

2020

**A documented analysis of the 2018 congregational separation  
occurring at Newberg Friends Church, Newberg, Oregon**

Sherry Macy

# **A documented analysis of the 2017 congregational separation occurring at Newberg Friends Church, Newberg, Oregon**

by Sherry Macy  
NFC office administrator (2003-2018)

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2020

Julie Anderson, Hank Helsabeck, Mauri Macy, Dick Sartwell, Ron Stansell, and Dave Woolsey reviewed, added input, and approved the final draft of this treatise.  
All played an important role in the deliberations chronicled within these pages.

This document contains a privately owned blog post, making it necessary to include only the link and not the content (included with the officially archived file). In the event the author removes the posts, you may contact me at [sherrymacy@gmail.com](mailto:sherrymacy@gmail.com) for a copy.

# PART 1 — COMPREHENSIVE TIMELINE

**July 24, 2015**—After more than ten years of intervention between leadership at West Hills Friends Church (WHFC) and leadership of Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends (NWYM)—operating under Evangelical Friends Church International—the NWYM board of elders found it necessary to release WHFC from its association. Despite the clear statement in its Faith & Practice (F&P), WHFC affirmed homosexual relationships and regularly performed same-sex weddings.

From the Board of Elders, NWYM, July 2015

Recognizing that our yearly meeting is unable to embrace our current diversity, and recognizing the shattering that is ensuing, with grace and charity we sorrowfully release West Hills Friends Church from NWYM membership. It is our hope that this will free WHFC to pursue the call of God they have discerned. We record our respect for the process WHFC has followed and the sincerity of their convictions, which include their affirmation of committed same sex relationships and the decision to perform those weddings. We are grateful for the respect this body has shown us as elders and for the friendships that have developed. We grieve our loss, even as we recognize the pain this community will feel at being disconnected from the NWYM of Friends. We have experienced WHFC as a strong, healthy, growing community of Christian Friends, and we know that in spite of this painful and unwanted action, they will continue to thrive, perhaps forming other connections. We nurture the hope that a reconnection with NWYM might be possible in the future.

Even so, out of love for the whole of NWYM, we sense that this is the way forward. While we respect WHFC's convictions, we recognize that the NWYM as a whole is not in any position to recognize same-sex marriages or record as pastors people who are living in committed same-sex relationships. We discern that taking no action in the case of WHFC would only cause more shattering at this point in time.

Our *Faith and Practice* provides a way to appeal this decision.

We recognize that as a yearly meeting, we are not in consensus over our statement on human sexuality in the *Faith and Practice*. We recognize that we need to do the hard work of theological reflection as Friends on the issues of revelation (including the authority of both the written and living Word of God) and human sexuality (in a broader sense than just LGBTQ issues). As elders we plan to facilitate this reflection. We need to seek and discover what God is saying to us at this time around these issues, in a spirit of humility, love and faith in a God who delights to unlock these mysteries.

In the meantime, we plead with the people, pastors and congregations to NWYM, on all sides of these issues, to commit to doing this hard work together. Can we decide to love each other? Can we hold on to our love of Jesus and the Word of God, refraining from words or actions that would only cause more pain and division? Can we give the culture around us reason to say, "See how they love one another!"

Ken Redford, Clerk  
Board of Elders, NWYM

## Faith and Practice Statements on Human Sexuality

The entire Faith and Practice of NWYM can be found here: <http://nwfriends.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/faith-and-practice-2011-2012-08-20.pdf>

Below are the relevant sections from pages 11 and 80.

### **[From p. 11] Christian Witness to Human Sexuality**

We hold that only marriage is conducive to godly fulfillment in sexual relationships for the purposes of reproduction and enrichment of life. We consider sexual intimacy outside marriage as sinful because it distorts God's purposes for human sexuality. We denounce, as contrary to the moral laws of God, acts of homosexuality, sexual abuse, and any other form of sexual perversion (see "Human Sexuality," p. 80). The church, however, as a community of forgiven persons, remains loving and sensitive to those we consider in error. Because God's grace can deliver from sins of any kind, we are called to forgive those who have repented and to free them for participation in the church.

### **[From p. 80] Human Sexuality**

[Added in 1982] Friends believe that the divine intent of marriage is to fulfill the emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of humankind and that only within the bonds of marriage divinely ordained can there be a beautiful sexual relationship for the purposes of reproduction and life enrichment. Adultery and fornication are sinful because they distort the purposes of God for the right ordering of human sexuality.

Friends believe that the practice of sexual perversion in any form is sinful and contrary to the God-ordained purposes in sexual relationships. These perversions include sexual violence, homosexual acts, transvestism, incest, and sex acts with animals. The sin nature is capable of vile affections when humankind rejects the moral laws of God.

Scriptures relating to these distorted and perverse forms of sexuality include Genesis 19:1-13; Deuteronomy 22:5; Leviticus 18:20, 22, 23; Romans 1:24-28; 1 Corinthians 5:1, 2 and 6:9-20. Neither in the Scriptures nor in church history have these practices been regarded as consistent with righteous living.

Friends do not accept as members those involved in these perverse practices; neither do they permit them to hold positions of responsibility or leadership in the church. However, Friends believe that the grace of God is adequate to cleanse and deliver from all sin (1 John 1:9; 2 Corinthians 5:17), and they desire to be tender and sensitive to all people, ready to express kindness, love, and forgiveness. See also Jude 7, 8; Colossians 3:5-7; and Revelation 2:18, 27. When the erring one has been repentant, the past should not be remembered. As Christ called and blessed those whom He forgave, so must His followers. Friends must not hinder the forgiven person from holding membership or having responsibility in the church.

Friends churches should exercise concern for their members on matters of sexuality and should discipline offenders in love and truth (see "Rules of Discipline" p. 46).

**July 2015**—Reaction to this decision was mixed: some were relieved, some were angry, many felt sadness. Eight churches appealed the decision within the 30-day deadline, and the NWYM Administrative Council considered those appeals. All but one on the NFC pastoral team and the majority of the elders aligned with the appeal, though their position was not widely known among the NFC congregation.

**August 23, 2015**—The presiding clerk, Phil Smith, agreed to call a congregational business meeting to seek approval for NFC's participation in the organized appeal. The clerk did not find consensus and NFC did not join the appeal. "The business meeting made it clear that we are deeply divided as a church around this issue, an issue that evokes a wide range of emotions, often very strong." [Smith, p. 3]



**From the Newberg Friends Elders,  
Clerk of the Meeting Phil Smith, and the Pastoral Team**

***What leads us to study human sexuality?***

For the last couple of months, we have been thinking, discussing, and praying about how to lead Newberg Friends Church in the midst of our current differences about human sexuality. Our goal is to encourage everyone first and foremost to obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ. We are prompted in part by the discernment of our yearly meeting Board of Elders. Here is a quote from their July 2015 letter:

*"We recognize that we need to do the hard work of theological reflection as Friends on the issues of revelation (including the authority of both the written and living Word of God) and human sexuality (in a broader sense than just LGBTQ issues)."*

The differences in our congregation on this issue came out strongly and in sometimes hurtful ways in our business meeting on August 23. We want to challenge our church community to speak and act with humility, recognizing that we have people in our church with beliefs all across the spectrum who are committed to obedience to Christ and the authority of the Bible.

While some may be clear in their own beliefs in regard to human sexuality and therefore confused about why we should spend time and energy to study and reflect on human sexuality, we believe reflection is needed for several reasons. Prayerful study and reading the Bible are always beneficial in helping us to live obedient lives. Questions and wrestling are not the enemies of truth; they are helpful in pursuing it. Human sexuality is one of the key questions of our time, and we believe it is central to the health of our church to study it together.

Perhaps most importantly, we are aware that some who have grown up with or have chosen Newberg Friends as their church home identify in some way as LGBT or are questioning their sexuality. As leaders at NFC, we want to model that Christ, the Bible, and the Christian community are our guides into all truth. We want to care for and welcome people as we seek God's guidance and direction for our lives under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

This journey will require each of us to be open to the Holy Spirit's transforming power, to show respect and love as we disagree. And it will give us wonderful opportunities to learn to love others as we love ourselves!

As we enter this process, we want to be clear that we are not seeking to change our current practices at Newberg Friends Church, including those related to marriages. We want to emphasize that our goal for this process of study and reflection is to deepen our understanding of human sexuality and Christian discipleship. We want to learn from the Bible, from teachers, from each other, and most importantly from God.

Please join us in praying for unity, truth, and love to saturate our whole community as we seek God together. Next week in *Your NFC* we will share some more background to this process, and in future weeks we will offer suggestions for individual study and reflection, all in preparation for some kind of corporate study in late winter/early spring 2016.

**From the Newberg Friends Elders,  
Clerk of the Meeting Phil Smith, and the Pastoral Team**

***Background to Our Exploration of Human Sexuality***

The last 20 years have seen huge and rapid changes in how society understands human sexuality and specifically gay relationships and marriage. Christians, and more recently Evangelical Christians, have also become more varied in their beliefs. This has created a lot of anxiety in the church, because sexuality is an intimate and important part of our lives, one that (like all areas of life) is best experienced in the way God intends. How do we show both love and acceptance to each other and also challenge each other to live in faithful obedience to God? How do we work through our differences in understanding God's intent, when there used to be no differences at all?

Our yearly meeting has discussed these issues for several reasons in the last couple of years. On March 1, 2012, alumni from George Fox University released a public letter, asking George Fox University and Northwest Yearly Meeting to change policy to allow committed same-sex relationships (<http://www.onegeorgefox.org>). Discussion around this letter also made more public that one church in the yearly meeting, West Hills Friends Church, had gone through a 12-year discernment process that led to full inclusion of LGBTQ people in the life of their meeting (here is a link to their description of the process: <http://www.westhillsfriends.org/wwwhistory.html>). The yearly meeting Board of Elders were informed of West Hills' decision in 2008 and began discussions with West Hills Friends Church in 2012, as this decision was out of harmony with the yearly meeting Faith and Practice.

West Hills' decision to be open and affirming of gay and lesbian relationships, and later to perform a same-sex wedding, was deeply disturbing to many people in the yearly meeting. They believe West Hills' practices are clearly wrong, both according to the Bible and to our yearly meeting's Faith and Practice. In 2013, the yearly meeting Board of Elders determined that West Hills' decision was "shattering" to the yearly meeting and began a two-year process of discernment about how to address it. The Board of Elders also asked local churches and meetings to discuss and study issues of human sexuality. Newberg Friends Church responded with a series of four Sunday night meetings in February and March of 2014, attended by 73 people.

The yearly meeting Board of Elders also proposed a revision to the Faith and Practice statement on sexuality that did not change the position of the yearly meeting but sought to "season the language with grace." Consensus was not found to approve the revision in 2013 or 2014. On July 24, 2015, the Board of Elders announced their decision to release West Hills Friends Church from the yearly meeting. Reaction to this decision was mixed: some were relieved, some were angry, many felt sadness. Eight churches appealed the decision within the 30-day deadline, and the Administrative Council of the yearly meeting is considering those appeals (for documents and more details see this page on the yearly meeting website: <http://nwfriends.org/elders-decision-regarding-west-hills/>).

At Newberg Friends Church, a called business meeting on August 23, 2015, considered whether our church should make an appeal. There was lack of consensus to appeal. Some strongly support the decision to release West Hills. Some agree with West Hills' position and worry that there is no longer room for them within the yearly meeting. Some disagree with West Hills' position, but still want them to remain a part of the yearly meeting, desiring to be part of a community that can remain in unity despite diversity of thought and belief. These are just a few of a wide variety of perspectives in our church.

The business meeting made it clear that we are deeply divided as a church around this issue, an issue that evokes a wide range of emotions, often very strong. Some felt it was wrong to even discuss the issue, believing the Bible to be clear. Some loved the discussion and appreciated the good start of listening to each other and to God. Some left the meeting feeling unheard. Some felt shamed and unsafe in voicing their opinion. Some felt hurtful and damaging things were spoken to those in the room who might be questioning or identify as LGBTQ. (The NFC elders made a statement on page 4 of the October 16 issue of *Your NFC*: <http://newbergfriends.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/October-16-2015.pdf>).

As those charged with the leadership of Newberg Friends Church in this season, we acknowledge the differences in our church and call us to do the hard work of loving and respecting each other through these difficult conversations. We believe God's truth and God's love are both active and needed; they are not in opposition to each other. We invite God's Holy Spirit to guide, correct, convict, and empower us as we seek God's way forward through our differences.

To the Congregation from the NFC Elders:

Since the called business meeting on August 23, the NFC elders have been exploring the next steps we would like to take. While our plan is not definite yet, we believe it is important for us to share some of our reflections and to name some of the challenges regarding the business meeting. As elders, we attempted to prepare for the meeting, but realize in retrospect we were not sure of our roles in the meeting. We had made the proposal and wanted to provide chances for others to speak; however, we now realize it felt confusing to some that we did not stand and speak specifically in support of the proposal or help at all with the flow of the conversation.

In preparation, we as NFC elders discussed that the called congregational meeting remain focused on the proposal to appeal the decision of the NWYM elders and not on the issues of homosexuality and/or same-sex marriage. This proved difficult to do in the meeting and some of the statements made were beyond the scope of the proposal to appeal the NWYM elders decision. Some of these remarks could be heard as judgmental or harsh to members of the community. We are sorry that this may have happened to you.

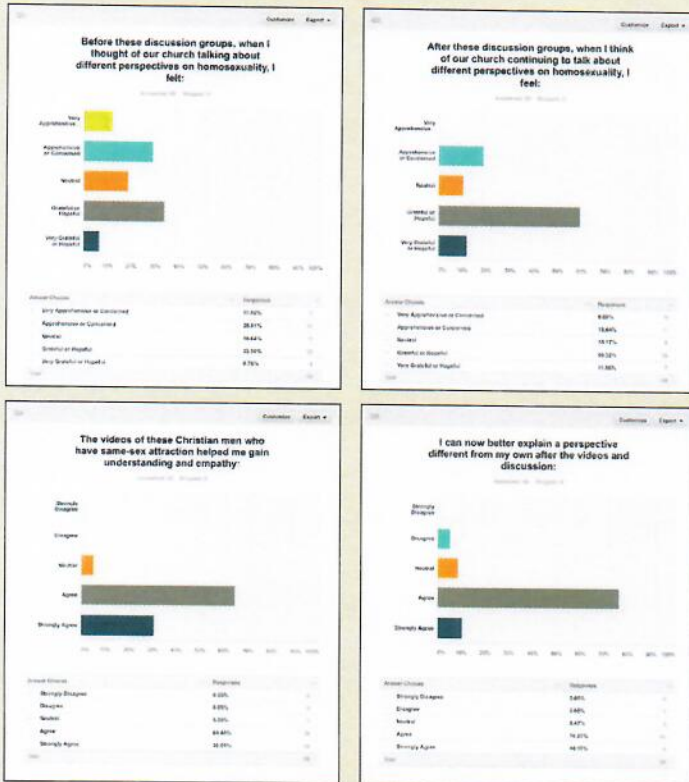
It is not possible to go back and unsay things that were said or to reframe the meeting to summarize and end at the hour planned. However, we as elders are unified in moving forward this fall with ideas and documents for your continued individual study. We feel strongly that the next step should include time to study scripture and the wise counsel of others in the Christian community. We will be outlining some of the details of our plans in the next few weeks with a call to those in the community to spend personal focused time in scripture and other reading/viewing this fall. We will be sharing suggestions in late October and into November. Our goal is to encourage those who are willing to read, study, and pray in ways that prepare us to meet together in love and humility in late winter/early spring for corporate study.



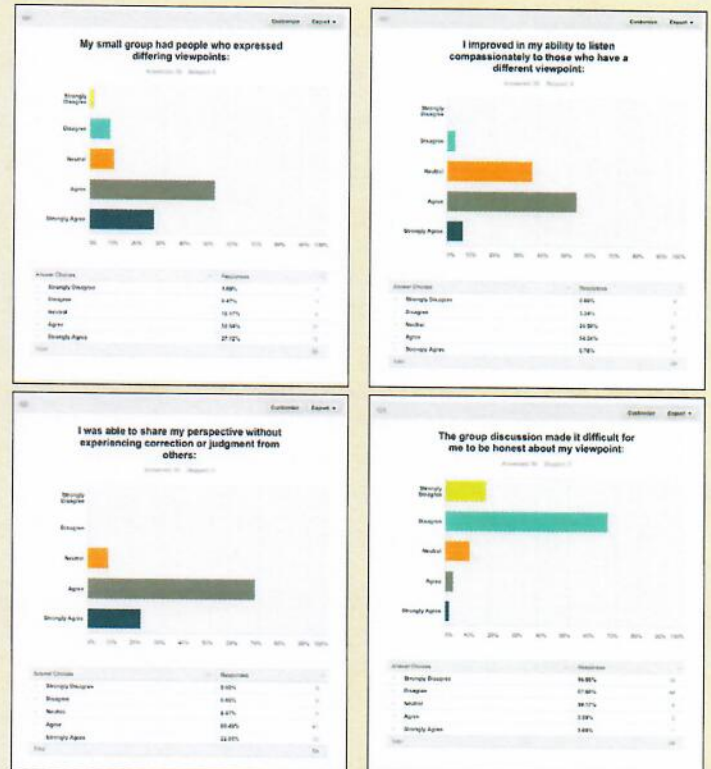
**April 2016**—NFC announced the plan for a congregation-wide study of human sexuality.

**July 2016**—One hundred people participated in the month-long study; 59 filled out a questionnaire. The charted results were published in *Your NFC*. A summary was issued to NFC congregation, laying out all aspects of the church's study on human sexuality.

Every Sunday during the month of April, more than 100 people from NFC watched videos and participated in discussion groups that focused on different Christian views on homosexuality. Thank you to the 59 people who filled out a questionnaire about the experience! The elders wanted everyone to see the results from the survey:



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We are encouraged that the experience of learning and discussing together resulted in lowered apprehension and better understanding of different perspectives. The elders are aware that these discussion groups were only a narrow slice of the area of human sexuality and are considering further ways to learn together and encourage deeper faithfulness as we each seek to live obediently to God.

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**October 2016**—NFC's lead pastor, Gregg Koskela, resigned but would stay, if needed, until the end of the pastoral year, June 30, 2017. A month later this was announced to the congregation, and Steve Fawver, pastor for spiritual life and care, was named as interim pastor July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. In November 2016, the pastor to seniors, Cindy Johnson, announced her resignation.



**Looking Back, Moving Forward**  
**Elders Report ~ January 2017**

The beginning of a new year is always a good time to reflect on the past and plan for the future. Our church comprises people deeply desiring to live out their faith by being in "a Growing community, Listening to Christ, Changing in the Spirit, Living out Love." There is evidence of God's work in and among us.

Those currently called into roles of servant leadership have spent concentrated time this fall reflecting on the ways our community has engaged with theology, study of scripture, and various perspectives concerning human sexuality. We are grateful that more than 100 people participated in the learning discussion groups last April. Great care for one another was exhibited as we sought to gain understanding and insight from scripture, from each other, and from the Lord.

In August, the elders reflected on the question, "What kind of church do we want to be?" The first word on the list was diverse. We are a body of believers who are diverse in church backgrounds, ages, ethnicities, biblical understanding, etc. Diversity is a gift and an asset.

