

# Southeastern Yearly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends

## Epistle 2023

Loving Greetings to Friends Everywhere,

Southeastern Yearly Meeting gathered for its 59th sessions from Forth Month 5<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> Days. The meeting sessions were hybrid, allowing Friends at a distance to join with those in person to conduct Yearly Meeting business. In-person, we met at the Dayspring Conference Center at Parrish, FL. This was a new location and facility for us. Our in-person gathering was full of joy and laughter.

145 Friends gathered for our sessions; 108 in-person (88 adults and 20 youth) and 37 on-line. We were also joined, on-line, by Friends from the Havana (Cuba) Unprogrammed Worship Group. The short virtual visit by Friends from Cuba, with a message from Alejandro Castellanos, the Clerk of the Worship Group, was a source of great joy. Alejandro expressed hope for the day when we can meet together in-person at Havana. We look forward to this day, also.

We welcomed Friends from other Yearly Meetings and Friends organizations, including FGC, FCNL, Right Sharing of World Resources, AFSC. It is a joy to meet with Friends beyond the borders of our own Yearly Meeting.

Our theme this year was “Deepening at the Root: Tending the Source of Our Worship & Witness.” Christopher Sammond brought us the Walton Lecture and two (2) retreat sessions. The retreat sessions gave us the opportunity to experience deep listening to each other and the Spirit, to share deeply with each other, gaining skill in tending to the Source. Opportunities for worship, fellowship, and workshops offered us further ways to deepen our spiritual lives together.

Our Yearly Meeting committed to maintaining our Field Secretary for Earthcare position by changing from a program supported by separate donations to part of the general administrative budget.

Togetherness  
Unity  
Boldness  
Flowing  
Like the murmuration of starlings  
Love  
Rabbits and raccoons at worship  
Snakes sunning  
Spirit moving

Sometimes one despairs that one has lost their way  
We are not alone  
We have not bowed to Baal  
We are all the beloved

We are all the wounded and the healed  
The lost and found  
The betrayer and the Savior  
The persecutor and the persecuted  
Children of the Light we are still here  
Our hearts are of one accord  
Our steps move as one  
Yet each has its own rhythm  
Our dance in the river of Life

*Blessings and Peace to You All in Light*  
Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends