

New England Yearly Meeting of Friends

The Religious Society of Friends in New England

Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.
Exodus 25:8 (KJV)

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.
Matthew 18:20 (KJV)

Dear Friends everywhere:

New England Yearly Meeting of Friends gathered at Bryant University in Smithfield, Rhode Island, August 4th through 9th, 2007, for its 347th Annual Sessions. Our theme was, *Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary*. We are not only to make a sanctuary for ourselves; we are called to make a sanctuary for everyone even if that discomforts us. The continuing crises of war and environmental destruction weigh heavily on us. However, most of our work as a body focused on how we can order our own yearly meeting and relate to other Friends: how we can open ourselves to being a sanctuary for the Divine. Calls for understanding, forgiveness, acceptance and unity reverberated in ministry day after day.

This week the Friend of Friends in our midst reminded us that we need each other, but where two or three are gathered together there is always diversity, which can feel like disunity: dangerous, and painful. Conflict is an opportunity given by the Spirit to practice forgiveness, sacrificial love, and relentless engagement. Pain can prepare us: draw us closer to each other and to the Holy One. If we are willing to be put into the fire, the Creator may shape us into a vessel that is a sanctuary, where we can look into each other's eyes and see God, and tears will run down our cheeks.

Issues we dealt with this week have drawn us to consider the history of our yearly meeting, which reunited in 1945 after a century of division. The walls of our sanctuary show stresses from that history. These worry us, and at the same time call us to grow. Fifty years ago we had many pastors and dependable volunteers whom yearly meeting staff could call on. Now, with fewer pastors and volunteers, and in a much different social context, we have had to increase our faithful and overworked staff. The financial and organizational implications are challenging, and we have asked our Permanent Board to continue seeking solutions.

We joyfully gave preliminary approval to the chapter on worship in our new, developing revision of *Faith and Practice*. In this matter as in others, we hunger for words that might pull us to that place where we can stand together.

We heard a proposal for changes in the relationship between the New England Yearly Meeting and the Moses Brown School, which has been under our care for over 200 years. After a period of dryness, there have been fruitful efforts to revitalize the Quaker nature of the school. Many Friends who have labored hard for the benefit of the school spoke in support of the school and of the proposed changes. Others with experience raised serious doubts about the proposal, worrying that it might lead to reduced Quaker influence. We were unable to accept the entire proposal, but agreed to establish a committee to nurture the relationship between the YM and the school. We thank the Divine Teacher for the courage and faithfulness of Friends during this consideration.

We came together in deep distress about the personnel policy of Friends United Meeting. Some

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of us came wanting to break off all connection. Others came with a strong sense that, despite all our disagreements, it is important to stay in relationship. We felt angry, confused, outraged, frustrated, and brokenhearted, but there was also tenderness, honesty, loving concern for each other, and especially for all those who are in pain. Ministry & Counsel's inspired preparation was of great help to us as we began our conversation with small groups. During the week the Spirit moved powerfully among us, and enabled us to hear each other and open our hearts to new ideas.

We were given unity to affirm that the Holy One loves all people equally, regardless of sexual orientation. We have confirmed this truth through careful study of scripture and searching for the will of God. We prayerfully and respectfully ask that the worldwide community of Friends open its heart to this knowing.

We also need to attend to the beam in our own eye, by talking with each other about sexual ethics and the deepest meanings of family, marriage, and committed relationships. We ask our monthly and quarterly meetings to continue seeking Divine guidance on same-sex marriage. In this process, we have committed ourselves to love and forbearance, and tender care for one another. We acknowledge great pain in our community over these issues. We seek healing, wholeness and God's blessing as we move forward.

We rejoice in the exuberance of youth, from the small voices of children in our worship to the awesome energy of Young Friends. They delight us, leading us in singing, worship and prayer. "We are all the haystack, we are all needle, and we are all found." Our labors and decisions are not only for ourselves, but also for our children and our children's children.

Our history of division makes us aware that our unity is fragile, precious, and holy. Unity will not make our conflicts go away; but it will undergird our struggles with love. We are learning to know and to love each other through our passionate and diverse feelings and opinions. The Creator is knitting us together, stitch by stitch, into a coat of many colors. Holy Spirit, we praise and thank you for all the disparate colors and textures of our threads.