In October, the pastoral team reflected on the church vision statement and our overall community. In many rich and vibrant ways, Newberg Friends Church (NFC) is exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit as articulated in the vision statement. The team also acknowledged the season of grief our community members have experienced this year, coupled with the challenges of living in tension over our diversity.

As elders and pastors we are conscious of the challenges of the last few years as Northwest Yearly Meeting (NWYM) leaders (elders, administrative council, and representatives) have struggled to unify over the current NWYM Faith and Practice and the decision to release West Hills Friends because of their welcoming and affirming embrace of the LGBTQ community. On December 9, 2016, the representatives of all the churches met but could not come to a decision. Because of this, the administrative council of NWYM did further work that will be presented at the upcoming Midyear Boards (being rescheduled due to unsafe travel conditions).

As elders and pastors we recognize that the members of the NFC community represent a broad spectrum of the Northwest Yearly Meeting. Our congregation

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*continued from page 4*

is a microcosm of the yearly meeting with people holding traditional or progressive perspectives as well as views in the middle. There are those who hold the traditional view of sexuality. NFC also includes people who are LGBTQ and individuals striving to be their allies. Just as the yearly meeting has wrestled, so has NFC. Within the last year, discussion around dividing the yearly meeting has surfaced. As stewards and shepherds of NFC, the leadership team does not want NFC to split but rather to live into a calling to be unified in Christ in the midst of our diversity.

Elders and pastors acknowledge that hurt has been experienced as people have expressed their views on human sexuality. Members of our community across the spectrum have experienced deep pain, hurt, and struggle when words of condemnation have been spoken. Others have felt discounted when their views have seemingly been dismissed. Because we desire our NFC community to be caring and loving, the following statement is our call:

*At NFC we seek to care for each other with a clear focus on following Jesus' way, truth, and life while acknowledging disagreement of theological positions and biblical interpretations related to human sexuality. We are unified in the belief that love, not condemnation (John 3:16-17), draws each one of us to the cross of Christ. Therefore, our hope and desire is to be a community that can accept and reflect God's love for all people, showing respect and care for all in our words and actions.*

As elders and pastors we want to be a church that can allow for different perspectives while providing a safe environment for us all to worship God together. Diversity regarding differing perspectives on human sexuality is a reality among us. This diversity is reflected in our pastoral team, our committee members, our YM representatives, our volunteers, and our attendees.

Our hope is to remain in unity while taking steps to provide for the diversity that already exists at NFC. We hope to act in specific ways that clarify how we might achieve this unity amidst diversity as we seek to keep our focus on Christ as the center of this community.

*The Newberg Friends Church Elders*  
January 18, 2017

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**January 2017**—Meanwhile, West Hills Friends Church chose to not leave. Appeals by several other NWYM churches created a stand-off in the process with an ongoing debate about the appeal and the appeal to the appeal! Unable to move forward, the Administrative Council was forced to propose a restructuring—offering churches that no longer want to remain under its F&P to leave of their own accord, taking their property. Its proposal also suggested that churches who have disagreement among themselves on LGBTQ matters would be welcome to remain in NWYM. Churches were given a 1.5-year timeline.





## NWYM Restructuring

To: Northwest Yearly Meeting

Date: January 28, 2017

From: Administrative Council, Brad Holton, clerk

Since the end of 2016 Yearly Meeting sessions, the clerks, along with the Superintendent and the Administrative Council, have labored and wrestled together over the issues currently dividing NWYM. Following the called representatives meeting on December 9 and 10, the clerks and Superintendent separately and together discerned that the Yearly Meeting is so evenly divided that consensus around the human sexuality issue is not likely in the foreseeable future. These leaders also agreed that without some decisive action, the Yearly Meeting would fracture one, two or four churches at a time, but it would fracture.

Possible options were discussed by the Administrative Council in retreat on January 12-14. The AC prayed, discussed and through clear discernment made a decision and presented it to the representatives at mid-year board meetings.

At the representatives meeting held this January 27 and 28 in Newberg, the clerks and Administrative Council announced their decision to guide the Yearly Meeting through a restructuring process. The restructuring is as follows:

### Newly Formed Yearly Meeting

- This yearly meeting would embrace a revised *Faith and Practice*
- This group would be composed of meetings that have decided to practice and/or have recorded an affirming stance.
- This may include churches who have internal disagreement but have agreed to align their practices with the newly formed yearly meeting *Faith and Practice*.

### Northwest Yearly Meeting

- This yearly meeting would be composed of meetings who align with current Northwest Yearly Meeting *Faith and Practice*.
- This may include churches who have internal disagreement but have agreed to align their practices with current NWYM *Faith and Practice*.

A transition team, formed of Elders, AC members, Trustees and other at-large members will facilitate the creation of a newly formed yearly meeting. Churches who hold an affirming statement may be a part of the newly formed yearly meeting or may choose to be independent. It is the intent of the Administrative Council, that churches becoming part of the newly formed yearly meeting or separating from NWYM during this restructuring process may retain ownership of their church property, along with any indebtedness. All other issues of property, assets and related organization connection questions raised because of the restructuring process will be addressed by that transition team. The transition team will be approved by the AC and report to them.

This process will be a lengthy one and the AC is committed to completing the transition with dignity and honor for all churches. Our goal is to complete this transition process on or before June 30, 2018.

To read more about the process leading up to the decision, visit the Next Steps page.

#### NWYM Transition Team

A transition team, formed of Elders, AC members, Trustees and other at-large members will facilitate the creation of a newly formed yearly meeting. Churches who hold an affirming statement may be a part of the newly formed yearly meeting or may choose to be independent. It is the intent of the Administrative Council, that churches becoming part of the newly formed yearly meeting or separating from NWYM during this restructuring process

may retain ownership of their church property, along with any indebtedness. All other issues of property, assets and related organization connection questions raised because of the restructuring process will be addressed by that transition team.

#### Transition Team Updates:

NWYM Transition Team Report 3.18.17

NWYM Transition Team Report 04.17

NWYM Transition Team 06.03.17

NWYM Transition Team Report 7.8.17

**January 2017**—NFC's youth pastor, Eric Muhr, resigned.

**January 2017**—Lead pastor Gregg Koskela surrendered his Recorded Minister status with NWYM. He informed the elders, who withheld this information from the NFC congregation.

<https://outofdoubt.wordpress.com/2017/05/10/honest-thoughts/>

**February 10, 2017**—Your NFC published instructions for financial giving that would circumvent NWYM.

**February 2017**—NFC elders (in chambers) decided to endorse NFC leaving NWYM.

## From the Elders:

The elders met last Monday, February 6, and will meet again on Monday, February 13, as we continue to seek God's direction for NFC. We are working on budget and staffing issues, as well as considering how our community can discern what is best for NFC with the changes in the yearly meeting. The decision to reorganize into two different yearly meetings gives three options for NFC: we can remain in NWYM; we can leave NWYM to join the newly forming yearly meeting; or, we can leave NWYM and become an independent Friends congregation. As the first step in our process, we are considering two different gatherings for information, questions, and comments. One would be for those who desire to remain in NWYM, and the other for those who want to consider leaving NWYM either to become independent or to join the new yearly meeting. These are just informative, beginning steps in our process.

Several people have asked if there is a way to give to NFC without also contributing to NWYM. The stewards and elders have created an NFC Operations fund to respond to this request; money designated NFC Operations will not have the usual 15% given to NWYM. For those who wish to increase support to NWYM, you can contact the yearly meeting office and ask how to give directly.



**March 2, 2017**—The first gathering of the Ad Hoc Group (AHG) was formed by concerned NFCers. Because of tensions within the congregation, this was held in a private setting and not publicly shared. Sherry Macy, NFC office administrator, was the only person in attendance who knew what would be distributed to the congregation the following morning.

**March 3, 2017**—The Discernment Process Information and the timeline were distributed to the NFC email list, print copies to Friendsview Retirement Community.

## Discernment Process Information

### What does NFC need to decide?

Because of the yearly meeting decision to restructure, all churches have decisions to make. (See background documents at the end of this document for more information.) NFC could remain a part of NWYM, which will be organized around the current Faith and Practice statement regarding human sexuality. Or NFC could leave NWYM. In this restructuring period, churches that leave keep ownership of buildings and property.

If NFC leaves NWYM, we could choose to join a yet-to-be-formed new yearly meeting, which will be organized around a new Faith and Practice that affirms full participation of [LGBTQ people](#) and likely would affirm same-sex marriage. Or NFC could choose to be an independent Friends congregation, choosing non-official relationships and partnerships with camps, global outreach ministries, and Friends churches in both NWYM and the newly formed yearly meeting.

### What will not change?

NFC will remain a Christ-centered community that believes the Bible to be authoritative in our individual and corporate lives. NFC will keep the [same statements of mission, vision, and values](#) we have held.

### What are the central issues at stake?

- Some see the central issue as God's guidance for marriage; that the decision of affiliation should primarily be about whether one believes marriage is for a man and a woman, or whether it is something faithful Christians of the same gender can experience.
- Some see the central issue as the criteria for membership and participation in the church. For some, this means the church must align membership with core agreements; for others, this means a commitment to Jesus is the defining issue for membership, and other disagreements can exist within the community.
- Some see the division of the last few years as distracting the church from our mission, and a reorganization as a way to get unstuck; others see the issues involved in the division as central to the mission of the church.

### What may be reasons to support the various options?

#### *NFC staying in NWYM:*

For those convinced that scripture teaches that God's intention is for marriage to be between a man and a woman, and who believe that people with same-sex attraction are called to celibacy, staying in NWYM may make the most sense. For those who believe NFC and NWYM should confront what the NWYM Faith and Practice sees as sinful and hold firmly to what Faith and Practice sees as truth, staying in NWYM may make the most sense.

#### *NFC joining the newly formed YM:*

For those convinced that scripture and God's leading affirm full inclusion of LGBTQ people in all aspects of church life, including leadership and pastoral positions for people who are in a same-sex relationship, joining the new YM may make the most sense. For those who believe justice calls us to confront ways we have excluded LGBTQ people, and who believe acceptance and belonging in spiritual community are the best ways for the Holy Spirit to lead each person to holiness, joining the new YM may make the most sense.

#### *NFC leaving the YM to become an independent Friends church:*

For those who do not desire that our differences about human sexuality be dividing lines for participation in spiritual community, becoming independent may make the most sense. For those who believe our divided world needs people who accept the challenge of living in a community with differences and are willing to seek God together, becoming independent may make the most sense. For those who believe acceptance and belonging in spiritual community are the best ways for the Holy Spirit to lead each person to holiness, becoming independent may make the most sense.

### Planning process: Prayer Teams, Meetings, Surveys, Listening Forums

Gatherings and survey are intended for regular attenders and members only.

Prayer Team: A call for prayer focused specifically on this time of discussion and discernment will be initiated by our Monday morning prayer group and open to all who attend NFC. Group gatherings for prayer will be held in various locations and at various times as designed by the team.

<i>March 5</i> 6:30 p.m. Informational Gathering	<i>April 9</i> 6:30 p.m. Survey Report	<i>April 24 – May 5</i> Leadership team discernment meetings (clerks of the meeting, elders, pastors)
<i>March 5 (8:30pm) -19</i> Survey Open (available <a href="#">online</a> and hard copy)	<i>April 23</i> Listening Forums: 2 p.m. Sharing reasons for staying in NWYM 6:30 p.m. Sharing reasons for leaving NWYM	<i>May 7</i> 6:30 p.m. Business Meeting with a minute of recommendation from the leadership team

### What are the thoughts of the pastors?

As your pastors, we love the NFC community and desire to serve and lead with open hands and hearts. Throughout the difficulties over the last couple of years, we've had to walk a careful road. We desire to be open and transparent and to share our perspective of God's leading; and we also want to honor and submit to the community's right to make decisions about how we will act as a united church community.

We now face a difficult decision as a church: remain in NWYM or choose to leave, either to become an independent Friends church or to join a new yearly meeting, which has yet to be formed.

Some have asked our opinion or perspective on this decision, which we offer to the community as one part of the discernment process. As pastors, we believe the actions taken by the Administrative Council demonstrate a change in leadership style, in identity of who can be members in NWYM and a change in tenor and tone. It is not the same yearly meeting it has been. As individuals, we do not feel called to continue as pastors with NWYM.

In addition, the breadth of perspectives held by our pastors is more inclusive than a strict application of Faith and Practice would allow.

Our desire is to be in a faith community that is not defined in the way the restructure defines NWYM. We believe that a move to an independent Friends church allows us to prioritize our local commitment to each other at NFC and to pursue non-official relationships and partnership with camps, global outreach ministries, and Friends churches in NWYM and the newly formed yearly meeting.

We want to clearly state that we respect the right of the business meeting to decide NFC's affiliation. We want NFC to thrive with whatever affiliation our community makes.

### The tone of our decision making:

There is within us, collectively and individually, a tendency to criticize both the people and the process that have led us to this place of restructuring. Venting our feelings is helpful to a degree, but now is the time to delve deeper into what it means to be Friends of Jesus as well as friends and family to one another. May we continue to pray that we can move beyond blame toward hope and beyond woundedness to healing. May we choose to trust that others are acting with good intent. May we share our convictions with honesty and respect, and submit to each other as we seek God's direction.

### Community guidelines for this discernment process:

Let us prepare as we enter into business together as a respectful, worshipful Quaker community:

*I enter this space with gratitude for God's presence and love.  
I recognize the Light of Christ's presence in us all, even in those with whom I disagree.  
If led to speak, I will do so with humility and respect as I ask questions or seek to share my perspective.  
I will seek to create a safe place for all to be heard and to listen.*

### Background documents available:

- [NWYM elders' letter](#) releasing West Hills (Jul. 2015)
- NFC document from Phil Smith, elders, and pastors [describing process of appeal](#) (Nov. 2015)
- Study Resources: [Book List](#) (Nov. 2015), [videos](#) from discussion groups (Apr. 2016)
- [NFC elders' statement](#) on diversity (Jan. 2017)
- Administrative Council [announcement of YM restructuring](#) (Jan. 2017)
- The current Faith and Practice [statements on human sexuality](#)
- The current [Mission, Vision, and Values](#) statements of NFC
- 7 • [Definitions and Acronyms](#)



**March 5, 2017**—Two days later, without business-meeting approval, NFC was thrust into a discernment process, beginning with an informational gathering led by the elders.

**March 13, 2017**—AHG leaders pinpointed their main concerns with the process by creating a document to present to the elders and requested an audience. That evening, three persons representing the AHG met with the elders and went through this document with them.

To: The Elders of Newberg Friends Church (NFC)  
From: a Group of NFC Members  
Re: Concerns Regarding the Discernment Process for Determining the Future of NFC  
Date: March 13, 2017

On March 2, a group of about forty members of NFC met to discuss issues that have arisen from the response of the leadership of NFC to the recent actions of the Administrative Council of NWYM. On the following day, we received the Discernment Process document that compounded these issues and resulted in a significant rise in the number of concerned members about the process that will determine the future of NFC. Here are some of our concerns:

- The process for discernment was sent to the congregation just 48 hours before the Information Meeting and that meeting was structured in a way to minimize debate over the legitimacy of the process.
- So far the only input on the process has come from the pastors and elders.
- The statement from the pastors that they do not feel “called to continue as pastors in NWYM” has created a serious conflict of interest in that the pastors are overseeing a process in which they stand to gain or lose their vocational employment.
- The survey strikes us as unfair and slanted in a number of ways, including:
  - While stipulating the NWYM Faith and Practice statement on human sexuality, it offers no guidance on what an “independent Friends Church” position on these same issues would be.
  - It specifies that the NWYM statement on human sexuality will remain as currently published without taking into account the possibility of an amendment to that statement.
  - Question 10 of the survey with the phrase “would have to” suggests that NFC does not currently align its practices with the Faith and Practice statement on human sexuality.
  - The inclusion of children as young as eleven to take this kind of survey is inappropriate.
  - Completing the surveys before the listening forums take place seems backwards.

We therefore appeal to the Elders to take the following actions:

- Have the pastors recuse themselves from the final discernment meeting and not be present at the following business meeting.
- Throughout the discernment process, name a new clerk who has a reputation for fairness. We recommend Phil Smith.
- Include the addition of the following four persons to participate with the church leaders in the review of the surveys: Ron Stansell, Tabitha Greller, Clyde Thomas, and Judy Woolsey.
- Exclude survey results submitted by children of ages 11-15.
- Respond in writing to these appeals as soon as possible, but no later than one week from tonight. (Send to Hank Helsabeck – hhelsabeck@georgefox.edu)

**March 21, 2017**—The elders responded.

To: A Group of NFC Members  
From: The NFC Elders  
Re: Concerns Regarding the Discernment Process  
Date: March 21, 2017

The elders met until 10pm on March 13 and again on March 20 discussing your concerns and other significant issues. We want to start by saying we acknowledge the discernment process is not going the way we anticipated. We have heard from many within our congregation who are saddened by the distrust that is occurring.

Here is our feedback on the written points and a couple other concerns shared with us on March 13:

- **Timeframe of receiving the process for discernment and minimizing debate.** Although the dates were mentioned in church and in your NFC for our discernment process several weeks ahead, the process was still being clarified right up until March 2. We agree it would have been helpful to have it sooner. The decision to limit debate at the Information meetings and delay input from the congregation until the listening forums on April 23 relates to the hurtful comments that surface in large group gatherings at NFC. Our

goal is to receive input from individuals through the survey, share that with the congregation on April 9 and then listen to each other without debate on April 23. Our intent is that those sharing at 2pm will be advocates for staying with NWYM (everyone else listening including the pastors, elders, and clerks) and those sharing at 6pm will be advocates for leaving (everyone else listening including pastors, elders, and clerks).

- **So far the only input on the process has come from the pastors and elders.** Given the reaction from your group and others, we agree that the process should be reviewed and modified as needed by a wider representation of the congregation.
- **The timing for when pastors should share the statement that they do not feel “called to continue as pastors in NWYM” is significant.** One perspective is that it reveals a conflict of interest. Another perspective is that it clarifies an important ramification of choosing to stay or leave NWYM that impacts all of us in terms of leadership and budget. It is important to note that 3 pastors have already resigned from leadership at NFC since October 2016.

cont'd on page 9



Knowing the position of the remaining pastors at the beginning of this process seems important.

- **We don't believe the survey questions are unfair or slanted. Here are our thoughts about the issues you raised.**
  - We can't know what statement, if any, an Independent Friends Church might make on human sexuality, but we could have stated that it is likely to be a more inclusive church allowing for greater diversity of opinion and membership than reflected in current NWYM faith and practice, but not welcoming and affirming to the same extent as might be expected in a new yearly meeting.
  - If the AC believed there was a possibility of a revision to the statement on human sexuality that would be acceptable to both the conservative and progressive branches of NWYM in the near future, it is doubtful that they would have decided we have to reorganize at this time.
  - Question #10 says "Understanding that NFC would be required to align our practices with the current F&P, I want NFC to remain part of NWYM". This question emphasizes a context in which NWYM has decided to move forward in a way that settles an issue on which there is diverse opinion about practice. Hopefully question #10 will provide feedback on whether or not NFC respondents agree with this way of resolving the controversy.
  - Question #10 also relates to a question that was raised by Tom Greller at our meeting on 3/13/17 concerning the elders' affirmation and support of Faith and Practice so we want to go on record as saying: Newberg Friends Church, both pastors and elders, remain in compliance with the NWYM Faith and Practice. We are in submission to NWYM to uphold Faith and Practice. While we do not all see the current "Christian Witness to Human Sexuality" as reflecting our personal convictions, we comply with it and accept it as the current position of NWYM and NFC.
  - The results of the survey will be reported by age category as well as other variables. We decided parents of middle school youth are best qualified to know if their children are mature enough to take the survey which is why parent approval was required for ages 11-15.

- We discussed whether to do the survey before the listening forums or after. There are good reasons for each. We decided it might be helpful to encourage individuals to both understand the issues and express their thoughts early on so that those advocating for staying or leaving would have objective data of where the rest of the congregation stands in this process. We hope the results of the survey will provide some clarification of ramifications as a foundation for decision making.

We have discussed the appeals you have made and offer these ideas in an effort to reduce some of the distrust that currently exists:

Although we cannot change the survey questions or that we indicated both on the survey and in the first information meeting that only the pastors and elders would read the comments, we did decide to hire an outside evaluator to analyze the results of the first 11 questions and prepare a report prior to the information session on April 9.

- We decided a representative from the congregation will be asked to assist Gregg in evaluating which surveys should be excluded from analysis based on the respondents' names. We think long time members, Clyde Thomas or Ron Stansell, will know most of the respondents so one of them is a good choice. Criteria recommended by the elders are that all surveys should be included unless a) names are not recognized as associated with NFC, b) only first names are used, or c) fake names are used. If duplicate surveys occur, only the last survey should be counted.
- Your other appeal suggestions regarding the discernment process need input from the broader congregation, but we agree that more representation from members and attenders is important. Our desire is to allow for NFC to reorganize in ways that are honoring to Christ and reflect His love and care for all of us.

## March 2017—The AHG distributed a FAQ document to help clarify their position.

### Frequently Asked Questions Created and distributed by "Newberg Friends Supporting NW Yearly Meeting" March 2017

#### 1. Who are we?

- We are a collection of individuals who "found each other" after the elders announced our church's discernment process. This diverse group represents different age groups, different theological backgrounds (including life-long Quakers), and a collection of surprisingly different political perspectives. Still, we unite around the Faith and Practice of Northwest Yearly Meeting (NWYM) and Newberg Friends Church (NFC) in regard to marriage and human sexuality. *We want NFC to remain part of NWYM.* Our group is open to any who agree with this statement.
- We do not like to disagree, fight, or choose sides and have avoided it as long as we could. Given the decision NFC faces, we now feel compelled to stand up for our convictions and for our congregation's relationship with NWYM.
- This is not a personal matter concerning individual elders, pastors, or clerk but about the vast difference we see in biblical interpretation about marriage and human sexuality.
- Most of us recognize a particular slant in the discernment process and survey.

#### 2. What is NFC's decision really about?

- Some say our decision is about the tone of recent actions of the NWYM Administrative Council; others say our decision is about same-sex marriage as practiced at West Hills Friends Church and elsewhere; others say our decision is over biblical interpretation; others say it is about authority. In a secondary way, we believe it involves *all* of these elements.
- Since our pastors have announced their intention to leave NWYM, they have become part of the mix of factors as well.
- The crux of our decision is what the Bible says about marriage and human sexuality.

#### 3. How many options do we really have as a congregation?

- The elders and pastors laid out an internally inconsistent discernment process. They describe the *three* options as:
  - Remain part of NWYM (marriage is for one man and one woman)
  - Join the new yearly meeting (presumably will affirm same-sex marriage)
  - Become an independent church (without form or declarations)

yet...

- When we gather for listening groups on April 23, only two groups are offered:
  - Favor remaining in NWYM
  - Favor leaving NWYM

- Sadly, over recent months and even years, many have left NFC in great pain because they felt our church was being led in a direction they could not support. They have found other places to worship and cannot have a voice in our discernment process.

#### 4. Why not become an independent Friends church? Can't we just agree to disagree?

- This sounds like an attractive option, yet ten years of attempts to find common ground at the NWYM level failed to satisfy both viewpoints and neither was satisfied. A compromise could work for the short term, but what happens when a same-sex couple asks to be married at the independent church? Or when same-sex individuals who were married elsewhere ask to be trusted with positions of leadership in the church. Will "agree to disagree" work then?
- Consider the real probability that the result of the discernment process causes many to leave, redistributing the viewpoints of those who remain in the independent church, now heavily weighted toward the LGBTQ-affirming side.
- "Agreeing to disagree" appeals most to those for whom same-sex marriage is unimportant. Those who *do* care, both pro and con, do not find this option satisfactory.

#### 5. Why should we remain part of NWYM?

- God designed his church to be a community of followers, all in accountable fellowship with one another—not for independence of either individuals or congregations. Independence can easily lead to trouble, as can be observed throughout history. Interdependence is his design.
- Being part of the larger fellowship involves George Fox University, our missionary-sending and supporting organizations, the rich ministry of our camps and retreats, fellowship with other churches, and more. Add to that the sense of directly continuing the historic and effective ministry of NFC and NWYM that goes back more than 125 years.
- If not connected to NWYM, NFC will lose the support that exists through Faith and Practice, soundly based on historic interpretations of Scripture.
- As one of the stronger congregations in NWYM, we have opportunities to serve and encourage other congregations.

#### 6. But what will happen if we stay in NWYM, since all of our pastors will leave NFC?

- If God allows NFC to remain faithful to NWYM's Faith and Practice, we can trust him to help find new leadership in moving forward. We are sad our pastors have chosen to leave because they have served the NFC community with loving compassion. The future has not been discussed, but we imagine most have been asking the same question.

#### 7. Isn't the Faith and Practice statement on human sexuality harsh and condemning?

- Many have expressed this, and both sides agree. In fact, several of our group have worked toward an improved, more gracious statement. Here is one example of the kind of statement many could support:

##### Christian Witness to Human Sexuality

Scripture repeatedly warns us against adultery and other sexual sins. Our creator gives us such guidelines out of infinite love for us. As followers of Jesus, we welcome to our meetings any person who is open to the light of Christ, including those tempted by or in bondage of any sin. We affirm monogamy as the fitting pattern of marriage, symbolized in the marriage of the Lamb and his bride. We do not affirm same-sex marriage, as it is counter to scriptural teaching.

#### 8. You are hard on the pastors and elders. Why?

- If any of us has said or written harsh words, repentance and apologies are due. Our desire is to express our convictions about issues and the discernment process while speaking truth with love.
- As we share our profound differences of viewpoint, we all—on both sides—should resist interpreting them as attacks.
- It is possible—even probable—that individuals of any perspective will unintentionally misunderstand the other, resulting in hurt feelings. In these difficult times, we need to be the first to offer grace to the other.
- Many people have been hurt. No one has a corner on offending or being offended.

#### 9. I don't like taking sides. Must I?

- No one has to choose a side in this process. But it follows that any who avoid involvement in the distasteful discernment process need to be prepared to follow the final decision.
- We encourage everyone to stand up and speak for themselves and what they believe, not count on others to speak for us. We also encourage everyone to speak their convictions with grace and civility.

#### 10. What if Newberg Friends Church doesn't do anything?

- If our congregation did not have a process for discernment, we would, by default, remain a part of NWYM.

#### 11. What's all the fuss over the discernment process laid out by the elders and pastors?

- Many of us feel that since most of the discernment team already favor leaving NWYM, the process is skewed from the very beginning. We believe a more balanced and representative group should lead the discernment process.
- The elders and pastors want us to trust them, yet they have gone on record as opposing and not trusting the NWYM Elders and Administrative Council decisions.

This handout was created by the "Newberg Friends Supporting NW Yearly Meeting" group. You may share it with anyone. If you have questions or want a digital copy, e-mail Ad Hoc Secretary at <inthebeginningonene@gmail.com>



**March 2017**—Those who designed the discernment process also oversaw the creation of the survey. Many on the AHG and even some from the other side believed it was biased in the way it presented the options, some felt it was confusing or found it difficult to answer with integrity. In well-attended AHG prayer gatherings we sought help from above, feeling the only way to “save” our church was through God’s work.

#### Yearly Meeting Restructuring Survey for Newberg Friends Church

Because of the Yearly Meeting decision to restructure, all churches have decisions to make. NFC could remain a part of NWYM, which will be organized around the current Faith and Practice Statement regarding human sexuality. Or NFC could leave NWYM. In this restructuring period, churches that leave keep ownership of buildings and property.

If NFC leaves NWYM, we could choose to join a yet-to-be-formed new yearly meeting, which will be organized around a new Faith and Practice that affirms full participation of LGBTQ people [link to definitions] and likely would affirm same-sex marriage. Or NFC could choose to be an independent Friends congregation, choosing non-official relationships and partnerships with camps, global outreach ministries, and Friends churches in both NWYM and the newly formed yearly meeting.

This survey is not a vote to make the final decision. The survey has two purposes. One, it will help all of us think through issues around the decision ahead of us. Two, we hope to gather input from a wide range of our regular attenders as we begin this process. Sometimes Quakers have had “threshing” meetings before decision-making meetings, to thresh out important information. Think of this survey in that way, as a helpful part of our later decision-making process.

**THIS SURVEY IS INTENDED FOR MEMBERS AND REGULAR ATTENDERS OF NFC.**

\* 1. Name (REQUIRED FIELD. Your name will not be made public with your specific responses. Elders, clerks, and pastors will see the raw data of the surveys, but everyone else will only see anonymous summaries of data.)

2. Age (check one):

- ☐ 11-17  
☐ 18-35  
☐ 36-50  
☐ 51-65  
☐ 66-80  
☐ 80+

3. Within the last year I have participated at Newberg Friends Church in the following ways (check all that apply):

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday school teacher/volunteer | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace and Justice committee  | <input type="checkbox"/> Love INC volunteer                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth volunteer                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Making/serving coffee        | <input type="checkbox"/> Faith in Action                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music ministry                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Bible Fellowship     | <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat for Humanity                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular financial giver to NFC  | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening Life groups        | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood ministry                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Support global outreach partner | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday school                | <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer group                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stewards committee              | <input type="checkbox"/> NFC Women's Retreat          | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle school or high school youth group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elders committee                | <input type="checkbox"/> Twin Rocks Men's Retreat     | <input type="checkbox"/> Bible quizzing                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trustees committee              | <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage Encouragement Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Refugee response committee               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cemetery committee              | <input type="checkbox"/> JOY Breakfast                | <input type="checkbox"/> Small group                              |

4. During 2017, I have participated in the following worship gatherings (check all that apply):

- ☐ First Service (9:00 am) ☐ Second Service (10:45 am) ☐ Taizé Service (6 pm)  
☐ None

5. I have attended Newberg Friends Church (check one):

- ☐ Less than a year ☐ 1-5 years ☐ 6-10 years ☐ Over 10 years

After the restructure, Northwest Yearly Meeting will be composed of meetings who align their practices with the current Faith and Practice. Here is the statement on Human Sexuality:

#### [From p. 11] Christian Witness to Human Sexuality

We hold that only marriage is conducive to godly fulfillment in sexual relationships for the purposes of reproduction and enrichment of life. We consider sexual intimacy outside marriage as sinful because it distorts God's purposes for human sexuality. We denounce, as contrary to the moral laws of God, acts of homosexuality, sexual abuse, and any other form of sexual perversion (see "Human Sexuality," p. 80). The church, however, as a community of forgiven persons, remains loving and sensitive to those we consider in error. Because God's grace can deliver from sins of any kind, we are called to forgive those who have repented and to free them for participation in the church.

[Excerpt from p. 80; read the whole context at this link]

[Added in 1982] ...Friends believe that the practice of sexual perversion in any form is sinful and contrary to the God-ordained purposes in sexual relationships. These perversions include sexual violence, homosexual acts, transvestism, incest, and sex acts with animals. The sin nature is capable of vile affections when humankind rejects the moral laws of God.

Scriptures relating to these distorted and perverse forms of sexuality include Genesis 19:1-13; Deuteronomy 22:5; Leviticus 18:20, 22, 23; Romans 1:24-28; 1 Corinthians 5:1, 2 and 6:9-20. Neither in the Scriptures nor in church history have these practices been regarded as consistent with righteous living.

Friends do not accept as members those involved in these perverse practices; neither do they permit them to hold positions of responsibility or leadership in the church. However, Friends believe that the grace of God is adequate to cleanse and deliver from all sin (1 John 1:9; 2 Corinthians 5:17), and they desire to be tender and sensitive to all people, ready to express kindness, love, and forgiveness...

6. I agree with and support the current NWYM Faith and Practice statement on human sexuality.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Unsure or Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

7. I want to be part of a church with a clear statement on human sexuality.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Unsure or Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

8. I am willing to be in a church with diversity of belief about human sexuality.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Unsure or Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

9. I want to be part of a church that values having people with different perspectives on many important issues of faith.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Unsure or Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

10. Understanding that Newberg Friends Church would be required to align our practices with the current statement in Faith and Practice on human sexuality, I want NFC to remain in Northwest Yearly Meeting

- ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Unsure or Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

11. If Newberg Friends Church chooses to leave Northwest Yearly Meeting, do you think NFC should (choose one)

- ☐ Become an independent Friends church  
☐ Join the new, welcoming and affirming yearly meeting  
☐ Unsure

12. Additional comments



**April 9, 2017**—Help in analyzing the survey was neither requested nor any offer accepted from anyone on the AHG. Nonetheless, the results were announced, showing approximately half the congregation wanted to leave NWYM, half wanted to stay. **No consensus was reached to leave, therefore NFC would stay in NWYM.**

**April 23, 2017**—Two listening forums were held—one for those who wanted to leave NWYM to share, one for those who wanted to stay.

**April 2017**—NFC's children's pastor, Michelle Akins, resigned, effective June 30, 2017.

**May 2017**—Pastors/elders/clerks published a public invitation in the May 12 issue of *Your NFC* to those interested in starting an independent Friends church.

**invitation**

This Sunday at 6 p.m. in the sanctuary,  
come join in a time of worship, business,  
and corporate visioning for a  
church outside NWYM.

RSVP for childcare and transportation  
from Friendsview at  
[independentfriendsnewberg@gmail.com](mailto:independentfriendsnewberg@gmail.com).

Another way to join the conversation is  
**this form with five visioning questions.**

**Visioning Questions for a New Work**

A significant portion of our congregation at Newberg Friends Church feels called to branch out into a Meeting independent from NWYM. As we seek to keep our congregation as whole as possible during this transition, we must discern together what is our shared vision apart from NWYM.

In addition to meeting together to share each other's vision, it is important to be thinking about these things and sharing them with each other in whatever way we can.

This questionnaire aims to:

- get people thinking about vision for a new work,
- allow us to see what vision we share in common,
- and share our vision with one another.

What is life-giving about Newberg Friends that you want to take forward to this new community?

Your answer:

What has not felt possible at Newberg Friends that you hope to be possible in this new community?

Your answer:

What is necessary in order for you to include yourself in a church community?

Your answer:

What is your vision for what a church should do or be?

Your answer:

**Visioning Questions for a New Work**

\* Required

Thank you for your interest!

We deeply appreciate you taking the time to contribute to our shared vision!

Could we get your name? (We won't share it with anyone without your permission) \*

Your answer:

I'd like to do more!  
If you would like to be involved in other ways, there are many things to be done!

I would like to...

- ☐ Be placed on a meeting list so I know what meetings will happen
- ☐ Get involved with the visioning task force
- ☐ Hear about other ways to get involved
- ☐ Commit to pray for this adventure

Please enter your email address so we know where to contact you:

Your answer:

Back Submit

**May 5, 2017**—NFC's administrative pastor, Elizabeth Sherwood, resigned.

**May 10, 2017**—Clerks sent this response to congregation "group leaders." [p. 12]



Dear Friends in Christ:

We, your clerks, heard on Sunday a wide range of visions for the future of Newberg Friends Church. We see in the congregation evidence that positions are hardening, and groups are readying to take unilateral action which may lead to a bitter split, with relationships broken and both sides left in a precarious condition on multiple levels.

Because we believe such an outcome would grieve the Holy Spirit and gravely mar the Church's witness in Newberg, the Pacific Northwest, and around the world, we are committed to working persistently to help the congregation find a path in keeping with the Spirit's leading, allowing us to maintain loving relationships and Christian ministry whether as one congregation, two congregations, or whatever other outcome God may have for us.

**We do not feel clear to call another congregational meeting at this time. Instead, we ask each of the emerging congregations to send five people to a meeting as soon as possible to discuss together the possible ways forward.**

At this point we see this as a one-time meeting, facilitated by the two of us as congregational clerks, to explore the range of options the congregation might have, and to assess the prospects for working together to reach the best possible outcome. Whether the group will have other meetings will emerge from the group's discernment of the Spirit's leading.

We do not expect this meeting to reach clarity about the outcome. What we are hoping for is clarity about the next steps: what people can do, what they are willing to do, what is possible.

We would like this meeting to occur as soon as possible. To that end, we call the meeting for Saturday morning, May 13 from 10-12. We will meet in one of the Barclay rooms.

As for whom to send, we leave that to your group's discernment of the Spirit's leading. We think thoughtful people representative of the diversity

of opinion and experience in your group, and who have the respect of the rest of your group's members, would be the most likely candidates. We expect the meeting will not be easy, so people who are not too daunted by tensions might be candidates. But these are our human thoughts; send whomever the Spirit seems to favor.

We ask for five people from each group to keep the meeting balanced and personal.

One or both of us can come to your group's meeting Wednesday or Thursday evening to answer your questions if you like. We are also happy to answer questions via email.

We pray for all of you, and that our work as clerks, including this letter, can be a tool for God's grace in all our lives.

In Christ,

Mark Ankeny  
Presiding Clerk

Ron Mock  
Co-Assistant Clerk

PS: This effort is not intended to replace the transition team which we are also forming to help manage the logistics of transitions facing us no matter what choices we make about the future of our congregation. It is ok - in fact, it might be good -- to send your two representatives to the Transition Team to this meeting as part of your delegation.

**May 21, 2017**—At the end of a meeting of the “Group of 12” (five representatives from each “side” plus two clerks) the clerks announced that the goal of the next meeting on May 28 was to come up with 2 or 3 scenarios by the end of the meeting. Sometime during the intervening week, Ron Stansell (one of the 5 from AHG) sent the clerks this letter reiterating their position. [p. 13]



To Mark Ankeny, Ron Mock and Phil Smith  
Subject: May 28 Group of 13

Hi, Mark,

I trust your trip is going well. Sorry for adding business to business. In preparation for the Group of 13 meeting Sunday evening, our group of five wants to give you a "heads up" on our desires for that evening. Respectfully, we were not entirely pleased with your informational release to the community last week. Yes, you altered a couple of things in response to my comments, and I appreciate that, but the overall impression still falls far short of the "scenario" we perceive as the only way forward. The "scenario" that follows is what we hope can receive a clear hearing to the point that others in the group can repeat back to us what they hear us saying. The following three points were presented last meeting, but they were not dealt with well. Point three was not discussed at all. The three points again:

1. NFC is a congregation of the Quaker tradition and part of NWYM that practices consensus in finding the will of the Lord in decision making. Since we lack a consensus by the congregation to move in a different direction, NFC remains part of NWYM.

2. Because we are a congregation of NWYM, it is not appropriate to ask us to participate in the creation of another congregation outside of NWYM with significant differences from ours in theology and organizational structure. Those who cannot in good conscience remain part of NFC should accept the responsibility to take a course of action that allows them to be free to pursue their calling.

