly meeting getting to maintain the identity of NWYM?
 - v. We should not be encouraging churches to leave the NWYM. We may be getting ahead of ourselves to do too much planning. We should allow the process of changing the language of our Faith & Practice to play out. This person would like for us to stay together.
 - w. To whom should questions be directed for the Transition Committee to consider and answer?
- Retha: Send them to Retha: retha@nwfriends.org
6. Lynn asked us to consider what's next. To determine how we move forward, and to streamline communication, we could form a steering committee comprised of representatives from West Hills, Camas, Eugene, and Klamath Falls. We could also consider including representatives from other churches, including those who appealed the Elders decision to release WH (North Valley, North Seattle, Spokane, Reedwood, and Hillsboro) and other churches who may be divided on this issue.
- i. The idea of a steering committee is lovely, but it still feels like, in our love for one another, we're trying to move too fast. We haven't yet done the work of sitting and listening.

Also, a question for the AC: How about during this summer's annual sessions, everyone shows up at GFU, but the This New Thing group meets and starts doing work together?

- ii. There may be an issue with the language we're using. Maybe call it a Dialogue Group, instead of a Task Force. Let's allow for continued dialogue and communication, but not try to take official action before it's time. These four churches have not yet had a chance to do the discernment work needed to make a decision.
- iii. Followed up on another's statement asking if the Faith and Practice statement about human sexuality was currently under a revision process.
 - Answer: No, but it could be.
- iv. All monthly meetings leaving NWYM should first get 501(c)3 status of their own. Then those churches can discern whether/how they'd like to join with other churches.
- v. Encouraged all meetings to look at protection for themselves from a risk standpoint. West Hills, for example, is already in the process of obtaining it's own 501(c)3 status. Once churches take that step, it will be easier to determine how/whether we want to join together. Everyone goes through the change curve. We are all in different places.
- vi. Please consider keeping split churches in the loop on this Dialogue Group/Task Force. There people there who will care a great deal about how This New Thing develops.
- vii. We need some sort of mechanism that can help us catch all this energy. We need to be able to nurture the ideas that are being offered.
- viii. How will we handle pastoral care for the pastors who are going through this?
 - Many are being overwhelmed by the weight of this responsibility, and the importance that is attached to their every word and move.
 - Also how will we support the yearly meeting staff in a similar way.
- ix. Are members of these four churches allowed to be on boards for now? Are they invited to yearly meeting?
 - Retha: Yes. Everyone is a full member until the full transfer takes place. Everyone is welcome at yearly meeting.
 - No one from those meetings would be allowed to be nominated to NWYM boards.
- x. Let's watch out for closed discussion and secrecy. The new gift we're able to give each other is openness.
- xi. The use of labels is divisive and breaks down healthy communication. Both sides of this issue have been guilty of a lack of acceptance for one another. We'd be in a better place if we could listen to one another.
- xii. Regarding being inclusive, we need youth and young adults (under 40) in this conversation to tell us what their leadings are. They must be a part of the discernment about how we go forward.

- xiii. When will the next meeting take place?
- xiv. Friends are invited to a gathering and potluck on February 25 from 2-6pm at Hillsboro Friends Church.
- xv. Would like us to decide on a name, so this doesn't have to be referred to as "Those Four Churches."
- xvi. Eugene needs more time to process this.
- xvii. WH needs more time to process this. Churches who may join This New Thing need more time to process this.
- xviii. Camas needs more time to process this.
- xix. Klamath Falls needs more time to process this. They want to stay connected and in relationship with NWYM. Also affirmed the statement about how challenging this time is for pastors.
- xx. It's important that these meetings get their own 501(c)3. Why have a transition team start their work before these churches have had a chance to decide what their best way forward may be? We need to get the younger crowd in on this!
- xxi. Lynn offered the date of Saturday, April 22 for our meetings to consider as our next gathering.
- xxii. Clyde asked us to consider April 22 as our next meeting date.
- xxiii. Clyde spoke about the sermon on the mount. He spoke about pursuing loving relationship with those with whom we disagree and not hardening our hearts to them. We discussed the location for the April 22 meeting and how great it would be if we spent more time traveling to visit one another.
- xxiv. The tentative location for the April 22 gathering is Eugene Friends Church.
- xxv. Clyde closed the meeting in prayer.

Submitted by Catherine Olson, recording clerk pro-tem; reviewed by Retha McCutchen, Lynn Holt, Matt Boswell, Bruce Murphy, and Clyde Parker.