New England Yearly Meeting of Friends

Y harán un santuario para mí, y habitaré en medio de ellos.
Éxodo 25:8

Porque donde están dos o tres congregados en mi nombre, allí estoy yo en medio de ellos.
Mateo 18:20

Queridos Amigos en todas partes

La Junta Anual de Amigos de Nueva Inglaterra se reunió en la Universidad Bryant en Smithfield, Rhode Island del 5 al 9 de agosto del 2007, en su 347ª sesión. Nuestro lema fue *Señor, prepárame para ser un santuario*. No sólo hemos de hacer un santuario para nosotros mismos, sino que somos llamados a edificar un santuario para todo el mundo, aunque nos incomode. Las continuas crisis de guerra y la destrucción del medio ambiente nos abruma. Sin embargo, la mayor parte de nuestra labor corporativa se enfocaba en cómo organizar nuestra junta anual y cómo relacionarnos con otros Amigos; cómo podemos abrirnos para ser un santuario para lo Divino. Día tras día, los llamados a la comprensión, el perdón, la aceptación y la unión resonaban en el ministerio.

Esta semana el Amigo de Amigos en medio de nosotros nos recordó que nos necesitamos los unos a los otros, pero que donde están dos o tres congregados siempre hay diversidad que se puede sentir como desunión, peligrosa y dolorosa. El conflicto es una oportunidad que el Espíritu nos da para practicar el perdón, el amor abnegado, la brega sin tregua. El dolor nos puede preparar, acercarnos a los demás y al Santísimo. Si consentimos a ser puestos en el fuego, el Creador puede formarnos como vasija que sea santuario, donde podremos ver a Dios en los ojos de los demás, y las lágrimas se nos derramarán por las mejillas.

Los asuntos que hemos tratado durante la semana nos llevan a considerar la historia de nuestra junta anual, que se reunificó en 1945 después de un siglo de división. Las paredes de nuestro santuario manifiestan las tensiones de esa historia, que nos preocupan y al mismo tiempo nos llaman a crecer. Hace cincuenta años, teníamos muchos pastores y voluntarios fiables con los que los empleados de la junta anual podían contar. Ahora, sin esos recursos y en un contexto social muy diferente, hemos tenido que aumentar nuestro personal fiel y sobrecargado. Las consecuencias financieras y organizativas nos retan, y pedimos que nuestra Mesa Permanente siga buscando soluciones.

Nos regocijamos en la aprobación previa del capítulo sobre adoración para nuestra nueva *Fe y Práctica* que está en formación. En este asunto como en otros, anhelamos palabras que nos lleven a todos a un lugar donde podamos morar juntos.

Hubo una propuesta para cambiar la relación entre nuestra junta anual y la Escuela Moses Brown, que ha estado bajo nuestro cuidado durante más de 200 años. Después de un período de sequía, han habido esfuerzos fructíferos para reactivar el carácter cuáquero de la escuela. Muchos Amigos que han laborado mucho para ayudar la escuela se expresaron a favor de la escuela y de la propuesta. Otros Amigos de experiencia expresaron serias dudas, considerando que podría causar una disminución de la influencia cuáquera. No pudimos aceptar la propuesta en total, pero acordamos establecer una comisión para cultivar la relación entre la junta anual y

la escuela. Agradecemos al Maestro Divino por el valor y la fidelidad de los Amigos durante esta consideración.

Nos reunimos en profunda angustia sobre la política de empleo de la Junta Unida de Amigos. Algunos vinieron con el deseo de terminar toda relación. Otros vinieron con un fuerte sentido de que, a pesar de todos los desacuerdos, es importante mantener la relación. Nos sentimos enojados, confusos, ultrajados, frustrados, destrozados; pero también hubo ternura, honestidad, preocupación cariñosa para con los demás, y especialmente para con los adoloridos. La preparación inspirada de la Comisión de Ministerio y Consejo nos ayudó mucho mientras comenzamos nuestra conversación en grupos pequeños. Durante la semana el Espíritu se movió entre nosotros con poder, y nos capacitó para oír a los demás y para abrir nuestros corazones a nuevas ideas.

Recibimos la unión para afirmar que el Santísimo ama a todas las personas igualmente, sin considerar la orientación sexual. Hemos confirmado esta verdad por medio de un estudio cuidadoso de la escritura y por medio de una búsqueda de la voluntad de Dios. Con oración y respeto, pedimos que la comunidad mundial de Amigos abra su corazón a este conocimiento.

También hemos de ocuparnos de la viga en nuestro propio ojo. Tenemos que hablar abiertamente de la ética sexual y el significado más profundo de la familia, el matrimonio, y las relaciones comprometidas. Les pedimos a nuestras juntas mensuales y trimestrales que busquen la guía Divina sobre el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo. En este proceso nos comprometemos al amor y la paciencia, y a la atención tierna los unos para con los otros. Reconocemos que hay gran dolor en nuestra comunidad sobre estos asuntos. En este proceso pedimos curación, integridad, y bendición de Dios.

Nos regocijamos en la juventud exuberante, desde las voces pequeñas en nuestros cultos hasta la energía formidable de los jóvenes amigos. Nos deleitan, nos dirigen en canto, adoración, y oración. “Todos somos el pajar, todos somos las agujas, y todos somos encontrados.” Laboramos y hacemos decisiones no sólo para nosotros mismos, sino también para nuestros hijos y para los hijos de nuestros hijos.

Nuestra historia de división nos hace conscientes de que nuestra unión es frágil, preciosa, y santa. La unión no acabará con los conflictos, pero cimentará con amor nuestras luchas. A través de nuestros sentimientos y opiniones apasionados y diversos, estamos aprendiendo a conocernos y a amarnos. Punto por punto el Creador nos une en una túnica de colores tejida. Espíritu Santo, te alabamos y te agradecemos por todos los distintos colores y texturas de nuestros hilos.

La Junta Anual de Amigos de Nueva Inglaterra

Epistle from the NEYM Young Adult Friends Yearly Meeting (YAF)

Greetings, fellow Friends,

This year NEYM met at Bryant University in Rhode Island, once again, from August 4th through 9th, under the theme of *Lord Prepare Me To Be A Sanctuary*.

Friends continued to discuss Friends United Meeting's (FUM) personnel policy, alongside the wider yearly meeting's struggle to find unity in our own support of Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual, and Queer communities. The Yearly Meeting disagrees strongly with the policy. Despite this hurt, Friends recognize that this is an opportunity for a greater discussion of community building with those Friends whose beliefs differ from our own. One of the larger concerns of the wider yearly meeting was whether to remain connected to FUM, or to break away in protest of the FUM's personnel policies. Many Friends felt it would be wrong to break away at this point in time, and we were in unity to remain a part of FUM while speaking Truth as we understand it.

As for the smaller YAF community, many of us were not led to join the annual nominating committee for Ministry & Oversight (M&O). In the end, four YAFs felt led to join it. At last year's midwinter event, it was decided to no longer begin terms on M&O at NEYMYM Sessions, but at our traditional midwinter retreat, giving these four Friends a little breathing space before coming up with a slate. We also considered the possibility of changing our normal schedule of retreats and other events between NEYM Sessions. To increase attendance, YAFs decided to shift focus away from traditional retreats and focus on the midwinter gathering as well as on more extensive community- focused events such as various pre-existing service events and the new YAF Camp planned for next summer. We designed this Camp to strengthen our community and offer us a chance to discuss spiritual grounding and its translation to action.

On Tuesday, YAFs heard a presentation from Beth Pyles of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). Many YAFs were deeply moved. Her faith-in-action message from CPT and her exhortation against the Iraq War inspired all. We pass on her suggestions to Friends everywhere: to pray; to talk openly to non-Friends and others outside the peace community with whom we may not agree; to give time, money and resources to peacemakers; and to call the President and urge him not to attack Iran.