3. Multiple groups with sharply differing theologies who attempt to share facilities and assets are headed for on-going conflict over space usage and program content. Sharing facilities would also bring confusion in the community about the identity of NFC.

We actually do not see ourselves negotiating toward any additional scenarios with a group that has yet to establish a clear identity and is not a decision-making body for NFC. Of course, neither is our affinity group a decision-making body. It seems to us there needs to be a clear recognition of that disunity through minuted action by a congregational meeting. Is this not something our group of 13 can discuss and forward a recommendation for official action? I think we can together respectfully accomplish that and then feel more liberated. It may well be that NFC will need the help of yearly meeting officials as the NFC congregation puts into place new clerks, elders and pastoral staff, plus fill other standing committees that will have vacancies.

Those who plan to leave NFC are taking the opportunity to organize and follow through on their sense of calling, which the NWYM Affinity groups should work to respect and accept. We as a group of five and our steering committee will commit

ourselves to lead those who wish to stay toward respectful disagreement. Once a group of those who want to leave have submitted their resignations of membership and have duly organized, then we may have opportunities to discuss additional more minor scenarios in the separation process. That process need not be closed off at this point.

The NWYM Affinity group has a number of concrete ideas swirling about to invigorate NFC and move forward with enthusiasm and joy. We want to sow seeds of hope for intergenerational worship and teaching, fresh evangelism, a prayer movement and a commitment to world missions. It has felt presumptive on our part to dictate the future of a congregation whose current leadership is leaving the yearly meeting, leaving a significant number who will remain in the yearly meeting.

There it is, Mark. Our expectation is that a clarification of our three points will constitute a major part of our agenda, followed by a discussion of a minute of respectful disunity to be presented to the congregational meeting. We have discussed the three points thoroughly with the entire Ad Hoc Group and have received a resounding affirmation that this is the route we desire to see taken. A minute of disunity sounds strange to my ears, but it seems like a respectful liberation of one another without further wrangling. If such a minute does not receive approval by the congregation and we do not see resignations from elders and clerks planning to leave the yearly meeting, it seems our only recourse is a request for intervention by yearly meeting officials so that we can move ahead.

Sincerely,

Ron Stansell

On behalf of the NWYM Affinity group and the group of five (Hank Helsabeck, Richard Sartwell, Dave Woolsey, Julie Anderson and Ron Stansell)

**May 28, 2017**—The "Group of 12" met the following week. The clerks distributed the following document [p. 14] for consideration although the five who wanted to stay in NWYM had continued to remind the others that NFC was currently a NWYM church with no consensus to leave. NFC would not be dividing into two congregations. All were welcome to stay. Those who chose to leave NFC could start a new church if they desired, but NFC had no obligation to share its assets.



## Potential Scenario

### Queries:

**How can we use our resources to maximize ministry for both meetings?**  
**How can we share/manage/split our resources in ways that maximize reconciliation between both meetings?**

Given those queries, the sketched out "scenario" below is less concerned with what's perceived as equal or fair, and more concerned with maximizing those values. The scenario below is a starting point considering and addressing both of the queries above; negotiation and changes should do the same.

### Needs of Both Communities to Maximize Ministry:

**1) Buildings/Meeting Space:** Both meetings need effective facilities for large- and small-group gatherings and office space for staff.

—NFC main building is released to the meeting staying in NWYM (hereafter 'NWYM meeting').

—The name Newberg Friends Church is also released to the NWYM meeting.

—For historical and financial reasons, Friends Cemetery stays with the NFC main building and the NWYM meeting.

—Friends Center (2nd street) is released to the Independent Friends Church (hereafter 'independent meeting'). This provides a potential meeting space for the independent meeting and/or a salable asset (see #2).

—The independent meetings asks the NWYM meeting to consider renting usage of the main NFC building to the independent meeting, after asset distribution is finalized, at an appropriate market rate (possibly at an alternate time - e.g. Sunday late afternoon or evening - for subsequent discussion). This helps provide cash flow to the NWYM meeting and allows the possibility for independent church members to continue meeting in the facility they are accustomed to.

—Independent meeting to have right-of-first-refusal in the event of a sale of the NFC main building, at 50% of FMV for 20 years. In the unlikely event of such a sale, this would provide the possibility of the historic building remaining under the care and use of a descendant of NFC.

Recommendation: the NWYM meeting should consider offering space in the main NFC building to the Latino congregation. Los Amigos is tied tightly to the Yearly Meeting; we anticipate they would appreciate continued relationship with the

—'Airporter' released to NWYM meeting. This supports continued service to and from Friendsview.

—1 van released to independent meeting

Any other vehicles TBD, based on consideration of the ministry needs of each body.

### 6) Designated funds

Each designated fund to be considered jointly and assigned to the meeting most closely associated with or leading that ministry.

#### Possible Examples:

—Wood ministry fund released to the NWYM meeting

—Refugee Response fund released to independent meeting

—Compassionate care fund split equally

...

### 7) Other

—Musical equipment, decorations, etc. to be considered at a later time.

#### Details:

Taxes: Transfer of property will not represent a sale, but will be mutual gifts or for another non-taxable transfer purpose

### Needs of Both Meetings to Maximize Reconciliation:

Goal: Create time and space where those from each meeting can gather for ministry and worship.

#### Ideas:

—Plan a joint picnic on the NFC lawn and worship together on Labor Day.

—Plan a joint Christmas Eve service

—Annual events (like this) where we gather for worship together

Perhaps in the first couple of years (until this becomes a bit routinized) we have a committee with members from both meetings that plan events, and fosters partnering in some of our ministries. The goal is to maintain relationships, to affirm our mutual respect for each other's ministry and convictions, to celebrate and honor our historic connection to each other, and to bear witness to what peace-making can look like to our Newberg community.

NWYM meeting. This also provides continued meeting space for Los Amigos in the event the independent church elects to sell Friends Center.

**2) Reserve funds and Staffing:** Both meetings need stability in pastoral equipping and guidance. Each will have ongoing income, but will need sufficient reserve funds to release staff without risk of insolvency. Current NFC general funds are not sufficient to provide safe reserves for both meetings

—One rental house to be released to the independent meeting - the middle of the three in value (note: we believe the three rental houses are roughly equal in value, but an independent appraisal can confirm that).

—Remaining NFC general funds and reserves are released to the NWYM meeting at the conclusion of the asset distribution process.

—The NWYM meeting agrees that business registration and fundraising by the independent meeting will not be considered 'leaving' NFC or terminate the process of asset distribution.

Recommendation: The NWYM meeting should consider selling one or both of the remaining rental houses to replenish reserve funds, and/or to replenish the cemetery endowment.

### 3) Office supplies

—4 sets office equipment (desk, chair, filing cabinets, shelving, etc.) to be released to the independent meeting (leaving approximately 3-4 remaining in the current office for the NWYM meeting).

### 4) Children's Ministry Equipment

To be released to the independent meeting (remainder to NWYM meeting):

—1 complete set of Godly play (of the 2 NFC owns)

—1/2 of curriculum room and classroom supplies

—1/2 of nursery equipment and supplies

—1/2 of toddler and child toys

Note: this section may be reconsidered or renegotiated if the independent meeting rents space from the NWYM meeting and shares these supplies.

### 5) Vehicles

Other ministries we might partner in:

—Wood ministry

—Care of cemetery

—Peace and social justice



**June 4, 2017**—The AHG, now publicly welcome to meet at NFC, gathered after worship for a pot-luck lunch. Steve Fawver attended and encouraged the “NWYM NFC group” to name a nominating committee to suggest names to fill anticipated vacancies and to begin securing future standing committee members as needed. He suggested there may be profitable consultations between departing standing committee members with new appointees to communicate structures, hand off processes, and care for dangling details.

**June 5, 2017**—Transition tactics were laid out. Steve Fawver offered to serve as a transition administrator for two or preferably three months...was willing to be a part of a worship planning team and willing to preach if so requested but understands that may not be appropriate or well accepted. He was okay with remaining behind the scenes...would likely accept a position with the new independent group, but not until October 1 or later. Departing staff members were preparing files, role descriptions, and current assignments. Resignations from “leavers” who were elders, trustees, clerks, stewards, nominating committee, and cemetery committee should be effective June 30.

**June 8, 2017**—AHG expressed concern that the clerks continued to decline their requests to share their “three points” for discussion. [They were finally shared—when asked—in the June 11 meeting.]

Dear Ad Hoc Friends,

Later today you will receive an email from the Newberg Friends Church clerks Mark Ankeny, Phil Smith and Ron Mock. In the email, they will present a minute that they hope the congregation will approve at the Sunday, June 11 business meeting. As your steering team, we want to let you know ahead of time to be on the alert for the email with the clerks’ minute and to study the minute carefully.

We also want to let you know that the minute the clerks are presenting does not take into account the position your five representatives put forth in the meetings of the 12 (and 13). We shared repeatedly in the three meetings the three points that you affirmed as follows:

1. NFC is a congregation of the Quaker tradition and part of NWYM that practices consensus in finding the will of the Lord in decision-making. Since we lack a consensus by the congregation to move in a different direction, NFC remains part of NWYM.
2. Because we are a congregation of NWYM, it is not appropriate to ask us to participate in the creation of another congregation with significant differences from ours in theology and organizational structure. Those who cannot in good conscience remain part of us should accept the responsibility to take a course of action that allows them to be free to pursue their calling.
3. Multiple groups with sharply differing theologies who attempt to share facilities and assets are headed for on-going conflict over space, usage and program content. Sharing facilities would also bring confusion in the community about the identity of NFC.

And, while it seems that those who are separating to form an independent church finally heard us by the end of the last meeting, the clerks’ minute does not honor the position we represented to them at all. Unfortunately, their interpretation of work the NWYM Transition Team has done, seems to authorize the division of assets between NFC and the new independent church that is in the process of organizing. We hope to avoid sharing assets and facilities, if possible.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you be present at the Sunday night business meeting and prayerfully consider, between now and then, how God might be leading you to respond to this minute. We are resolved to be gracious and respectful with our words, but to nonetheless stand firm in our opposition to the clerks’ minute.

Please continue to pray for God’s strength and direction as we all lean into this new challenge.

Your Ad Hoc Steering Team

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
And do not rely on your own insight.  
In all your ways acknowledge him,  
And he will make straight your paths.  
Proverbs 3:5-6



# June 11, 2017—NFC clerks issued a letter to the congregation using language that implied we were dividing into two congregations. Proposed minute. Meeting minutes.

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

## PROPOSED MINUTE

We the members of Newberg Friends Church acknowledge:

- Our beloved church is beginning the process of dividing, with some members wishing to stay in the Northwest Yearly Meeting (NWYM) under the name of Newberg Friends Church, others forming a congregation independent of Northwest Yearly Meeting, and others choosing to attend elsewhere.
- Each group includes people who have been members of Newberg Friends Church for all or most of their lives. Both groups forming new congregations have prayerfully sought God's guidance on the issues that divide us, but have discerned God's will differently.
- None of us wish to leave Newberg Friends Church, but it no longer appears possible to worship, minister, and celebrate together completely in light of the matters of conscience upon which we disagree.

We take note of the Northwest Yearly Meeting's approach to its restructuring marked by a spirit of generosity and mutual grace, as embodied in the following:

- A policy that all churches in the Yearly Meeting, including those who have been released from the Yearly Meeting, will be members of the Yearly Meeting until June 30, 2018;
- Recognition that both those staying in the Yearly Meeting and those leaving are all Christian believers seeking to follow the leading of Christ in their lives;
- A desire, as stated in June 3<sup>rd</sup> NWYM Transition Team's minutes, to be "respectful, fair and impartial", including its recognition "that if a current church splits during their discernment process as a result of the Administrative Council's decision to restructure, and a viable new church is formed, having incorporated and obtained a 501(c)(3), both should be recognized as historical churches of NWYM."
- A declaration in those minutes that current NWYM churches who choose to be independent will retain their property and debts, and access to the Friends Church Extension Fund, and their staff will still have access to the YM pension plan.

Given that both groups within Newberg Friends Church need to take practical measures to prepare for our restructuring, we:

1. Approve the Interim Budget covering the period from July 1 to September 30, 2017.
2. Direct that a Covenant of Separation embodying the details of our restructuring, effective on or before September 30, 2017, be drafted for our approval by a representative group convened by our clerks covering relationships, finances, and other matters, according to the following principles:
  - A. Care will be taken to enable the two congregations to regard each other with mutual respect and affection, and members of both congregations to continue to enjoy warm and caring personal relationships as we interact in the Newberg community.
  - B. All current members of Newberg Friends Church have the right to use its facilities and resources, and the obligation to support the church with prayers, service, and finances as they are able.
  - C. All current members of Newberg Friends Church will remain members until they officially relinquish membership.
  - D. The clerks and the representative group will not rest until they can propose in the Covenant of Separation an allocation of resources that leaves both congregations with the means to be thriving bodies of Christian believers.
  - E. In releasing resources we will be acting in gratitude for the many contributions we all have made to the life of NFC, out of respect for everyone's desire to follow the callings of Jesus as they see them, and in keeping with our desire to act in the spirit of generosity and mutual grace embodied in the Northwest Yearly Meeting's policy toward churches leaving the Yearly Meeting.



**Newberg Friends Church  
Congregational Business Meeting  
Minutes, June 11, 2017 [Draft]**

Presiding clerk Mark Ankeny convened the meeting for worship for the conduct of business at 6:00 pm. He led in prayer. Recognize grief we all share. Personal story: Remembering church approval for his proposed marriage 42 years ago in this place. We have come to diverging pathways; may the Spirit be with us.

**Ron Mock:** Introduced the Statement of affirmation of proposed minutes on behalf of the clerks.

**Proposed Three-Month Budget:** Aaron Dunlop and Chuck Scott presented. See slide presentation and handout.

**Second check signer:** When Elizabeth Sherwood ends her term of employment on June 30 we will have only one check signer, Dave Hampton. We move that we approve John Hutchinson as second signer. **Approved.**

**Three-month budget:** We normally approve an annual budget, but that is not appropriate under current conditions. The stewards have settled on 3-month interim budget; expenses; one pastor. The budget was summarized (see slide presentation and handout). The basis of revenue estimates matches the last 2-3 months of general fund giving. This is our best estimate, including reserves at hand. It is possible to draw from reserves if necessary. The budget lasts until the covenant of separation is complete; if that is sooner than September 30, changes could be made. We must approve some budget in order to make expenditures after July 1. Certain reserves that can be drawn from; not all are available because they are restricted in various ways. The budget may be affected by the work of the Covenant of Separation.

**Mark Ankeny:** Call for approval. **Approved.**

**Mark Ankeny:** It is time to consider the Covenant of Separation proposal, minute. Direct that a Covenant of Separation embodying the details of our restructuring, effective on or before September 30, 2017, be drafted for our approval by a representative group convened by our clerks covering relationships, finances, and other matters, according to the following principles:

**Proposed Minute:**

We the members of Newberg Friends Church acknowledge:

- Our beloved church is beginning the process of dividing, with some members wishing to stay in the Northwest Yearly Meeting (NWYM) under the name of Newberg Friends Church, others forming a congregation independent of Northwest Yearly Meeting, and others choosing to attend elsewhere.
- Each group includes people who have been members of Newberg Friends Church for all or most of their lives. Both groups forming new congregations have prayerfully sought God's guidance on the issues that divide us, but have discerned God's will differently.
- None of us wish to leave Newberg Friends Church, but it no longer appears possible to worship, minister, and celebrate together completely in light of the matters of conscience upon which we disagree.

We take note of the Northwest Yearly Meeting's approach to its restructuring marked by a spirit of generosity and mutual grace, as embodied in the following:

- A policy that all churches in the Yearly Meeting, including those who have been released from the Yearly Meeting, will be members of the Yearly Meeting until June 30, 2018;
- Recognition that both those staying in the Yearly Meeting and those leaving are all Christian believers seeking to follow the leading of Christ in their lives;

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Phil Smith: Julie and I agree on lots of things. These are difficult matters; we need to remember our deepest commitments to each other, but especially to Christ. Julie has spoken directly about matters as she perceives them. We need to hold these things in the light carefully; speak the truth in love. Incendiary words are dangerous. The entire monetary value of NFC could be spent and gone in a generation, but bitter hearts can last for many generations. We need to guard the more important things; this building is not it. This minute is an attempt to move forward; the principles are more important than the specifics. Can we consider the more important things?

Kim McDonough: I am hearing language tonight about assumptions. For example, stayers are the real NFC; they retain building and resources.

**Mark Ankeny:** Yes. But nothing is decided.

Jo Lewis: Phil, using the word "incendiary" is itself incendiary. Church leadership has been one-sided; it is not incendiary to say it has happened; this is part of the tragedy. The wording of minute does not reflect what those who wish to stay desire. Maybe we should approve simply that there will be a Covenant of Separation; I can't agree with minute as it stands.

Ron Stansell: Let me say a couple of things about the clerks; they recognize that separation is taking place and that it should be done with kindness. I sense that we agree about that. I suggest that we limit action to approval of separation taskforce without identifying guiding principles. I pray that with good leadership, a covenant can be done that reflects both perspectives.

Bob Hampton: Membership is an important term but what is the definition? Remain until officially relinquish membership? Do we even have those kinds of rosters? In recent years, the word has been used more loosely. Does not being in agreement with the F&P mean we are not members? My own family is split apart. Even those of us who stay in the YM want some changes; things are written that don't need to be said.

**Mark Ankeny:** It means formal membership in NFC; there are likely many more on the lists than those who actually attend. West Hills, etc., all still considered members until June 30, 2018.

Mauri Macy: I support what Ron Stansell said. Don't encumber the minute with further statements. I have skepticism regarding the process as it has unfolded so far. The minute does not reflect the work of the group of 13.

**Mark Ankeny:** Our job as clerks is to bring what has been perceived.

Mauri Macy: Can it be transparent to the degree that all will have confidence?

Alice Maurer: Is discernment being made regarding who are actually members of NFC as we work on these decisions? Do attendees have the same voice as those who have become formal members? Agreeing to F&P is part of that; maybe they have changed their views.

**Mark Ankeny:** Clerks have not looked at any membership rolls.

Steve McKinney: I appreciate the tone of the meeting this evening. However, I regret the word of "incendiary." But there are evident conflicts of interest. The group of 13 has issues that must be addressed. Membership: different levels of members. Has consideration been given to scope and breadth of these articles of separation? What are the elements that will have to be defined? Needs to be a meeting that prays over this task force. The present document does not articulate all concerns.

Rachel Staley: I have been part of nominating committee for six years. We have tried to be fair. I ask that we refrain from ripping apart our leaders.

Irene Dunlop: The tone of this meeting has become incredibly hurtful. We have been asked to look at this issue by the YM. The YM is taking a grace-filled approach; that of Christ in everyone. What I am hearing from the affinity group that is staying seems to be different.

Robert Bonner: I am shocked by Steve's comment. Am I hearing that there are non-negotiables? Are you saying "There is no use talking about it; I don't care what you think?" John 13:35, "A new commandment I give you...love one another." We must approach this covenant with love, or we are not friends of Jesus, staying or leaving. I hope the idea of "non-negotiable" can be changed.

