

Southeastern Yearly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends
Second Specially Called
Executive Committee Meeting 2022
3 Ninth Month 2022

MINUTES

The meeting began with worship at 7 pm.

Bill Carlie shared a reading:

Thus our waking up and our getting up is also an opening up. When we are opened up we are ready to accept and to receive. Spirituality thus becomes the art of wakefulness, of being aware, conscious and alive. Awe, astonishment and praise are the fruits of our wakefulness, our resurrection from dead consciousness. All we can say for this gift of a divine universe, divinely infused and divinely present, is thank you. Thus it is not happiness that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us happy.

Daniel A. Seeger, 2002

The purpose of the called meeting is to select a new location for the 2023 annual sessions. Warren Willis United Methodist Camp & Conference Center (formerly the Life Enrichment Center) has changed its policies, which would make it impossible to hold our sessions there.

The Gathering Committee has been researching substitute sites in the weeks since this news was received. Members of the committee, along with a representative of the Youth Committee visited Dayspring Camp and Conference Center in Parrish, Florida, which is available Easter weekend 2023. The committee recommends we sign a contract to hold the 2023 Gathering. A complete report is attached.

22-2SpCEC01 Executive Committee approves holding our 2023 Yearly Meeting Gathering at Dayspring Camp and Conference Center, April 5 through 9, and to authorize Bill Carlie, Yearly Meeting Clerk; Vicki Carlie, Gathering Clerk; or Susan Wade, Administrative Secretary, to sign a contract and make deposits as necessary to reserve the camp.

APPROVED

Costs at Dayspring will be higher. The Gathering Committee is exploring a “pay as led” model. They are also asking the Executive Committee, Trustees, and Finance Committee to consider the finances.

22-2SpCEC02 Executive Committee, Trustees, and Finance Committee will consider what funds are available to support the 2023 Gathering and especially enable families and young adults to attend, should there be a shortfall in revenue with a pay as led system.

APPROVED

Liz Dykes read the numbered, approved minutes back to the meeting. They were affirmed.

The meeting closed with worship

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Dykes, recording clerk

Participants:

Clearwater Monthly Meeting

Eileen Zingaro

Ft. Lauderdale Monthly Meeting

Brian Humphrey

Gainesville Monthly Meeting

Peter Ackerman

Shawna Doran

Liz Dykes

Jean Larson

Miami Monthly Meeting

Brian Olson

Orlando Monthly Meeting

Liz Jenkins

Ed Lesnick

Richelle Ogle (St. Augustine WG)

Daniel R Vaughn

Palm Beach Monthly Meeting

Jack Bradin (Treasure Coast WG)

St. Petersburg Monthly Meeting

Bill Carlie

Vicki Carlie

Susan Wade

Tallahassee Monthly Meeting

Neil Andersen

Andrea Hoskins

Warren Hoskins

Tampa Monthly Meeting

Jan Dham

Lisa Erazmus

Cecelia Yocum

Gathering Committee Report

SEYM Called Executive Committee Meeting
3rd Month 2022

New Site for Yearly Meeting Gathering

Following last year's Gathering, we reserved the Warren Willis/LEC site for 2023. On August 10th, Lori at Warren Willis Conference Center gave us the news that we would not be able to use the auditorium, along with its 4 breakout rooms. She cited their new policy that only groups of 150 or more could reserve and use the building; and even if we had 150 and reserved the building, they could exercise their option to bump us for a larger group, up to two weeks prior to our event. They offered us alternate meeting space to replace the auditorium, the Pearson Room, but that space is not adequate for our activities, and breakout rooms would be in different locations.

The Gathering Committee and Yearly Meeting Clerk met on August 13th. We agreed that LEC was no longer a viable site for the Gathering, and that we would search for a new site. We needed to act quickly. Most camps are reserved a year in advance; we would be lucky to find openings for 2023.

The Committee developed a list of criteria for a Yearly Meeting site (attached), using not only our own years of experience, but input from the Youth Committee and analysis of registration data from the last 3 in-person Gatherings.