This year, YAFs continued the annual tradition of 'welcoming' the graduating Young Friends but faced a new set of difficulties. It has always been hard to get the Young Friends excited about what it means to be a YAF, mostly because we have trouble knowing it ourselves.

From the game of Winkum, we moved to the graciously donated Junior High meeting space, to see Peterson Toscano's new one man play entitled *The Reeducation of George W. Bush*. Peterson is a well-known performer and is also a member of NEYM. His performance was, at times, moving, and hilarious, and at other times, very thought provoking. He received a standing ovation from the many people attending, which included people from almost every age group at NEYM Sessions.

Thursday came, and all too soon we had to say our goodbyes following the closing worship for all ages. We had our last lunch in which there were many hugs. Soon thereafter, we returned to our normal lives, missing our Quaker Friends all that much more.

The Young Adult Friends of New England Yearly Meeting

Epistle from the NEYM Young Friends (YFs)

Dear F/friends Everywhere,

The Young Friends of New England gathered at Bryant University on the 4th day of 8th month, 2007 for our Annual Sessions. We began with a witty presentation of the “commitments” by the Yearly Meeting Ministry & Counsel. Following name games and other logistical matters, the group shared a delicious pizza dinner of lasagna provided by Bryant.

The following morning we attended intergenerational worship which was followed by a keynote message from Duduzile Joyce Mtshazo, a visitor from Central & Southern African Yearly Meeting. In her deeply personal and emotional message, she talked about the theme of our Annual Sessions, *Lord Prepare Me To Be A Sanctuary*. She reminded Friends of the difficulty in preparing oneself to be a sanctuary, requiring that we recognize how we are “programmed” by our surroundings, and that we learn to share our burdens both with one another and with God.

On Sunday evening we once more congregated with the larger meeting to discuss NEYM’s response to Friends United Meeting’s personnel policy (which affirms gay civil rights but prohibits non-celibate gay or unmarried Friends from working or volunteering with FUM). In order to gain a broader perspective on the FUM/NEYM relationship, Lisa Graustein, our former coordinator and beloved RP (Resource Person), summarized 300 years of New England Quaker history in one hour. This was illustrated by a “slide show,” using Young Friends as props to represent the various historical figures and events. Afterward, the group broke into small groups to explore our feelings and goals and to relate constructive strategies for addressing this sensitive issue. While this discussion is a step in the right direction, it is clear that there is much work left to do as a community to interpret the Spirit’s leading and come to unity.

Over the course of the week, Young Friends actively conversed about our experience and feelings around the personnel policy. Many Young Friends felt that FUM’s policy is discriminatory towards large numbers of Friends who might want to work with FUM. Others felt that in these times when our nation is at war, is complicit in the torture of human beings, and is witnessing changes in the climate of our planet, that there were other issues to which NEYM might also devote time and energy.

Monday morning was filled with passion and sadness as the Young Friends joined adult business meeting to hear memorial minutes for fellow Friends Jane Cook and Christopher Clark. Chris, a recent graduate of the Young Friends program, was killed in a car accident last February. Several of those who were closest to Chris gave heartfelt messages to his life and his profound effect on their lives. Many friends were deeply moved by the minute and messages even though we did not all know Chris well.

For our afternoon program Christian Peacemaker Team representative Beth Pyles came to talk with us about her experiences in Iraq. She asked us as Young Friends to consider how much of our time and resources we devote to peace now, distinguishing “making” peace and “being” peace. We explored “What has God put on my heart?” and “What is one thing I can do today to promote peace?”

In our business meetings and worship we considered correspondence between an RP and a local police department; this was in regards to an incident during our February retreat in which Friends felt that racial profiling by the police had occurred. During our week together we also considered Friends’ experiences and feelings surrounding our commitment on abstaining from sexual activity while gathered. Many Friends felt it was necessary to do so to keep our commu-

nity safe and secure for all present. We will continue to attend to this topic during future gatherings as well. We conducted our usual business of retreat planning and M&C nominations in a worshipful manner with relative ease.