Lisa McMinn: I was one of the 13. I have been silent, not knowing how to respond. Where can we go with what we heard? We heard from those who are staying, "Just go away." It would be good to see

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- A desire, as stated in June 3rd NWYM Transition Team's minutes, to be "respectful, fair and impartial", including its recognition "that if a current church splits during their discernment process as a result of the Administrative Council's decision to restructure, and a viable new church is formed, having incorporated and obtained a 501(c)(3), both should be recognized as historical churches of NWYM."
- A declaration in those minutes that current NWYM churches who choose to be independent will retain their property and debts, and access to the Friends Church Extension Fund, and their staff will still have access to the YM pension plan.

Given that both groups within Newberg Friends Church need to take practical measures to prepare for our restructuring, we:

1. Approve the Interim Budget covering the period from July 1 to September 30, 2017.
2. Direct that a Covenant of Separation embodying the details of our restructuring, effective on or before September 30, 2017, be drafted for our approval by a representative group convened by our clerks covering relationships, finances, and other matters, according to the following principles:
  - A. Care will be taken to enable the two congregations to regard each other with mutual respect and affection, and members of both congregations to continue to enjoy warm and caring personal relationships as we interact in the Newberg community.
  - B. All current members of Newberg Friends Church have the right to use its facilities and resources, and the obligation to support the church with prayers, service, and finances as they are able.
  - C. [All current members of Newberg Friends Church will remain members until they officially relinquish membership.]
  - D. The clerks and the representative group will not rest until they can propose in the Covenant of Separation an allocation of resources that leaves both congregations with the means to be thriving bodies of Christian believers.
  - E. In releasing resources we will be acting in gratitude for the many contributions we all have made to the life of NFC, out of respect for everyone's desire to follow the callings of Jesus as they see them, and in keeping with our desire to act in the spirit of generosity and mutual grace embodied in the Northwest Yearly Meeting's policy toward churches leaving the Yearly Meeting.

**Discussion:** The following are notes on the discussion as well as the recording clerk was able to capture them:

Jerry Mann: I have a question about the language. Why is there no mention of reason for separation? **Mark Ankeny:** It was assumed everyone would know.

Ron Mock: It didn't occur to me that we needed to state it. We are trying to deal with determining the details. This is a minute, not the content of the covenant.

Jerry Mann: What do you mean by B (current members can use facilities as long as members)?

Ron Mock: The length of membership is addressed in C. Membership.

Jerry Mann: Would it include the right to conduct same-sex marriages?

Hub Mardock: We are a functioning organization. Why do we have to go through this process again? The new group could apply for their own 501-3C.

Julie Anderson: I want to address the idea of restructuring. I read on the website of emerging church "We decry as sinful..." using imbalance of power to our own benefit. However, this minute reflects only one side of the meeting of 13. This is no surprise, since the process has been skewed from beginning; pastors, elders, presiding clerk—all represent the leaving side. We have been leaned on by pastors, elders, clerks for their own benefit. They have abused their power.

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if we can do better than that. How can we move ahead with no more parameters than the group of 13 had? The group of 13 didn't get very far. We just want to follow the heart of Jesus.

Carol Hankins: We have been official members here about 20 years, served in a variety of positions. I grew up in Presbyterian Church because parents experienced so much ugliness in a Baptist Church that they looked for a place they could find an emphasis on love. My father often said there is nothing uglier than a church fight. Dear Friends—you are the body of Christ who more than any other have called out to my heart about Christ's love. Has this evening reflected the love of Christ. I have heard concerns about "re-structuring," wonder if this re-wording might help us get further. Suggested minute: "A representative group be convened by clerks to develop a covenant of separation...focuses on our relationships and finances. Both congregations to be thriving bodies; include principles C & D."

Kati McKee: I have been associated with NFC 10 years; handbells; about five years ago I became a member. This has been a warm and welcoming body to me. When you have been a person of privilege and others come along and ask for fairness and privilege, it can be uncomfortable, like you may lose privilege. Privilege can be shared.

Ron Mock: [Put up on the screen a draft of Carol's (and Ron's) suggestion.]

Phil Smith: We can't get rid of vague phrase "other matters," since other things can come up.

Becky Ankeny: I am also troubled by the idea of "non-negotiables." What are they? And if we cannot agree, does the YM step in and make decision for us? **Mark Ankeny:** Yes, clerks can request that help, but we would prefer to do it ourselves.

Hub Mardock: The staying affinity group had a meeting a couple weeks ago. We discussed things that cannot be done and things that should be done. They were summarized in three points. Dick Sartwell went around the group to ask for confirmation. Everyone unanimously agreed. If you wanted to know what they are, you could have been here. If you folks had come you would know.

**Mark Ankeny:** It should be noted that this was a called meeting of the ad hoc group of those staying.

Ron Stansell: I would not use the term "non-negotiables" to describe the three points. I would say they are three convictions. I support the short version of the minute proposed this evening. But what has been said this evening has shown we cannot talk about these things in a large group. Here are the three "convictions." [The text below is the actual text of the material presented to the group of 13. It is very similar to the recording clerk's notes, but more completely developed.]

1. NFC is a congregation of the Quaker tradition and part of NWYM that practices consensus in finding the will of the Lord in decision making. Since we lack a consensus by the congregation to move in a different direction, NFC remains part of NWYM.
2. Because we are a congregation of NWYM, it is not appropriate to ask us to participate in the creation of another congregation outside of NWYM with significant differences from ours in theology and organizational structure. Those who cannot in good conscience remain part of NFC should accept the responsibility to take a course of action that allows them to be free to pursue their calling.
3. Multiple groups with sharply differing theologies who attempt to share facilities and assets are headed for on-going conflict over space usage and program content. Sharing facilities would also bring confusion in the community about the identity of NFC.

**Mark Ankeny:** I take responsibility for not sharing this. The group of 13 never formally agreed.

Mauri Macy: It seems we are reaching agreement to support starting a task force; but without the detailed principles.

Lisby Curtis-Gemeryer: I have a question about process. Will the covenant have to be approved by the church or will the elders, etc. be empowered to approve?

**Mark Ankeny:** Could we try a two-step process:

1. Short version of establishing representative group convened by elders to develop Covenant of Separation...
- Principles D & E:

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cont'd on page 18



- D. The clerks and the representative group will not rest until they can propose in the Covenant of Separation an allocation of resources that leaves both congregations with the means to be thriving bodies of Christian believers.
- E. In releasing resources we will be acting in gratitude for the many contributions we all have made to the life of NFC, out of respect for everyone's desire to follow the callings of Jesus as they see them, and in keeping with our desire to act in the spirit of generosity and mutual grace embodied in the Northwest Yearly Meeting's policy toward churches leaving the Yearly Meeting.
- Chuck: When persons are selected to be stewards and trustees, it is a unique classification. They have responsibilities that go beyond the doors of this church. There are matters that are legally required. Both "thriving bodies"? We may not be able to do that. There will be restrictions on what we can do. We are willing to serve, but must we must fulfill our obligations.
- Ron Hampton: The idea of "even" might be misleading us. Fair doesn't mean equal. We need to be respectful.
- Mark Ankeny: There are similar issues for both camps. For example, no one wants to sell off camps and divide resources.
- Marvin Walker: I have background as a trustee. We literally helped build a church, but came to believe it was going a very wrong direction. When we left, we didn't feel like we should take anything with us, not even a hymnal. What is driving this need for "fairness"? We should be looking at doctrine and beliefs, not "fairness." Gal. 5; look at rest of chapter; some things we know wrong in the sight of God, including sexual immorality.
- Dick Sartwell: Don't include D and E. There are phrases in both of those paragraphs that will be problematic.
- Denise Lyman: I would like to try to gather us back to basis of the situation. As staff, we have been very close. YM has asked us to deal with these issues. The pastoral staff tried hard to give the church an opportunity to be educated; they provided resources on various views. It became obvious fairly quickly that this church would not be able to come to a consensus; there is conscientious disagreement. But both groups are part of this congregation. I don't want to see either side demonized in this. We couldn't reach congregational consensus; so how can we divide conscientiously?
- Mark Ankeny: I have a responsibility to discern the sense of the meeting. We are willing to have a representative group develop the covenant. Can we empower this group? Do we have to bring it back to congregation? I am trying to follow through with F&P and the group from the NWYM.
- Mauri Macy: I am in agreement with Ron, including the idea that it will have to be "sold" to each group.
- Rich Brown: It makes sense to give the group the opportunity to approve, but... What about idea of "voluntarily" passing it to the YM if the group can't come to a decision?
- Mark Ankeny: I am hearing that the group should develop the covenant, communicate with affinity groups and seek congregational approval. If approval cannot be reached we should ask YM to facilitate. I think we can make this work.
- Chuck Scott: I want to do everything possible to make this happen; I don't want to turn it over to the YM.
- David Andres: There has been recurring issue of trust regarding leaders expressed by some. We have tried to be faithful. We should trust that the clerks, stewards, trustees, and representatives will do their best to develop this covenant.
- Steve Sherwood: I too trust, but echo Lisby and Irene's concern about our lack of consensus. How do we decide? There should be some recognition that we have not done too well with that so far and if we are unsuccessful another alternative like the YM should be in place. We can't assume a so-called default.
- Mark Ankeny: We have not decided that the status quo is the default.
- Steve Sherwood: We are deeply divided. How will we decide?

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- Mark Ankeny: It will behoove us to divide with respect. The Covenant of Separation is a first choice; the YM would be last resort. As a grandparent, disturbs me deeply that my kids are having to deal with this issue, a cloud. I am hopeful we can come back as quickly as possible.
- Steve Gulley: Many ideas have been floating around. Discernment is an important process. The minute has already changed. The empowered group will also use discernment. When the result comes back, we will have another opportunity to discern.
- Mark Ankeny: We have agreed to form the group to develop the Covenant of Separation. The group will bring the Covenant back to congregation for approval. We all want to have this end in a way that ministry can happen in Newberg. We will need names from each affinity group for representatives.

**Formal Minute:** We direct that a representative group be convened by our clerks to develop a Covenant of Separation to be effective on or before September 30, 2017 that focuses on our relationships, finances, and other matters.

The meeting concluded at 8:15 p.m. in prayer led by presiding clerk Mark Ankeny.

The meeting adjourned to meet again at the call of the presiding clerk.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Ankeny, presiding clerk

Phil Smith, co-assistant clerk

Ron Mock, co-assistant clerk

David Sherwood, recording clerk

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## June 19, 2017—The presiding clerk issued their proposed "covenant of separation" (COS).

### Newberg Friends Church Covenant of Separation

June 19, 2017

We, the members of Newberg Friends Church, affirm:

- The image of Christ is in each person and every member is desiring to follow God's call in their life.
- All have prayerfully sought God's guidance on the issues which divide us, but have discerned God's will differently.
- All of our buildings, funds, ministries, and history are worth nothing if our corporate witness for Christ is harmed in our community.

We, the members of Newberg Friends Church, acknowledge:

- Our beloved church is in the process of dividing with some members wishing to remain in the Northwest Yearly Meeting (NWYM) and others wishing to leave NWYM.
- None of us wish to leave Newberg Friends Church, but it no longer appears possible to worship, minister, and celebrate together with our whole hearts in light of disagreements of both broad theological nature and specifically around the area of human sexuality.
- There has been no consensus reached by Newberg Friends Church in a business meeting to remove the church from Northwest Yearly Meeting.

To care for our brothers and sisters in Christ who can no longer sit under the umbrella of NWYM we gift the following in hopes that Christ will bless their ministry:

- The proceeds from the sale of Friends Center will be dispersed as follows:
  - 20% to Los Amigos Hispanic Ministry to provide a new place to worship
  - 30% set in a third-party escrow account to be used solely for the purposes related to Newberg Friends Community Cemetery. This absolves any organization which emerges from Newberg Friends Church from responsibility or liability regarding its perpetual care.
  - 50% set aside in a third-party escrow account to be given to any viable congregation (as defined by NWYM) which emerges from Newberg Friends Church by June 30, 2018.
    - If more than one congregation forms, funds will be allocated based on the number of members in each new congregation on June 30, 2018 and dispersed no later than July 31, 2018.
    - Members leaving NWYM are encouraged to select a few people to assist with the sale.
- Newberg Friends Church also agrees to release the following to the emerging Independent Friends Church:
  - Physical assets:
    - Two vehicles of their choosing
    - One complete set of Godly Play
    - One half of all Nursery and Children's toys except where the toys are an individual's personal property.
    - One half of all curriculum and classroom teaching supplies
  - Restricted funds (approximate amounts, exact amounts will be calculated on the date of disbursement):
    - All of the Refugee Response Fund (\$11,200)
    - One half of the compassionate care fund (\$7,700)
    - One half of the Camp Scholarship fund (\$2,000)
    - One half of the Vehicle Replacement Reserve (\$2,800)
    - One half of the Office Equipment Reserve (\$750)
  - Physical assets and funds are to be released no later than one month from the approval of this covenant.



## June 21, 2017—NFC's agreement with Steve Fawver as interim pastor, prepared by Ron Stansell

Steve Fawver, NFC Interim Pastor

Steve,

I presented a summary of my good visit with you on Monday to the NFC Steering Committee Tuesday evening. The following reflects both my meeting with you and decisions made by the Steering Committee that is functioning as an interim Elders body until the NFC Elder body begins functioning.

1. Steve sees himself as a **bridge** between the retiring pastoral team and the NFC staying congregation. He acknowledged it is for the maximum of three months (July-September) or it might be shorter.

2. Steve feels there are some "bridges" he can create to facilitate for the following:

- **Youth ministries** -- focused on events like camps and outings that are traditional through the summer and would serve both NFC youth and youth of the emerging congregation and some of the cooperation in youth programming that has included North Valley and Second Street for a number of years. It would include supervision and direction over Corban Gronvald (youth coordinator) and Isaac Swan (youth intern) who both see their work actually terminating the end of August, not the end of September. They see this as "summer schedule" work, coordinating details among parents and other volunteers.
- **Building management:** supervision of maintenance and custodial staff, i.e., locking and unlocking the building, preparing for memorial services and weddings.
- **Office management:** assignments to people like Denise and Sherry and/or whatever volunteers might appear. Receptionist hours and covering for one another during office hours.
- **Hospital visitation/emergency calls** until new systems are in place.
- Provide **institutional memory** about files, processes and what has been done in the recent past.

3. Steve expects to submit to and be accountable to the new NFC Elders body or the NFC Steering Committee or a combination of the two during his time of service. It would seem wise to have one contact person with whom Steve can communicate.

4. Steve is willing not to preach and is willing to commit to not being pushy or attempt to convince others of his persuasion to leave the yearly meeting.

5. We have yet to work out a pattern for Steve's involvement in upcoming worship services, but we see it as a behind-the-scenes role primarily.

home as a consultant and occasional "on call" role to facilitate further youth programming and other responsibilities outlined above. We approve of the following arrangements:

- NFC will continue Steve's salary and benefits through the end of August but acknowledge that he will be mostly free after July 28 to pursue other interests.
- During July and August, Steve is requested to supervise youth coordinator Corbin Gronvald and youth intern Isaac Swan, primarily focused on summer youth events.
- We recommend that Steve talk out the new relationships with Corbin and Isaac, with our understanding that their ministries will be completed by August 31. One or more NFC elder can accompany Steve in that conversation if Steve so desires.
- We need to talk with Steve about how youth programming costs are structured and what is included in the interim budget amounts.

Those present at the Steering Committee meeting on Tuesday, June 20, 2017: Dick and Linda Sartwell, Dave and Judy Woolsey, Carl and Julie Anderson, Hank Helsabeck and Ron Stansell.

## July 7, 2017—AHG met to assess proposed COS.



## July 16, 2017—The congregation met to review next steps.

Provisional Meeting for Worship and Business  
Newberg Friends Church  
July 16, 2017

Per agreement of the existing clerks of the meeting, Mark Ankeny, Ron Mock, and Phil Smith; clerk of the elders, Beth LaForce; and Interim Pastor Steve Fawver, the continuing congregation of Newberg Friends Church met for business and worship in the sanctuary of the church building, July 16, 2017, at 7:00 PM.

Provisional clerk of elders, Ron Stansell, opened our meeting with the text of Ephesians 3:14 ff., a prayer for strength, grounding in love, and to be filled with God's fullness. After some moments of quiet waiting, he led in prayer.

Judy Woolsey, clerk of the nominating committee, came to the microphone to submit the names of Carl Anderson and Dick Sartwell as provisional clerk of the meeting and provisional recording clerk, respectively. They were approved.

As the new clerks assumed their roles the nominating committee (Judy Woolsey, Cheri Hampton, and Jo Helsabeck) further submitted the names of Dave Hampton as treasurer and Carolyn Stansell as statistician. They were approved.

Carl Anderson, in asking the committee to submit the names of proposed elders, noted that with these new appointments there would be a new organizational feature with each elder taking special responsibility to focus attention on various aspects of the church's ministry. For example, one elder will give attention to relating to the Christian Education committee, another to worship, etc. The names submitted for elder were: Ron Stansell, Julie Anderson, Dave Woolsey, Gail Hutchison, Hank Helsabeck, Bob Hampton, and Ron Woodward.

Various members of the congregation asked about the vetting of these proposed elders in terms of their commitment to the NWYM Faith and Practice. Some noted that in the recent past elders had been routinely approved by the meeting only to later discover that individual elders did in fact have convictions contrary to the existing Faith and Practice. Others in the meeting asked us to remember the "pendulum principle," that because the pendulum had swung too far one way we should be aware of the danger of stopping the pendulum at the opposite extreme.

Nominating Clerk Judy Woolsey was asked, "Have these elders and other proposed officers of the church been asked to affirm Faith and Practice?" Judy noted that these individuals were not queried in this way, but that because of the current separation underway in our church, these individuals were chosen exclusively from the group of those publicly committed to NWYM and the Faith and Practice. She agreed that in the future the nominating committee would discuss these matters with potential nominees. She further noted that all names submitted in the meeting this evening were being appointed for terms of only one year. Individuals from among the group of proposed elders rose in the meeting to affirm their support of Faith and Practice as a way of reassuring the meeting. The named elders were given strong approval by the meeting.

In due course the nominating committee submitted the following names for the positions indicated and all were approved:

STEWARDS: Chuck Scott, Janelle Nordyke, Lisa Nauman, Ron Staples, Kathy Schlittenhart.

YEARLY MEETING REPRESENTATIVES: Dick Sartwell, Ron Staples, Susan Hampton, Betty Comfort, Cindy España, and Phil Smith.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: It was noted that though Faith and Practice provides for such a committee, it has not been appointed in recent years because these responsibilities have been covered by pastoral staff. Absent staff to care for these matters, the nominating committee sees the need to appoint a committee and suggests the following: Ken Howe, Candy Johnson, Lisa Nauman, Cathie Jo Sturdevant, Sharon Hubbell, and Barb Mann.

TRUSTEES: John Hutchinson, Clyde Thomas, Carol Thomas, Steve Gulley, Mark Martin, and Phyllis McKinney.

CEMETERY: Josh Nauman, Larry Anderson, Jim Long, Hubert Mardock, Mark Martin (who serves as liaison with the trustees).

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (names submitted by the elders): Judy Woolsey, Cheri Hampton, Jo Helsabeck.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE: This committee is also provided for by Faith and Practice but has not in practice been named at NFC, also because its function has been carried out by the church pastoral staff. Lacking staff, it seems wise to utilize this provision and name an administrative committee that will include the clerks of the meeting, the clerks of all standing committees, the pastor, and one of the representatives to NWYM.

