

Dear fellow members of Newberg Friends Church:

When last we met on May 7, 2017, we were unable to come to a sense of the meeting about the Elders' query: should NFC divide into two congregations? Since that contentious meeting, we (your clerks) have been working to prepare the way for the church to agree on what to do.

1. We convened the Group of 13: five representatives of those wishing to leave the Northwest Yearly Meeting to form an independent Friends church (the pro-independence group); five representatives of those wishing to stay in the Yearly Meeting (the YM group); Presiding Clerk Mark Ankeny, and assistant clerks Phil Smith and Ron Mock. That group met three times (May 13, 21, and 28). Our conversations were frank, warm, and cordial. The meetings helped us clarify the issues we need to resolve, understand better where everyone is coming from, and consider possible ways to navigate the crisis successfully.
2. After our May 28 meeting, we drafted a proposed minute representing our attempt to articulate a path forward that might get agreement in a congregational meeting. We shared the draft with the Group of 13, the NFC elders, and several officials of Northwest Yearly Meeting, seeking (and getting) feedback. We have revised the draft extensively.
3. Both the pro-independence group and the YM group are moving quickly to organize themselves to deal with the reality after June 30: most of our pastors will be done serving, many of our committee members' terms will expire, and the new fiscal year will begin. Each group is moving toward constituting its own leaders and making plans for practical matters like how to run worship, teach kids, and carry on ministries.

Out of our abiding concern that the coming transition be done well, to preserve relationships and allow both congregations to be thriving bodies of believers following the leadings of Jesus, we are proposing the attached minute for approval on June 11. The minute includes:

- The presentation of an interim budget drafted by the Stewards to allow the treasurer to pay bills after July 1st.
- A directive to the clerks to form a representative group to draft a Covenant of Separation to be effective on or before September 30.
- A number of key principles the congregation would endorse to guide the formation of the Covenant of Separation.

We expect the organizational efforts for both congregational groups to proceed apace whether or not we can approve a minute on June 11. An approved minute will help us manage the coming transition with relationships intact (or even in some cases strengthened) and our witness to Newberg and the world untarnished.

Thank you for your commitment to Newberg Friends Church, and your concern that we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in this time.

Mark Ankeny, Presiding Clerk

Phil Smith and Ron Mock, Assistant Clerks