The Committee Clerk and Secretary gathered information on various camps and conference centers in Florida (attached), contacting several by phone and email.

We have found one camp that meets our needs: [Dayspring Camp & Conference Center](#), located in Parrish, Florida (near Sarasota). And, amazingly, the only week they have available is Easter week.

Vicki Carlie (Gathering Clerk), Susan Wade (Secretary), and Jennifer Mendoza (Youth Committee co-clerk) visited Dayspring on September 1st. It is a beautiful, peaceful site located on the Manatee River. It is very close to Sarasota and St. Pete Meetings. SEYM would have exclusive use of the camp.

The meeting spaces are really nice, and will meet our needs for an auditorium with a stage, sound system and breakout rooms for the adult programs. There informal gathering spaces, outdoor worship benches, etc. There is a large building with 2 rooms for the Youth Program, as well as a nearby Pavilion with picnic tables, swimming pool, volleyball and basketball courts. Canoeing is in a cove off the Manatee River. There is also a high ropes course with a zip line; instructors are available. There are nature trails, including a Canopy Walk.

The lodging is much nicer than what we had at LEC. There are cabins that each have 4 bedrooms with private baths, a small living room and mini-kitchen. There are large houses with both private and semi-private arrangements, which have living rooms and kitchens. There are several rooms with true ADA-compliant baths. The cabins and houses will house about 80. There are also 6 dorm rooms that sleep 6, with shower/bathrooms. Lodging costs will run from \$20 - \$40 more per

person per night than LEC, depending on whether you are in a shared room, or a private room; Dorm housing would cost much less. But the rooms do not have the mold or strong cleaning smells we put up with at LEC. There is no camping on site, but there are at least 3 hotels just 7 minutes away.

For years we have complained about how bad the food was at LEC. At Dayspring, there are two chefs in the kitchen. They can accommodate special dietary needs. The meal prices are about the same as at LEC.

At our meeting on September 2, the Gathering Committee minuted:

The Gathering Committee asks Executive Committee to approve holding our 2023 Yearly Meeting Gathering at Dayspring Camp and Conference Center; and to authorize the Gathering Clerk and Secretary to sign a contract and make deposits as necessary to reserve the camp.

Expenses:

Our Gathering expenses will go up. Rates for the meeting room facilities may be around \$3000 more than at LEC.

At LEC, some Friends --- families in particular --- chose to camp mainly to keep their expenses low. The Gathering and Youth Committees are considering ways we can subsidize attendees who cannot afford the full cost of lodging at Dayspring. In recent years, we have offered scholarships to all who needed them, but the scholarship process has been complicated and difficult; and there are those who need financial assistance but don't want to ask for it, and so don't attend.

We are looking at using a tiered 'pay as led' system similar to what FGC and other YMs have been using, where people can choose to:

- pay their cost plus an additional \$100 (or more)
- pay their actual cost
- pay as led

Our experience is that Friends are generous; and this system will work to 'lift all boats' and enable families and younger folks to attend. However, there is always the possibility of a shortfall of revenue.

At our Gathering Committee meeting on September 2, we minuted:

The Gathering Committee asks Executive Committee, Trustees, and Finance Committee to consider what funds are available to support the Gathering and enable families and young adults to attend, should there be a shortfall in revenue.

We are excited about Dayspring; we have been wanting to find a new camp for years, and this place is beautiful. We invite you to visit their website: <https://dayspringfla.org/>

With gratitude,

The Gathering Committee, in consultation with the Youth Committee

SEYM GATHERING SITE SEARCH 2023

Needs & Priorities ~ Request for Proposal (RFP)

Accessibility

- Must be handicap accessible, and offer handicap lodging.
- Must welcome LGBTQ and diverse community
- Must have wi-fi (accessibility for those attending via Zoom)
- Must have food service with dietary options: gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian

Meeting Spaces

- **Required – minimum needs**
 1. **Auditorium:** to seat at least 200, allowing for handicap accessibility, additional space to set up meeting and display tables, plus extra space to stash chairs to clear floor for dancing. Raised stage and **audio/visual system** required.
 2. **Breakout rooms:** 2 additional rooms to seat about 30 in a circle.
 3. **Youth spaces:** one large youth room that can be used for meeting space, crafts, yoga; plus a Youth breakout room for small group discussion or toddler care.
 4. **Outdoor worship space:** pavilion or open-air amphitheater or seating
 5. **Kitchen:** access to small kitchen to refrigerate/store food for evening snacks.
- **Additional spaces and amenities that we would use**
 1. Up to 2 or more additional breakout rooms
 2. Informal gathering/lounge spaces
 3. Youth activities such as: pool, ropes course, canoeing, playground, archery; **PLUS supervisory staff availability.**

Lodging

- **Required:**
 1. **Motel-type rooms:** for 1-2 individuals needing privacy and private bath. Approximately 40 – 46 rooms. (though some of these attendees may be able to stay at nearby hotels)
 2. **Family rooms:** 3 or more in a family wanting their own space and bathroom. Might be a motel-type room or cabin or dorm space. Approximately 5 – 10 rooms.
 3. **Shared lodging:** for individuals to share sleeping space and bathrooms. Approx. 20 – 24 beds in dorm or cabin.
- **Additional lodging** we would also use that might be on site or off-site nearby:
 1. RV sites ---
 2. Tent sites – Any camping areas need to be designated for SEYM use only.
 3. Nearby hotels

Other Important Needs & Considerations

- Safety: No non-SEYM groups or individuals using our designated areas so that all Friends, Youth & parents can feel safe
- Nature! Natural setting for outdoor worship, nature trails.
- Quiet
- Access to refrigerator/kitchen or breakroom space for evening snacks and for those who must bring own food or medicines.
- Hydration: access to coffee, tea, water, ice.
- Proximity to airport. Airport shuttle service to camp.
- Areas for social interaction, bookstores, display tables

CAMP SEARCH 2022

Red indicates problem or need more information

See RFP for our criteria

Camps that meet criteria

Dayspring: <https://dayspringfla.org/room-rates/>

8411 25th St E, Parrish, FL 34219 Parrish, FL; east of Sarasota

- Episcopal-owned
- Auditorium: seats up to 300
- Several Meeting spaces: <https://dayspringfla.org/meeting-room-options/>
- Lodging: 42 bedrooms with 2 -3 beds, some with private baths; 36 single beds in dorms (counting bottom bunk only); 64 add'l bunks beds in Youth Cabins.
- **no camping, no RV; but a few RV parks nearby**
- Rates: costs anticipated to be about ¼ to 1/3 higher than LEC; but about same price or less for people who stay in dorms or cabins.
- lodging <https://dayspringfla.org/room-rates/>-----rates include meals
- Pool, volleyball, canoeing on Manatee river, ropes, 97 acres, nature trails including canopy walk, & more.
- Closest airports: Sarasota (SRQ), Tampa
- 3 hotels about 6 minutes away

We visited the camp. It's beautiful, meets our needs. See Gathering Cte Report 9/3/22 for more information. Lots of happy staff.

Other camps

Camp Weed <http://www.campweed.org/>

Episcopal Diocese of Florida

- 11057 Camp Weed Place, **Live Oak**, Florida 32060
- 1 hour north of Gainesville (closest airport)
- 1.5 hours to Tallahassee; **6 hours to Miami**
- Lodging:
 1. 50 hotel-type guest rooms with 2 dbl beds, private bath. \$85/nite/private & \$42.50 double occupancy.
 2. Cabins have 18 twin beds with 3 shared baths: **minimum 8 ppl/ cabin.** \$30/night/person
 3. RV and tent camping.
- Activities: canoeing, nature walks, pool, ~~ropes, climbing wall~~, volleyball
- **Auditorium space doesn't work at all**

Additional information from the camp and follow up phone call showed that the Auditorium space is unworkable. We could either have a combined auditorium/dining hall function (with no adequate sound systems) near the other program areas at the conference side of the camp, or the

Youth Pavilion (w/sound system) on the youth side, which is located too far away from our program areas.