During the presentation of the above committees, the meeting also specifically agreed to the following:

That all nominations presented this evening would be for one (1) year. Next year the committee will designate terms of service of one, two, or three years for each committee member to conform to the practice of creating staggered terms of service for church standing committees.

That Mark Martin serve on both the trustees and cemetery committees to provide liaison between the two committees.

That the newly created administrative committee will make regular reports to the congregation on actions taken by the group between congregational meetings for business and worship.

Concern was expressed in the meeting that while other congregations in NWYM are publicly issuing statements of their intent to remain or depart from the yearly meeting, NFC has not yet made such a statement. In view of our potential to influence the decision of other local churches should we issue such a statement of our intent to remain part of NWYM? Discussion of the pros and cons of such a statement centered on the reality that our local Covenant of Separation is not likely to be agreed upon by yearly meeting time, making it awkward to speak for the congregation as a whole. We agreed that an informal report to the representatives at the annual sessions can clarify the state of division in our congregation and assure other churches that there will indeed be an ongoing congregation of Newberg Friends Church, fully supportive of NWYM.

Carl Anderson reported for our representatives on the status of the Covenant of Separation. He cited specific items of agreement between the parties to date but noted that there is ongoing discussion of major assets. He reported that the basic proposal of our NFC representatives is still on the table, waiting for a formal response from those wanting to leave the church. Representatives of the two groups have also agreed that those leaving NFC will be meeting in some other location by the end of July and that they have taken steps to create a channel for their donors to contribute to them and avoid commingling of funds with NFC.

In regard to the Covenant of Separation one member asked for clarification on whether the Covenant could include language that would preclude the Emerging Congregation from ultimately changing their name to "Newberg Friends Church." Clerk Carl Anderson noted the concern and will keep it in mind during the Covenant of Separation discussions.

Pastoral and Church Staff. Ron Stansell announced that the elders will be discussing plans to secure an interim pastor for a period of at least three to six months. In addition they have the names of volunteers from the congregation who have agreed to be available for pastoral care, visitation, etc., for the near future.

The remaining church staff include Sherry Macy, publications and office administration; Denise Lyman, bookkeeper and receptionist; Arnie Mitchell, facilities co-manager; Dan Ritter, facilities co-manager; and Mark Thompson, cemetery sexton.

Ron reported on the recommendation of the steering group that the church seek to immediately secure a half-time administrator who will coordinate with Steve Fawver over the next two months to learn the procedures of the administrative functions of the office and church. The recommendation to hire such a person was approved.

Additionally Ron clarified the status of Interim Pastor Steve Fawver. Though not involved in the preaching ministry during the remaining months of his service, Steve will carry out administrative responsibilities over the months of July and August and orient the new administrator approved in the above minute. Steve will not be in the office during the month of September but will be paid his salary for that month as severance.

Carl Anderson closed the meeting with prayer at 8:30 PM.



## July 19, 2017—Newberg Emerging Friends Church (NEFC) issued statement and its core values.

7/19/17

We the members of Newberg Friends Church who have discerned that we can no longer remain in the Northwest Yearly Meeting, submit the following minute:

The NWYM restructuring process resulted in churches determining whether to stay or to leave the Yearly Meeting. Our congregation was evenly divided, and decided to separate. We are calling the side wishing to remain in the Yearly Meeting "NWYM-NFC," and the side wishing to leave "NEFC" (Newberg Emerging Friends Church). Both have historically been NFC, and upon separation are recognized by the NWYM as historic NWYM churches. A group with representatives from both sides was convened to work out a Covenant of Separation (CoS).

At the beginning of the CoS talks, an offer of 50% of the sale price of Friends Center, some restricted and designated funds, and some material assets (e.g. two vans) was offered to NEFC from NWYM-NFC. These represent an estimated 5-10% of current NFC assets net of liabilities. Subsequent attempts to negotiate have not yielded a change in this offer.

As members of NFC, we do not affirm an assumption that ascribes ownership and the right to distribute NFC resources to only one of the two NFC communities. Given our assumption that we should be equal partners at the table, we find the situation to be unjust and the offer to be inequitable. We find ourselves at an impasse, with no peaceful path forward.

As a body, we discerned the call to love one another outweighs the inclination to fight. Above all else, in fidelity to our shared faith, we desire that love mark the conclusion of this difficult process. Knowing both communities have felt the hand of God leading us forward in unexpected ways, we leave the choice of what to share in the hands of NWYM-NFC, releasing all expectations.

We recognize deep wounds in everyone involved. We pray for the grace to forgive, and for healing for all.

(This minute will be copied to NWYM for their records.)

### CORE VALUES

#### **Creator God is the Source of life**

Life is holy, having its origin in the creative and loving work of God, sustained by God's active and loving presence. Recognizing that all persons have equal value and are created in the image of God, we aspire to treat others with respect and dignity, regardless of human measures of merit or value. Recognizing that all of life belongs to and is a gift of God, we seek to treat all of Creation with respect and dignity.

#### **Jesus Christ is present**

Jesus Christ, our ever-present Teacher, resides with us as Word-Made-Flesh, Healer, Redeemer and Friend. Jesus revealed the full measure of God's love to humanity by entering creation as a human and experiencing birth, life, joy, suffering, and even death on a cross. Jesus's resurrection carries the promise that life overcomes death. Jesus, the Light within, is immediately accessible to all, inviting all to follow him, and in following live in the world justly, with mercy, compassion, and love, individually and collectively.

#### **Holy Spirit transforms and empowers**

Holy Spirit enlightens our paths, transforms our lives, and is our Comforter, Counselor, and Guide. As we accept the invitation to yield our lives to God and become immersed in the life of the Spirit, the gifts and fruits of the Spirit proliferate. We gain freedom to live into our true selves. Hatred gives way to love, selfishness to generosity, fear to courage, shame to acceptance, and self-centeredness to humility.

#### **Our Community is invited to live out love as represented by our Triune God.**

The essence of God is defined by a loving mutual three-in-oneness relationship. This loving community within God models the paradox, challenges, and gifts of life in community. We hold Oneness (unity) in tension with Three-ness (uniqueness) as we seek to live out of loving unity while honoring our unique distinctions as individuals. As humans endowed with God's image, we are invited to participate in reflecting this relational love throughout all our relationships—with each other in community, with other creatures, and with creation.

#### **The Bible as the Church's scriptures**

The Bible is a record of God's self-revealing presence, action, and love, particularly among the Hebrew people and in the early Christian community. God guided the gathering and conveying of scripture, and God continues to guide the community of faith in understanding and applying its teaching to our lives today. As the Spirit continues to teach the listening community, our shared knowledge of the Bible deepens both spoken ministry and inward listening, and it is reliable measure/an enduring guide/a welcome touchstone against which to test our leadings.

#### **Jesus calls us to be agents of God's kingdom in the midst of brokenness.**

Whether situations of conflict and confusion are personal, national, or global—within the church or beyond it—God calls us to act justly towards all, to love and give mercy to others, and to be humble in our relationships with others and with God. As receivers of God's grace, we are invited to give to others, to all creatures, and all creation as we have so generously received. Through our actions, which are made possible by the indwelling Holy Spirit, we shine light into darkness, bring love into places of brokenness, and invite all to know and respond to that of Christ within.



July 22, 2017—Quaker News reported on NEFC's withdrawal from negotiations.



## Newberg group withdraws from negotiations

on: July 22, 2017 In: Newberg, Resources No Comments

### Congregations disagree on split of NFC assets

Newberg Friends Church began the process of splitting into two congregations in May, and at a business meeting in June, clerks "recommended a formal process for separating into two congregations." Representatives from both groups would meet "to develop a Covenant of Separation to be effective on or before September 30, 2017, which focuses on our relationships, finances and other matters."

But at a business meeting Sunday, July 16, the group leaving Northwest Yearly Meeting (NEFC) approved formal withdrawal from the negotiation process: "We leave the choice of what to share in the hands of NWYM-NFC [the congregation that will stay with the yearly meeting], releasing all expectations."

On a series of projected slides, leaders of the emerging congregation claimed they had received a "best and final offer" worth between \$250,000 and \$375,000. They estimated that the church's net assets have a value in the range of \$3.5 to 5.5 million.

"The process was not a good faith negotiation," was listed as a point on a slide titled "Why it is Unjust."

Leaders presented a minute for approval, and although the spirit of that prepared statement was approved, Brandon Buerkle shared in an email that several people in the meeting recommended the minute be revised "to take out language that could be perceived as antagonistic. They wanted to soften it to make sure that the minute spoke out of a desire to love while also speaking truthfully."

"Some of those who spoke in the meeting about these kinds of revisions were tagged by the clerks to revise the minute alongside the CoS team this last week," Buerkle wrote. "After a number of revisions over email, the revised minute was brought before the NEFC elders, who made a few more tweaks before approving it."

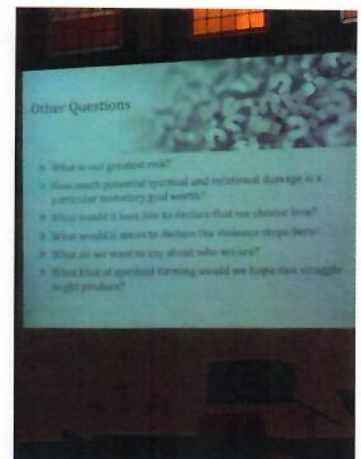
The revised minute was shared with clerks and members of the Covenant of Separation talks in an evening meeting on Saturday, July 22, and is excerpted below:

"An offer of 50 percent of the sale price of Friends Center, some restricted and designated funds, and some material assets (e.g. two vans) was offered to NEFC from NWYM-NFC. These represent an estimated 5 to 10 percent of current NFC assets net of liabilities. Subsequent attempts to negotiate have not yielded a change in this offer.

"As members of NFC, we do not affirm an assumption that ascribes ownership and the right to distribute NFC resources to only one of the two NFC communities. Given our assumption that we should be equal partners at the table, we find the situation to be unjust and the offer to be inequitable. We find ourselves at an impasse, with no peaceful path forward.

"As a body, we discerned the call to love one another outweighs the inclination to fight. Above all else, in fidelity to our shared faith, we desire that love mark the conclusion of this difficult process. Knowing both communities have felt the hand of God leading us forward in unexpected ways, we leave the choice of what to share in the hands of NWYM-NFC, releasing all expectations.

"We recognize deep wounds in everyone involved. We pray for the grace to forgive, and for healing for all."





# September 12, 2017—The final “Covenant of Separation” was distributed.

## Covenant of Separation (September 12, 2017)

Moved by a desire for interpersonal reconciliation, and seeking to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, we who worshipped together as the historic Newberg Friends Church enter into this Covenant of Separation.

### We jointly acknowledge the following:

- Our beloved church is dividing, with some members wishing to stay in the Northwest Yearly Meeting under the name of Newberg Friends Church (NFC), and others wishing to leave NWYM under the name of Newberg Emerging Friends Church (NEFC).
- None of us wish to leave the historic Newberg Friends Church, but it no longer appears possible to worship, minister, and celebrate together with our whole hearts in light of theological disagreements.
- We have prayerfully sought God’s guidance on the issues that divide us, but we discern God’s will differently.
- Despite our disagreements, the image of Christ is in every one of us and we all are desiring to follow God’s call in our lives, including our desire that love will mark the outcome of this difficult process.
- NFC’s history, ministries, buildings and funds are not ours to cling to and are worthless in comparison to God’s call to follow Jesus and love each other.
- At our last combined meeting for business on June 11, 2017, we commissioned our Clerks to convene representatives from both groups to draft this Covenant of Separation.

Those wishing to stay in NWYM and those wishing to form an independent church have called elders and other leaders, have begun holding separate worship services, and are developing separate ministry as led by the Spirit. We hereby acknowledge these steps have been taken with our mutual permission and recognition of the right of each group to follow God’s guidance as they see it.

Each group would add other points to their description of our division, but we have not reached mutual discernment about them. We are ready to move forward anyway so both congregations can focus on following God’s callings for their life and ministry.

### The Distribution of Assets:

We are encouraged that each of our congregations has felt the hand of God leading us in unexpected ways, including prompting both groups to be more generous with each other than we were initially inclined to be.

As part of this leading, on its own initiative NEFC released all expectations and left to the NWYM congregation the discernment of how assets should be distributed. The NWYM congregation gratefully recognizes this as a profound gift from NEFC, and gives the following as a tangible expression of their love and concern:

- The Friends Center will be sold at a time beneficial to market value and 50% of the net proceeds will be shared with the Newberg Emerging Friends Church (NEFC).
- Newberg Friends Church also agrees to release the following to the NEFC:
  - Physical assets
    - These assets are transferred without any restrictions:
      - The 12-passenger van and the 7-passenger suburban
      - One complete set of Godly Play
      - One half of all Nursery and Children’s toys
      - One half of all curriculum and classroom teaching supplies
  - Restricted funds:
    - Funds are transferred with the intent that they be used for the stated purposes of the donor.
    - Amounts are calculated on the fund balance as of June 30, 2017
      - All of the Refugee Response Fund - \$11,214.70
      - Three quarters of the compassionate care fund - \$4,100
      - One half of the camp scholarship funds - \$8,500
      - One half of the vehicle replacement reserve - \$3,000
      - One half of the office equipment reserve - \$900
    - Total transfer of \$27,714.70.
  - Physical assets and restricted funds are to be released no later than one month from the approval of this covenant.
- NEFC is also absolved of any responsibility or liability regarding Newberg Friends Community Cemetery.

### Conclusion:

While we accept this Covenant as the basis for both congregations to move forward, we believe God is not finished with either group, nor with our relationship. We expect God to continue to move in the hearts of members of both congregations to complete with justice and equity our story as brothers and sisters in Christ who shared for so long the life and ministry of the historic Newberg Friends Church.



**There will be music this winter at the Historic Butteville Store**

Venue announces its schedule of musical acts

See Arts & Leisure, Page A6



Owner & Neighbor  
Dr. Robert B. Pamplin, Jr.

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# Newberg Friends Church finalizes split of its members

*Those opting to remain in the Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends and those leaving to start Newberg Emerging Friends Church approve a 'covenant of separation'*

BY SETH GORDON

Newberg Graphic reporter

Completing a process that was set in motion by the Northwest Yearly Meeting's decision in January to reorganize over theological differences regarding homosexuality and the LGBTQ community, the two factions at Newberg Friends Church finalized their split by approving a "covenant of separation" at separate meetings held Sept. 24.

"While we accept this covenant as the basis for both congregations to move forward, we believe God is not finished with either group, nor with our relationship," the document's conclusion states. "We expect God to continue to move in the hearts of members of both congregations to complete with justice and equity our story as brothers and sisters in Christ who shared for so long the life and ministry of the historic Newberg Friends Church."

A group was formed to decide and document how the unified church's assets, liabilities and ministries would be divided. It included three representatives each from the portion of the congregation that elected to remain in the Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends (NWYM) and the group of members breaking away to create Newberg Emerging Friends Church (NEFC).



GRAPHIC FILE PHOTO

While some members of Newberg Friends Church will remain with that congregation, others have chosen to form Newberg Emerging Friends Church.

The working group also included three clerks from historic Newberg Friends Church — Mark Ankeny, Ron Mock and Phil Smith — as well as representatives from relevant committees from both churches.

Citing frustration with the process and a

desire to end conflict, the delegation from NEFC proposed relinquishing its power in the process and leaving all decisions on the division of assets to NFC. The congregation at NEFC, which in June began meeting for

See FRIENDS / Page A2



# Friends: Agree to split assets

■ *From page 1*

worship on Sunday evenings at Joyful Servant Lutheran, approved the decision in a "minute" at a business meeting July 16.

"We feel the call to love one another outweighs the inclination to fight," the minute reads. "Above all else, in fidelity to our shared faith, we desire that love mark the conclusion of this difficult process."

The covenant document recognized the withdrawal as "a profound gift from NEFC," and characterized the division of assets as "a tangible expression of their love and concern" from the congregation remaining at NFC.

The division includes an equal split of the proceeds from the sale of the Friends Center, which will be "sold at a time beneficial to market value," and a direct release of physical assets and funds to NEFC, which will also be released from responsibility or liability regarding Newberg Friends Cemetery.

Among the physical assets to be transferred are a 12-passenger van and a seven-passenger SUV, along with a split of nursery items, curriculum and classroom teaching supplies.

The funds transferred total \$27,714, but are restricted for use only by the stated purpose of the original donor, with those ranging from refugee response and camp scholarships to vehicle and office equipment replacement reserves.

In an email to the Graphic,

current clerk Carl Anderson indicated that Newberg Friends Church has chosen not to comment on any details of the covenant or the process to create it so as to better promote healing on both sides.

"The circumstances that have led to the Covenant of Separation between Newberg Friends Church and those known as Newberg Emerging Friends Church are a source of sadness to all of us," Anderson wrote. "Representatives of the two groups have worked for months through discussion and prayer to agree on this Covenant and to preserve long-standing friendships."

Newberg Emerging Friends Church did not respond to requests for comment.



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OCTOBER 6-12

**THE LEGO NINJAGO MOVIE** (PG)  
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NEXT: "IT"

**99W DRIVE-IN** (Hwy 99W, W of the Springbrook Rd. intersection)  
Program starts at dusk.  
FRI-SAT-SUN, OCT. 6-7-8

**THE LEGO NINJAGO MOVIE** (PG)  
with  
**BLADE RUNNER 2049** (R)



## January 2018—NFC issued a statement on human sexuality, drafted for the website.

### Elders' Proposed Statement on Human Sexuality Newberg Friends Church January 2018

We affirm all people are made in the image of God and dearly loved by God.

We believe we are all sinners saved by grace, called to a life of Christian discipline and love, and dependent on divine help and the beloved community.

We believe that God designed sexual intimacy solely for expression within the marriage commitment between one man and one woman. God calls those not married to abstain from sexual intimacy. Other forms of sexual practice, including heterosexual relations outside of marriage, homosexual relations, and any kind of sexual abuse go against God's plans and purposes for humanity. Regarding sexual sin, like other sins, the issue is behavior; not orientation, desire, or temptation. We are all tempted to sin in many ways. God's grace can deliver us from sin of any kind and his Spirit enables us to live our lives in ways that please him. We extend love to all our brothers and sisters, just as we know God does, including those who struggle with sexual temptation.

We extend welcome and love to everyone worshiping with us, even if we differ in understanding about God's will or human sexuality.

We look to the time when God makes all things new, when disciples of Jesus are one and we are all made perfect in Love.

## May 14, 2018— Dick Sartwell, NFC "rebuild" interim pastor, wrote a minute for the NWYM archives encapsulating the stayers' view of the 2017 separation.

### Newberg Friends Church Minute to Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends May 14, 2018

We the elders of Newberg Friends Church (NFC) submit the following minute, which reflects what occurred in our congregation in response to Northwest Yearly Meeting's (NWYM) letter of January 28, 2017, regarding restructuring:

The NWYM restructuring process, as stated in the above-mentioned letter, included provision for a new yearly meeting for churches that decided to practice and/or record an affirming stance regarding same-sex unions. Like the whole of NWYM, NFC found itself divided over this issue. We were unable to reach consensus to leave NWYM. Those who remain as NFC do not share the belief of those who chose to leave NFC that the NWYM Administrative Council (AC) action forced churches to decide to either stay in or leave NWYM. Our view has been that unless there was consensus to leave the yearly meeting within a local congregation, the local congregation would in fact remain a part of NWYM.

