

Southeastern Yearly Meeting

Quakers in Florida, southeast Georgia & South Carolina

Yearly Gathering
16 - 20 Fourth Month 2025

Epistle

To Friends Everywhere:

Loving Greetings of the Spirit for Southeastern Yearly Meeting in its 61st annual sessions held again this year at Dayspring Retreat Center in Parrish, Florida.

Daquanna Harrison of Adelpia Meeting (Baltimore Yearly Meeting) presented our Walton Lecture and gathering retreats. In addressing our theme, *Seeking the Wellspring of Audacious Hope*, Daquanna gave us tools to find our wellspring and pushed us to find the spaces that were ours. Daquanna urged us to take Outlandish Actions. She gave examples of actions that were outlandish but became simple as Friends and communities came together. We must be brave in these times.

Our business sessions were energetic, spirit led and brought us together. For the past two years, an *ad hoc* Quaker Call Committee has been meeting weekly to find where the passions in our yearly meeting to bring Quaker values into the wider community. There has been enthusiasm for establishing a Friends school in Florida but plans that seemed to be moving forward were derailed this winter. A new standing committee on Quaker Education, was charged with considering how to include Quaker values in education throughout SEYM and the *ad hoc* committee was laid down with gratitude. Further explorations of where the yearly meeting and its constituent monthly meetings and worship groups are being led by the spirit may be taken up by other committees.

As we reviewed the work of our Executive Committee and Interim Business Meetings, we rejoiced in the recognition of Deland Quaker Meeting, our newest Monthly Meeting, and the news that Jacksonville Worship Group at the Beaches is beginning to consider the steps to becoming a preparative meeting. We considered our budget and recommendations from our Finance Committee and Trustees. The Nominating Committee initially struggled with finding volunteers for key positions but ultimately filled most of the slots. We heard from visitors and representatives to wider Quaker organizations, from our monthly meetings, and connected with each other over meals, finding how the Spirit is moving among us.

Our Committee for Ministry on Racism requested and held a full plenary session devoted to the topic of Becoming an Anti-racist Yearly Meeting in Earnest. Friends shared what their monthly meetings were doing to advance anti-racism in their communities and consider how we can do better. Films, affinity groups, workshops, singing, nature walks, and an opportunity to swim filled our days.

One hundred and seventeen Friends came to our yearly meeting in person and another 25 joined on zoom. With new audio equipment, our hybrid experience was much improved. Our new Youth Coordinator, Rachel Dellinger, welcomed our five teens and 7 younger Friends, who enjoyed specially planned programs, including time with Daquanna Harrison and her elder Tomi Nagai-Rothe.

As we dispersed, there was enthusiasm for taking the Audacious Hope to our meetings and beginning the work of taking Simple, Brave, Outlandish action to bring justice to our local communities and to the world.