Outdoor worship space doesn't work
No staff for ropes course
Small camp staff is a problem

Florida Elks Youth Camp & Conference Center

<https://www.floridaelks.org/camp/> Umatilla, FL

- Conference center has 32 guest rooms; **CANT USE Youth side 50 cabins w/9 beds** Tent camping.
- Lots of meeting spaces
- archery range, pool, lake, challenge ropes course, indoor basketball arena.
- RV resort nearby; 1 motel nearby
- **Not enough lodging**
- **Very high prices**

Canterbury <https://canterburyretreat.org/> Oviedo, FL (near UCF, Orlando)

- **Not enough lodging; outrageously high prices**

Camp Shalom <https://campshalom.net/> AKA Orange Springs Retreat Center <https://orangespringsretreat.com/>

- 168 Camp Shalom Trail, Orange Springs, FL 32182 (Between Gainesville and Ocala)
- **Insufficient lodging and meeting space**
- **Auditorium size???** "There are a number of meeting rooms of different sizes that can be used for services, lectures, worship, break-out sessions, or even crafting. There is a theater and lecture room, equipped with an overhead projector for movies or presentations."
- Meals provided
- Amenities: Spring-fed lake with white sandy beach; pool, canoeing, sports fields, tennis courts.
- **Lodging???** "Our retreat lodgings include double cabins separated by large, clean Formica bathrooms, plus a select number of private lodgings."
- "Your church will have exclusive access and will be able to use the entire venue during your retreat."
- For groups up to 220 (and in some cases, larger).
- Rates: 4 night/ 5 day retreat: The cost is \$185 per person for a guaranteed minimum of 100 attendees from Dinner the Wednesday night through Lunch Sunday. This includes Meals, lodging, and exclusive use of the entire retreat center.
- Nearest hotel: 32 minutes away in Ocala.

Deerhaven Retreat and Conference Center <http://www.deerhaven.cc/>

Paisley, FL - Ocala Nat'l Forest

- Lodging: 24 motel style rooms, Dorm Cabins (capacity = 80); 30 RV sites, tent camping.
- Pool, lake, sports courts, nature trails

- Not enough meeting space??
- Food service?

Retreats by the Lake Lake Wales <http://retreatsbythelake.com/>

- 2819 Tiger Lake Rd, Lake Wales, FL 33898
- Professionally run
- **Not enough Lodging:**” lodges, cabins and a private house, with varying capacities ranging from 8 to 12 people. The total capacity for these types of accommodations is approximately 200 guests.”
- Nature, pool, lake, sports
- **Not enough meeting space. Auditorium is just a huge metal building. 2 breakout spaces.**

Luther Springs Hawthorne, FL <https://luthersprings.org/>

- Evangelical Lutheran, Gay friendly
- 120 ppl.
- Lodging: 30 guest rooms at Conference Center; Morgan Cabin Village: 5 cabins w/5 sets of bunk beds; Morgan Village: 5 cabins w/ 10 ea.
- Auditorium:
- **Meeting Spaces: up to 120 people**
- **No camping**
- **amenities? Youth camp photos show ropes, canoeing, archery**

Montgomery Presbyterian Center. Starke, FL

<https://montgomerycenter.net/>

- **meeting space is sparse**
- up to 150ppl
- lakes, water sports, archery, ropes
- Inn, cabins, lodges, RV & tent
- Good food (trained chef)

Cedarkirk

- **Not enough lodging or meeting space**

NOTES:

- Several more were researched but were obviously too small, many camps and conference centers were unsuitable due to fundamentalist religious views and/or being owned by an anti-LGBTQ denomination.
- Camps that are at the extreme ends of Florida were not considered.