The former leadership of NFC, including the pastors, elders, and presiding clerk, initiated a process in March 2017 to help the church discern what direction to take. Consistent lack of consensus first among the whole congregation, and subsequently among a select group excluding pastors, finally resulted in the formation of a task force of representatives from both persuasions to work out a Covenant of Separation.

In contrast to the contentions of our former pastors, many Friends from NFC who attended the January 2017 meeting in which the NWYM AC's restructuring action was announced felt the purpose of the AC's action was constructive, shared with love and grace, and was clearly intended to resolve conflicts, not create them.

Because all the official and public communication about the discernment process at NFC was in the hands of those who appeared already committed to leaving NWYM, a large group of members who supported remaining with the yearly meeting began to meet and discuss the options before them. The perspective of these Friends is represented by a FAQ document they prepared in March 2017 (see attached).

Representatives from those desiring to stay in NWYM and those desiring to leave met together several times with the intention of finding a way forward as a whole congregation. However, our differences were significant, and we could not see a way to leave or to stay within yearly meeting as an entire congregation. We agreed that separation seemed inevitable. Therefore, a task force was formed, made up of representatives from both sides and the clerks. This task force was charged with coming to agreement on the terms of a Covenant of Separation (see attached).

During the process of forming a Covenant of Separation, those deciding to leave NWYM legally incorporated as Newberg Emerging Friends Church (NEFC). They began gathering for discussion

and worship separately from NFC's gatherings, first at NFC and then later at a local Lutheran church.

Based on considerations of income, assets, and demographics, NFC put forth a proposal including a gift we believed would allow both congregations to experience financial viability. The gift offered included fifty percent of the net proceeds of the sale of the Friends Center, some restricted and designated funds, and some material assets. NEFC made a counter proposal asking for \$675,000 in assets, shared use of the buildings, and right of first refusal at fifty percent of fair market value if NFC was unable to continue as a church. NFC found this, in several ways, to be an unrealistic solution, a solution that would not afford NFC a sustainable future.

Differences in presuppositions regarding the NWYM AC's action and the intent behind their action, as well as a significant difference in perspective as to whether those leaving NFC were entitled to a share of the assets, precipitated a lack of consensus, bringing the Covenant of Separation task force to an impasse. At that point, NEFC decided to lay down its participation in further negotiations and to relinquish any further involvement in decisions regarding the terms of the Covenant of Separation.

NFC, in good faith and desiring NEFC to be in a position to sustain itself financially, made final modifications to the NFC proposal and submitted it to the clerks who prepared it for approval by the separate congregations of NEFC and NFC. Once approved by both groups, the elements of the proposal have been implemented on the proposed timeline.

Although we recognize that the members of NEFC historically were members of NFC and NWYM, their decision to leave both NFC and NWYM, based on their disagreement with Faith and Practice, redefined their status with both NFC and NWYM. They, by choice, are now members of NEFC and not NFC. Although NEFC temporarily remains under the umbrella of NWYM during the transitional period, ending June 2018, after that date they may choose to become members of another yearly meeting or remain independent.

The Covenant of Separation is not what we wanted, nor what we hoped and prayed for. NFC recognizes the deep pain and grief this separation has caused. Long-time relationships have been strained and broken. Even some familial relationships have been injured. Our heartache over this separation will not pass quickly. We entrust our brokenness into the Savior's hands and ask for his healing, understanding, and forgiveness to accompany all who have experienced this process.

Respectfully submitted to NWYM for the record,

NFC Elders



**July 18, 2018— Restructure allocations relating to Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends as approved by NWYM Administrative Council.**

Restructure allocations as approved by Northwest Yearly Meeting

Administrative Council

- The original decision for the restructure stated that any transfers would be made yearly meeting to yearly meeting only. That turns out to be NWYM and SCYMF.
- An aggregate index was prepared by the transition team some months ago. It is based on churches who were members of the historical NWYM, defined as churches who were members of NWYM on January 1, 2017. Only churches who left NWYM because of the human sexuality conflict are considered. Churches who left for other reasons are not a part of the restructure process.
- Historical churches of NWYM who left because of the human sexuality decision, were granted deeds to their property, subject to any indebtedness. This has already been done.
- Each church is assigned a percentage based on 10 year averages of Sunday am attendance (from Minutes) and local church support (from financial documents). That percentage is applied to the total and assigned either NWYM or SCYME, based on membership. Independent churches do not affect the distribution.
- Some of the distribution details are flexible for up to three years. If a church moves to or from one of the yearly meetings their percentage will travel with them and changes to the totals will be adjusted. (Example: one of the independent churches joins SC means their index amount would then increase SC's portion of the whole).
- The Ministry Fund balance was taken on June 30, 2018 and the aggregate index formula applied to the total. We have prepared a check to SCYMF for their portion - \$114,358. The portion that represents the percentages of independent churches will be held in a holding account, being update June 30, 2019, June 30, 2020 and finally frozen and disbursed on June 30, 2021. That gives these churches time to make a decision regarding yearly meeting membership.
- The designated fund of approximately \$837 for FWCC travel will be transferred to SCYMF. Each restricted account was reviewed per donor restriction and will remain under the supervision of NWYM.
- The only real property belonging to NWYM is the office at 200 N Meridian St., Newberg.

The NWYM will retain use of the 200 N. Meridian property herein described as the "NWYM Office". In lieu of rent, the NWYM will provide maintenance and upkeep for the property until it has been sold.

NWYM/SCYMF  
Written July 18, 2018



## PART 2 — AUTHOR’S PERSPECTIVE

**“All other ground is sinking sand.” This is what happens when autonomy trumps biblical authority. The moral revolution was only possible because of a great and unsustainable shift to personal autonomy in the culture. —Albert Mohler**

By way of introduction, I am Sherry Macy, wife of Mauri Macy, who served as NFC worship pastor for 33 years. In 1980, when he began his ministry, he was married to Margaret-Rose, who until her death from cancer in 1988 served with him in the music ministry, giving her time and talents as pianist and organist. I married Mauri, a friend since high school, in 1994 after the death of my first husband, Paul Carlson, moving to Oregon from Michigan and establishing our home together. Our musical history lent itself to continue in the music ministry at NFC, and I wholeheartedly joined in leading worship with the ensemble and with Mauri as a duet. My church background is not Quaker, but my orthodox biblical theology matched that of Northwest Yearly Meeting’s Faith & Practice in the key areas of Christian life and testimony.

Upon his retirement in 2013, Mauri and I stopped attending NFC, a common practice when one has served for many years in one place in order to allow the new person to develop his/her own style of leadership. It was a lovely break from early-morning call times and evening rehearsals. After a year of “attending church” online, I felt the need for community and found it in a small church called Hillside Fellowship while Mauri accepted invitations from neighboring churches to occasionally lead worship. He maintained his membership at NFC, while I felt it necessary to remove mine in order to fully enter in at Hillside Fellowship. NFC attendance was not a requirement for my position as NFC’s office administrator, a job I had loved since 2003. But changing my church membership only weeks before Northwest Yearly Meeting began to fracture removed my “voice” from any meetings or decisions being considered! For the record, Mauri and I remain united in our viewpoint on what I am about to share.

It’s been three years since Newberg Friends Church (NFC) broke apart. I imagine most of us have moved past the acute pain of those difficult days, but the lingering scars make some once-cordial relationships bristle when paths cross in our small town.

I write this personal account because working in the office put me on the front lines when it happened. Others could do the same, but to my knowledge no one has. Those who helped assess my timeline of events (Part 1) and also verified accuracy in this writing agree it is important for historians to have both perspectives that led to the “schism,” so named by the local newspaper. I accept that by writing this account, some of my former coworkers and church associates will take exception with or be offended by what I share. So I present the story with a humble spirit, asking God to reveal sin in my heart as I write, taking no joy in exposing the actions of others.

Some, maybe most, would say different interpretations of the biblical representation of marriage and human sexuality in general caused what NFCers now refer to as “the trouble.” It certainly was that, though much more. But let’s begin with the long-embraced Northwest Yearly Meeting



tenet relating to human sexuality clearly defined in its Faith and Practice <http://nwfriends.org/faith-practice/>:

#### 18. Christian Witness to Human Sexuality

*We hold that only marriage is conducive to godly fulfillment in sexual relationships for the purposes of reproduction and enrichment of life. We consider sexual intimacy outside marriage as sinful because it distorts God's purposes for human sexuality. We denounce, as contrary to the moral laws of God, acts of homosexuality, sexual abuse, and any other form of sexual perversion (see "Human Sexuality"). [pasted below] The church, however, as a community of forgiven persons, remains loving and sensitive to those we consider in error. Because God's grace can deliver from sins of any kind, we are called to forgive those who have repented and to free them for participation in the church.*

#### Human Sexuality

*[Added in 1982] Friends believe that the divine intent of marriage is to fulfill the emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of humankind and that only within the bonds of marriage divinely ordained can there be a beautiful sexual relationship for the purposes of reproduction and life enrichment. Adultery and fornication are sinful because they distort the purposes of God for the right ordering of human sexuality.*

*Friends believe that the practice of sexual perversion in any form is sinful and contrary to the God-ordained purposes in sexual relationships. These perversions include sexual violence, homosexual acts, transvestism, incest, and sex acts with animals. The sin nature is capable of vile affections when humankind rejects the moral laws of God.*

*Scriptures relating to these distorted and perverse forms of sexuality include Genesis 19:1-13; Deuteronomy 22:5; Leviticus 18:20, 22, 23; Romans 1:24-28; 1 Corinthians 5:1, 2 and 6:9-20. Neither in the Scriptures nor in church history have these practices been regarded as consistent with righteous living.*

*Friends do not accept as members those involved in these perverse practices; neither do they permit them to hold positions of responsibility or leadership in the church. However, Friends believe that the grace of God is adequate to cleanse and deliver from all sin (1 John 19; 2 Corinthians 5:17), and they desire to be tender and sensitive to all people, ready to express kindness, love, and forgiveness. See also Jude 7, 8; Colossians 3:5-7; and Revelation 2:18, 27. When the erring one has been repentant, the past should not be remembered. As Christ called and blessed those whom He forgave, so must His followers. Friends must not hinder the forgiven person from holding membership or having responsibility in the church.*

*Friends churches should exercise concern for their members on matters of sexuality and should discipline offenders in love and truth (see "Rules of Discipline").*

All leadership at the NWYM level (staff and board members) are required to be members of a NWYM-affiliated church; NWYM's F&P states that every person holding the leadership role of NFC pastor, elder, or clerk must be an NFC member. The membership application form includes this clause (copied here from the NWYM website):

***I am prepared to uphold the statements of Christian belief of Northwest Yearly Meeting, but if at any time I can no longer work in harmony with the faith and practice of Friends, I shall ask that my name be removed from membership.*** [bold italics added for emphasis]

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_



As in most churches, *anyone* can attend NFC, but its pastors, elders, and clerks must maintain membership to serve in those specific roles. Clearly, over time, the integrity of this form became watered down as leaders filling positions in both NWYM and NFC disregarded the entirety of their promise to uphold *this particular* statement of Christian belief of NWYM. And like the frog in the kettle of heating water, this gradual decline became a largely unnoticed, unattended matter.

By the time storm clouds began to gather, I was sure about the position of only three of the pastors on the subject of human sexuality. I became aware of their *unified* stance (with the exception of Cindy Johnson, then pastor to seniors) when in a congregational meeting no sense of the meeting\* was found for NFC to appeal NWYM's decision to remove West Hills Friends Church from its association for long-term non-compliance to Section #18. [p. 29] The pastors were clearly distraught over the church's decision to not appeal, bringing to light just how deeply committed they were to the cultural shift occurring within our regional Quaker community. In retrospect, I confess my own complacency. I did not ask the hard questions of my coworkers. "Does it strike you as disingenuous to serve a congregation whose published theology you do not embrace yourself?" "If the yearly meeting statement on human sexuality offends you so greatly, why don't you and your followers go start a church of your own?" (\*In a Quaker meeting for business, the presiding clerk called by the congregation, listens to input from those in attendance and discerns whether or not a *clear* sense of the meeting is reached.)

It's probably good to note that much of the leadership in NWYM, paid staff, and others, had embraced the prevailing cultural view of homosexuality to the degree that any attempt at revising F&P that fell short of full acceptance/affirmation was...unacceptable. And it was only after years of contending in good faith that the yearly meeting Administrative Council, headed by Brad Holton, concluded that churches must choose: either support Section #18 in F&P or leave the yearly meeting. (Also, it was clearly said that churches in disagreement, as we were, could remain in the yearly meeting...although still bound by F&P. This wasn't clarified at NFC as we began our process.) Churches that chose to leave were treated kindly—generously, I believe—and allowed to retain all their real properties/assets.





## NWYM Restructuring

To: Northwest Yearly Meeting

Date: January 28, 2017

From: Administrative Council, Brad Holton, clerk

Since the end of 2016 Yearly Meeting sessions, the clerks, along with the Superintendent and the Administrative Council, have labored and wrestled together over the issues currently dividing NWYM. Following the called representatives meeting on December 9 and 10, the clerks and Superintendent separately and together discerned that the Yearly Meeting is so evenly divided that consensus around the human sexuality issue is not likely in the foreseeable future. These leaders also agreed that without some decisive action, the Yearly Meeting would fracture one, two or four churches at a time, but it would fracture.

Possible options were discussed by the Administrative Council in retreat on January 12-14. The AC prayed, discussed and through clear discernment made a decision and presented it to the representatives at mid-year board meetings.

At the representatives meeting held this January 27 and 28 in Newberg, the clerks and Administrative Council announced their decision to guide the Yearly Meeting through a restructuring process. The restructure is as follows:

### Newly Formed Yearly Meeting

- This yearly meeting would embrace a revised *Faith and Practice*
- This group would be composed of meetings that have decided to practice and/or have recorded an affirming stance.
- This may include churches who have internal disagreement but have agreed to align their practices with the newly formed yearly meeting *Faith and Practice*.

### Northwest Yearly Meeting

- This yearly meeting would be composed of meetings who align with current Northwest Yearly Meeting *Faith and Practice*.
- This may include churches who have internal disagreement but have agreed to align their practices with current NWYM *Faith and Practice*.

A transition team, formed of Elders, AC members, Trustees and other at-large members will facilitate the creation of a newly formed yearly meeting. Churches who hold an affirming statement may be a part of the newly formed yearly meeting or may choose to be independent. It is the intent of the Administrative Council, that churches becoming part of the newly formed yearly meeting or separating from NWYM during this restructuring process may retain ownership of their church property, along with any indebtedness. All other issues of property, assets and related organization connection questions raised because of the restructuring process will be addressed by that transition team. The transition team will be approved by the AC and report to them.

This process will be a lengthy one and the AC is committed to completing the transition with dignity and honor for all churches. Our goal is to complete this transition process on or before June 30, 2018.

To read more about the process leading up to the decision, visit the [Next Steps](#) page.



## NWYM Transition Team

A transition team, formed of Elders, AC members, Trustees and other at-large members will facilitate the creation of a newly formed yearly meeting. Churches who hold an affirming statement may be a part of the newly formed yearly meeting or may choose to be independent. It is the intent of the Administrative Council, that churches becoming part of the newly formed yearly meeting or separating from NWYM during this restructuring process

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may retain ownership of their church property, along with any indebtedness. All other issues of property, assets and related organization connection questions raised because of the restructuring process will be addressed by that transition team.

Backlash to the council's action was predictable and strong, including the narrative that the yearly meeting was kicking churches out. Some believed the Administrative Council overstepped its authority by taking action.

Shortly after this announcement, the NFC pastors, elders, and clerks began to devise a plan they hoped would remove the historic church from its foundational roots in NWYM, an organization also fighting for its life. Only God knows what was in their hearts and minds to motivate this action. At its inception, the plan was unknown to the congregation, though we would soon learn that *all* the pastors would put their jobs on the line to announce their conditional intentions: "As individuals, we do not feel called to continue as pastors with NWYM." I wondered then—and *still* wonder—how the same pastoral team I had witnessed caring deeply for the *entire* NFC congregation could justify an attempt to disenfranchise a large number of those same people—many if not most who raised their children in the church.

While my teammates continued to treat me with the same kindness as in all the previous years, my known opposing viewpoint caused them to keep me in the dark about their plans until they were fully formed. I don't know exactly who participated in the closed meetings to form a "discernment process." My guess would be it included the lead pastor and at least two other full-time pastors. The committee of elders presented a united front, though it was hinted they did not *all* fully support the plan; still none recused himself/herself. The clerk and assistant clerk are expected to be unbiased in order to listen to all sides of a situation and discern whether or not consensus is found. Both clerks had already publicly expressed their view on human sexuality yet still participated in the preparation of a discernment process.

I had sensed something brewing and connected with Dick Sartwell, former NFC pastor, to talk over my deep concern. In that conversation I learned of an "ad hoc" group (AHG) scheduled for its first meeting on March 2, 2017, and asked if I might attend. *The very morning of the meeting* I was asked by two pastors to upload to the church website the plan for a discernment process that would be presented to the congregation *only two days before it would begin* to decide the direction NFC would take. I want to add here that the need for a discernment process was decided by pastors/elders/clerks *on their own*, with no congregational business meeting consensus or even congregational *awareness*. In my view, this was an egregious miscarriage of Quaker business form.



Also on that momentous March 2 day, the local newspaper published this:


PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP YOUR TOWN. YOUR PAPER.

Rock and blues at the CCC  
Tony Rocks and his band set to play  
Thursday at the cultural center — A7

Wolves & People brunt  
of protest by neighbor  
Brewery circulates petition — Page A8

**THE NEWBERG GRAPHIC**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2017 • VOL. 130, ISSUE 8 • THE ST. PAUL, DUNDEE AND NEWBERG LEADER IN NEWS • ONLINE AT NEWBERGGRAPHIC.COM • 51



Residents call on state to finish bypass  
Legislators host Jan. 30 town hall for public input

BY AARON CURRIAN KNAPP  
Newberg Graphic reporter

From the three state representatives hosting to more than 100 residents and local officials attending, the message of a transportation-focused town meeting in Newberg is clear: finish the pass.

Local elected officials, business owners, emergency personnel and residents gave no reasons — among things business owners want to market, easing tourists' access to the region, revitalizing cities and improving the quality of life for locals — as all explored the Republican lawmakers and the state to set aside enough funds to complete the full Newberg-Dundee bypass, the first of the nearing completion.

"It's imperative to bypass be that's the message we want to convey from the base 99W to Highway 101," said Mayor Tom Berg. "The bypass will turn the town into a better place."

Newberg Friends Church is among the more prominent members of Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends that will be affected by a split in ideology on homosexuality, including recognition of gay marriages and acceptance of pastors in same-sex relationships.

GRAPHIC PHOTO: GARY ALLEN

## A schism in the church

Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends, headquartered in Newberg but representing 50 churches in three states, announces it has reached an impasse on acceptance of the LGBTQ community and will split into separate denominations

BY SETH GORDON  
Newberg Graphic reporter

Ending roughly five years of internal debate about how to address homosexuality, the Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends announced Jan. 28 that it will split into two separate groups of churches in July 2018.

According to a release from NWYM Administrative Council Clerk Brad Holton, church representatives, denomination's administrative council, which was handling appeals by eight member churches, including North Valley Friends in Newberg, to the Council of Elders' decision to expel West Hills Friends Church in Portland in July 2015, made the decision to restructure at a weekend retreat Jan. 12-14 and presented it at the NWYM mid-year board meeting Jan. 27-28.

"I would say that most were surprised by the announcement of the restructuring. On (Jan. 29) we named our grief over the news. For individuals within our church, the differences about how to faithfully live out sexuality are as wide as the yearly meeting as a whole."

— Pastor Gregg Koehn, Newberg Friends Church

According to the release, a transition team consisting of elders, administrative council members, trustees and at-large members will lead the process to create a new yearly meeting.

"This process will be a lengthy one and the AC is committed to completing the transition with dignity and honor for all churches," the release stated. "Our goal is to complete this transition process on or before June 30, 2018."

The Northwest Yearly Meeting would include churches who align with the denomination's current "Faith and Practice" governing document, while the new yearly meeting would consist of churches that

See SCHISM / Page A2

## Promoting peace in Newberg

Local clubs will...

The discernment process information would "go live" the following morning as links were provided in the weekly electronic newsletter, *Your NFC*. I was dazed by its content, but to honor the confidentiality the team entrusted to me I withheld sharing it at the meeting that night. Thankfully, everyone at the meeting respected my precarious position, or possibly wondered if I might be an interloper. How would my casual acquaintances know my position on human sexuality?

On March 3, 2017, members and attenders at NFC received the following information:



# Discernment Process Information

## What does NFC need to decide?

Because of the yearly meeting decision to restructure, all churches have decisions to make. (See background documents at the end of this document for more information.) NFC could remain a part of NWYM, which will be organized around the current Faith and Practice statement regarding human sexuality. Or NFC could leave NWYM. In this restructuring period, churches that leave keep ownership of buildings and property.

If NFC leaves NWYM, we could choose to join a yet-to-be-formed new yearly meeting, which will be organized around a new Faith and Practice that affirms full participation of [LGBTQ people](#) and likely would affirm same-sex marriage. Or NFC could choose to be an independent Friends congregation, choosing non-official relationships and partnerships with camps, global outreach ministries, and Friends churches in both NWYM and the newly formed yearly meeting.

## What will not change?

NFC will remain a Christ-centered community that believes the Bible to be authoritative in our individual and corporate lives. NFC will keep the [same statements of mission, vision, and values](#) we have held.

## What are the central issues at stake?

- Some see the central issue as God's guidance for marriage; that the decision of affiliation should primarily be about whether one believes marriage is for a man and a woman, or whether it is something faithful Christians of the same gender can experience.
- Some see the central issue as the criteria for membership and participation in the church. For some, this means the church must align membership with core agreements; for others, this means a commitment to Jesus is the defining issue for membership, and other disagreements can exist within the community.
- Some see the division of the last few years as distracting the church from our mission, and a reorganization as a way to get unstuck; others see the issues involved in the division as central to the mission of the church.

## What may be reasons to support the various options?

### *NFC staying in NWYM:*

For those convinced that scripture teaches that God's intention is for marriage to be between a man and a woman, and who believe that people with same-sex attraction are called to celibacy, staying in NWYM may make the most sense. For those who believe NFC and NWYM should confront what the NWYM Faith and Practice sees as sinful and hold firmly to what Faith and Practice sees as truth, staying in NWYM may make the most sense.

### *NFC joining the newly formed YM:*

For those convinced that scripture and God's leading affirm full inclusion of LGBTQ people in all aspects of church life, including leadership and pastoral positions for people who are in a same-sex relationship, joining the new YM may make the most sense. For those who believe justice calls us to confront ways we have excluded LGBTQ people, and who believe acceptance and belonging in spiritual community are the best ways for the Holy Spirit to lead each person to holiness, joining the new YM may make the most sense.



*NFC leaving the YM to become an independent Friends church:*

For those who do not desire that our differences about human sexuality be dividing lines for participation in spiritual community, becoming independent may make the most sense. For those who believe our divided world needs people who accept the challenge of living in a community with differences and are willing to seek God together, becoming independent may make the most sense. For those who believe acceptance and belonging in spiritual community are the best ways for the Holy Spirit to lead each person to holiness, becoming independent may make the most sense.

## **Planning process: Prayer Teams, Meetings, Surveys, Listening Forums**

Gatherings and survey are intended for regular attenders and members only.

Prayer Team: A call for prayer focused specifically on this time of discussion and discernment will be initiated by our Monday morning prayer group and open to all who attend NFC. Group gatherings for prayer will be held in various locations and at various times as designed by the team.

March 5  
6:30 p.m.  
Informational Gathering

April 9  
6:30 p.m.  
Survey Report

April 24 – May 5  
Leadership team discernment meetings  
(clerks of the meeting, elders, pastors)

March 5 (8:30pm) -19  
Survey Open  
(available [online](#) and hard copy)

April 23  
Listening Forums:  
2 p.m.  
Sharing reasons for staying in NWYM  
6:30 p.m.  
Sharing reasons for leaving NWYM

May 7  
6:30 p.m.  
Business Meeting with a minute of recommendation from the leadership team

## **What are the thoughts of the pastors?**

As your pastors, we love the NFC community and desire to serve and lead with open hands and hearts. Throughout the difficulties over the last couple of years, we've had to walk a careful road. We desire to be open and transparent and to share our perspective of God's leading; and we also want to honor and submit to the community's right to make decisions about how we will act as a united church community.

We now face a difficult decision as a church: remain in NWYM or choose to leave, either to become an independent Friends church or to join a new yearly meeting, which has yet to be formed.

Some have asked our opinion or perspective on this decision, which we offer to the community as one part of the discernment process. As pastors, we believe the actions taken by the Administrative Council demonstrate a change in leadership style, in identity of who can be members in NWYM and a change in tenor and tone. It is not the same yearly meeting it has been. As individuals, we do not feel called to continue as pastors with NWYM.

In addition, the breadth of perspectives held by our pastors is more inclusive than a strict application of Faith and Practice would allow.

Our desire is to be in a faith community that is not defined in the way the restructure defines NWYM. We believe that a move to an independent Friends church allows us to prioritize our local commitment to each other at NFC and to pursue non-official relationships and partnership with camps, global outreach ministries, and Friends churches in NWYM and the newly formed yearly meeting.

We want to clearly state that we respect the right of the business meeting to decide NFC's affiliation. We want NFC to thrive with whatever affiliation our community makes.



## The tone of our decision making:

There is within us, collectively and individually, a tendency to criticize both the people and the process that have led us to this place of restructuring. Venting our feelings is helpful to a degree, but now is the time to delve deeper into what it means to be Friends of Jesus as well as friends and family to one another. May we continue to pray that we can move beyond blame toward hope and beyond woundedness to healing. May we choose to trust that others are acting with good intent. May we share our convictions with honesty and respect, and submit to each other as we seek God's direction.

## Community guidelines for this discernment process:

Let us prepare as we enter into business together as a respectful, worshipful Quaker community:

*I enter this space with gratitude for God's presence and love.*

*I recognize the Light of Christ's presence in us all, even in those with whom I disagree.*

*If led to speak, I will do so with humility and respect as I ask questions or seek to share my perspective.*

*I will seek to create a safe place for all to be heard and to listen.*

## Background documents available:

- [NWYM elders' letter](#) releasing West Hills (Jul. 2015)
- NFC document from Phil Smith, elders, and pastors [describing process of appeal](#) (Nov. 2015)
- Study Resources: [Book List](#) (Nov. 2015), [videos](#) from discussion groups (Apr. 2016)
- [NFC elders' statement](#) on diversity (Jan. 2017)
- Administrative Council [announcement of YM restructuring](#) (Jan. 2017)
- The current Faith and Practice [statements on human sexuality](#)
- The current [Mission, Vision, and Values](#) statements of NFC
- [Definitions and Acronyms](#)

Two days later, March 5, 2017, the process of discernment began. As a member, Mauri attended the meetings, while I relied on his reports and my involvement in the AHG (facilitating communication) to apprise me of the process.

Two weeks later, with the blessing of the AHG leadership, I stepped out of my complacency to write and send singular templated email notes to a sizable number of members and attenders of NFC with the hope of reaching some who might feel their beloved church being torn away from them and no place to express their concerns. Many *personal* hours were spent on the follow-up communication, which I share here for accountability purposes as an NFC employee.



Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I'm writing to you as a representative for the recently formed ad hoc group of folks (like me) who are committed to helping Newberg Friends Church remain part of Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends. Since we first met, our numbers have at least doubled as like-minded NFCers discover they aren't "out there" on their own.

As I look through the directory I can easily put an X across the names of outspoken LGBTQ-affirming NFCers who are leading the way for the church to leave NWYM, removing restrictions the current Faith and Practice places on gay marriage and LGBTQ people in ministry roles. I see our choices as two, not three. The only reason to leave NWYM would be to bypass the human sexuality section of F&P. Our group believes the dissatisfaction with NWYM the pastors, elders, and clerks have declared to the congregation goes hand in hand with their view on human sexuality.

Since I've never had an actual conversation with you about human sexuality, I don't know on which side you stand. We are all allowed to make up our own minds, which is why this note includes no convincing language. You're under no obligation to tell me, even if I say pretty please, but I have a good reason for wanting to know. I'm eager to find the NFCers who want to stay in NWYM and inform them of an ad hoc group formed to sift through the real issues that face us during the discernment process. I have been grateful and surprised by the number of individuals and couples decades younger than I who are coming forward to speak their dismay and concern over what could happen to our church.

Joining our group requires nothing of you but will help you know you aren't alone in your views. You will get email updates on the progress our leaders are making in seeking balance in the discernment process. The group welcomes your thoughts. And you will be invited to join in our next group meeting to hear from others and give all a place to speak among like-minded Friends.

You might be wondering why I, an employee of NFC, am writing you. Obviously, I disagree with the viewpoint and actions of those I serve in the office. This is no secret to them. I love them all and have loved working with them for the past almost 14 years. And I want to make it clear that I have kept confidence with everything I hear in the office and everything I do as part of my job. My opinions are my own, and whatever I share with the group is already out in the public domain.

So I'll repeat myself—you are under no obligation to answer me. I "reach out" as a way of unifying one side of the NFC conversation. If you're already connected in other ways, peace be with you.

Your friend, Sherry

Many responded with gratitude, wanting to be counted among those who wished to remain with NWYM and be included in the AHG meetings and communication. Others responded by forwarding my note to the pastors, which I expected would happen. My actions probably felt like a betrayal to my teammates, though there wasn't another way around it short of being disobedient to what I felt strongly led to do. So I understood and accepted the resultant dismissal from attend-



ing weekly team meetings and the reduced “temperature” around the office. If I’m honest, I was at least equally if not *more* disappointed in *them* for their choices and actions.

Reasonable questions were asked by those in the AHG, such as “All the pastors, elders, and clerks make up one side of this conversation; can’t those of us who don’t want to leave NWYM have a proportional representation?” Meanwhile, those from the congregation in alliance with the leadership began a “We trust you!” campaign.

Many faithful attenders who noticed a gradual change toward progressive ideas in the teaching had already left NFC to attend other churches. Did the pastors, elders, and clerks foresee the painful division their discernment process would create as members and attenders were forced to take sides? Extended families with multiple generations faced the same challenge.

At the beginning, the leadership proposed an either/or scenario, either NFC stays in NWYM or it leaves—independently or connected with an “inclusive” yearly meeting, yet to be formed. When the church-wide survey results clearly indicated *there was no consensus to leave*, the “discernment process” should have ended. Having pre-stated their intentions, the pastors should have resigned. Instead, the leadership’s narrative did an inexplicable 180-degree, declaring that NFC had actually become two churches. The posture shifted from “you’ll just have to find another place to worship” (one elder told a long-time member) to “because we have invested in NFC and you are now kicking us out, we are entitled to half the resources to support a church that affirms our theology.”

On May 10, 2017, lead pastor Gregg Koskela shared on his personal blog—[outofdoubt.wordpress.com/2017/05/10/honest-thoughts/](http://outofdoubt.wordpress.com/2017/05/10/honest-thoughts/)—that the previous January he had surrendered his recording with NWYM. He told the elders of his actions, but members of the congregation would only know this if they followed his blog. Though he had already resigned effective June 30, 2017 (or sooner if asked), he continued in his role as teaching pastor, giving input to the discernment process, without recording credentials.

One by one, other NFC pastors resigned while the presiding clerk continued to dialog with subgroups from each of the two “sides.” My access to documentation at this point is limited to the AHG’s responses to these negotiations. However, I can offer the “three points” our side asked be shared with those leaving NWYM and NFC to form Newberg Emerging Friends Church (NEFC):

1. NFC is a congregation of the Quaker tradition and part of NWYM that practices consensus in finding the will of the Lord in decision-making. Since we lack a consensus by the congregation to move in a different direction, NFC remains part of NWYM.
2. Because we are a congregation of NWYM, it is not appropriate to ask us to participate in the creation of another congregation with significant differences from ours in theology and organizational structure. Those who cannot in good conscience remain part of us should accept the responsibility to take a course of action that allows them to be free to pursue their calling.



3. Multiple groups with sharply differing theologies who attempt to share facilities and assets are headed for on-going conflict over space, usage and program content. Sharing facilities would also bring confusion in the community about the identity of NFC.

Several times the AHG's representatives strongly urged that our "three points" be shared with those on the other side. The lead pastor gave his permission for me to attend the next all-church meeting (though I was to remain silent) where I heard several people refer to our "three points." The response was treated almost as though we had been withholding rather than desperate to distribute it! Thankfully one of our AHG leaders had them in his possession and read them aloud. By this time, numbers 1 and 3 were moot points, but number 2 still held our main concern of sharing resources.

With the "leaving" NFC leadership still holding authority, a "Covenant of Separation" was created. They maintained the narrative that NFC was dividing into two churches in order to claim what they considered *their* portion of its assets. They continued to build their case, supported by a financial perspective that NFC was worth upwards of 12 million dollars. Apart from this extravagant estimation, they made no mention of the perpetual liability of NFC's support of Friends Cemetery. I repeat: a church with no consensus to leave NWYM was under no obligation to gift its resources, especially with an unknown, unestablished entity. Yet it was determined NFC would give (1) half the eventual sale proceeds of Friends Center, (2) two vehicles, and (3) Sunday school resources, etc., with NEFC. Though this seemed incredibly generous to me—the very idea that monies given to NFC in good faith would play a part in the start of a work that affirms the *antithesis* of our F&P—it was publicly reported by Quaker News that the leavers were "taking the high road, ceasing their attempts at negotiation, no longer risking spiritual and relational damage for monetary goals, and putting a stop to the violence." Yes, the *violence*. [Note for historians: in 2017, language adjustments were being made to accommodate gender confusion and other progressive anomalies. Most of us still thought *violence* was a physical act of aggression toward another, which made this accusation startling.]

No one was coerced to stay or to leave. I said many times: "Everybody gets to choose." Regardless, NFC became a target on social media. Accusations, anger, grief, and pain were expressed, wearing spirits thin. One AHG member wrote to me: "I can't continue to cope with this horrible, heavy grief and turmoil for much longer. It's taking a toll on my health. I am so glad for this group, at least I know I am not alone. When a church member is going through hard times, we are supposed to be able to talk with a pastor, or have a meeting for clearness with the elders—I realized today that I don't even have that option."

The outgoing pastors, elders, and clerks held their given positions right up to the end of their term, June 30, 2017, leaving scant opportunity for new committees to be named or document transfers made. The AHG was laid down and Carl Anderson took the lead as presiding clerk, Ron Stansell as clerk of elders, as the rebuilding process began July 1, 2017. Steve Fawver, would maintain the salaried position of interim pastor for three months. I wrestled



with God over the decision others made to continue Steve's employment, even with limitation provisions in the meeting minutes because he was also serving as copastor of the newly formed NEFC, meeting temporarily at NFC. He publicly revealed his negative attitude toward NFC in recorded messages issued on NEFC's new website. Prior to the start of this discernment process, I had worked in perfect harmony with Steve and my other teammates. At the time for the other pastors' departure, my frazzled spirit needed a timely break, provided by a family need in Arizona. During that time I "heard" the clear directive from God to "work with Steve." I was asked by the new leadership to continue my full-time role as office administrator, and I quickly accepted without noticing I was falling into the sin of self-importance. Pride conspired with affirmation from others to let me believe I would play an important role in the transition and rebuilding of NFC "for such a time as this." So while God worked on repairing *and* humbling me that year, I reset the office and kept a semblance of order during shortened office hours. I reinstated my NFC affiliate membership and joined with those ambitious "stayers" who stepped right up to fill the mostly empty positions. Dick Sartwell accepted a nine-month call as interim pastor to preach and serve the needs of the still-shocked and hurting congregation. Carl Anderson worked tirelessly with a willing and able administrative committee, each member overseeing one area of church ministry. It was a sight to behold!

To recover my own balance I read the New Testament four times in succession searching for understanding in the other side's biblical interpretation. Instead of understanding, I found several passages that call for a higher level of accountability for those in leadership and consequences for false teachers. I read *Gay Girl, Good God* (Jackie Hill Perry) and *People to Be Loved: Why Homosexuality Is Not Just an Issue* (Preston Sprinkle). It became clear that the disagreements we had over LGBTQ matters boiled down to disagreements over the authority of Scripture. Do we humans get to choose which parts we want to follow then discard the rest because it doesn't seem loving? God defined marriage; I didn't! If he isn't loving, who is? Throughout Scripture he never changed the definition; instead we are warned that all diversions from his plan for sexuality are sin.

And now—at the time of this writing—our culture has worsened, as more and more believers lean away from biblical truth, softening their concern over sin. I'd nearly finished this writing when I read Gregg Koskela's book *Finding Hildegard*, written as he sought healing from the debacle at NFC. Reading his personal account of what he referred to as "the rupture" was hard for me, but it also helped me understand what motivated his actions. I believe that as a "progressive" Christian, he hoped to move NFC toward a different understanding of God's requirements for human sexuality and expression. He didn't want the church to lose the younger generations and thought NFC needed to change in order to keep them. In *Finding Hildegard* he writes: "I tried for a lot of years to create space in a church community where we could pursue God's love and justice. Where we could reform and not oppress. Where we could see our failings, each other's failings, and follow the leading of the Spirit together into healing and community. I failed. We failed."

Gregg took a job with the local public school district, but two of the leaving pastors plus one other former NFC pastor, along with several from the NFC congregation, formed an independent



“affirming” church, Wayside Friends Church (originally Newberg Emerging Friends Church). Not all who left NFC align with the “affirmers,” but their spirits were wounded from all the discord and found other church homes.

NWYM called new leadership in Jim LaShana as general superintendent and is gradually regaining its footing; NFC called a new pastor, Keith Reeser, and recently added an associate pastor, Kenny Snyder. COVID-19 lockdowns caused additional challenges to growth for both, but they will survive, with God’s guidance and grace. Mauri and I remain fully committed to the truth of scripture yet no longer attend Newberg Friends Church. During the transition at NFC, Hillside Fellowship became an Anglican church, its former pastor ordained as an Anglican priest. I studied the theology, and while I aligned with most of its doctrine, certain aspects made me uncomfortable; when they stopped meeting due to the lockdowns, I worshiped with Mauri, “attending” church online. When churches are once again able to meet in person, we hope to find a new place to worship together.

In retrospect I wondered how our church situation could go so far awry. I found some understanding in Douglas Wilson’s “Plodcast” #153— <https://canonpress.libsyn.com/153-how-liberalism-grows>