On Tuesday and Wednesday morning Young Friends attended Bible Half-hour led by Benigno Sanchez-Eppler. He integrated text from the Old and New Testaments with personal stories to illustrate that when we gather together in worship, we create a place of sanctuary where we are held by each other and God. In our own worship, we were moved by a spiritual journey shared by a fellow Young Friend, who after facing a physical injury which prevented her from running, was able to find other ways of experiencing that same level of spiritual clarity.

Considering the amount of Spirit-led discussion laid on the hearts of Friends, Young Friends were thankful to still be able to participate in traditional and fun activities. We welcomed new eighth-graders into Young Friends during Monday's dinner. The evening program was led by Allison Aldrich, a professionally trained chorus and peace-through-song leader. She guided us in an hour and a half of joyful song and movement, including the Ghanaian song game *Tue Tue* which got friends clapping, singing, walking, and really confused at times. Later that evening, Young Friends joined energetic Friends of all ages in a spirited contra dance, complete with sashaying, swinging, and vigorous fiddle music. The hot weather did not stop us from dancing our best, but it made our annual trip to the beach the next day well appreciated. Friends jumped over, rode on, and swam through the crashing waves of Scarborough beach, enjoying the sand and surf and relaxing with a picnic lunch. Later on Tuesday, all Young Friends went to see our RP and one-man-theater-company, Peterson Toscano, perform his newest play, *The Re-education of George W. Bush: No President Left Behind*. It was funny and thought-provoking; Peterson left us asking ourselves how we could educate the "little George Bush" within each of us.

The Young Friends again hosted the NEYM coffeehouse, a variety show that we enjoy every year. It made some laugh, it made some cry, but Friends were in unity—we will never forget it. After coffeehouse, Young Friends/Young Adult Friends danced the night away with the dance theme of "Rocking Through the Ages," with great music from the last century and this one.

On Thursday morning, we packed up and left, glad to have shared this fun-filled and productive week with our Friends from all over New England and beyond. We look forward to a great year of retreats, in which we will explore our Quaker identity further through fellowship and fun.

The Young Friends of New England Yearly Meeting

Epistle from the NEYM Junior High Yearly Meeting (JHYM)

To Friends Everywhere,

The theme this year was Sanctuary. When we gathered Saturday evening August 4, 2007, our program began with a surprise. For the first time we had been asked to lead intergenerational worship the next morning for more than 600 Friends gathered here at Bryant University, in Smithfield, RI. We were like “What?” Then confused, then “OK, Let’s do it!” We woke people up singing *We’re working on a Building*. We shared ways that JHYM is a sanctuary for us, then exited singing *Lord Prepare Me To Be A Sanctuary*, one of our favorite songs.

We did a variety of things about our theme. Five panelists came and talked about their work with creating sanctuaries for people around the world. Judy Goldberger and Mary Hopkins had moving stories about illegal immigrants, the qualities of their lives and why they left their old lives to come here to the United States.

Eden and James Grace talked about Kenya and how they worked with Quakers there. We found out that more than half the world’s Quakers are in Kenya and live in a space a bit smaller than Rhode Island. They also told a bit about daily life and how some children would love to go to school, but they can’t afford it.

Beth Pyles works with the Christian Peacemaker Teams in Iraq and she talked about Ghandi’s statement about our need to be the change we want to see in the world. One evening Benigno Sanchez-Eppler led us in a program about visible and invisible friends that connect us. It was awesomely cool!

We gathered in small groups at random times during our time together. On Wednesday each group got a big piece of white cloth. We decorated them to display what we thought about sanctuary. We hung them to create an actual sanctuary for our 8th grade graduation ceremony.

We had business meetings. It took an hour and fifteen minutes, a night sleeping on the idea and some thoughtful silence to arrive at a decision about a clerk. We now have three co-clerks, another first!

Everyone is generally nice to everyone else, even though you might not be best friends. Nobody has had major disagreements with each other. We got to explore some of the disagreement going on at the adult sessions. Kevin Lee led a program about the Friends United Meeting problem where two people read off a script, one person reading about how they didn’t think the personnel policy made sense, and the other reading about the personnel policy and why it did make sense. We had a chance to show and change our positions by moving around and explaining why we moved where we moved. Some people left that evening program confused.

Gretchen Baker-Smith, the coordinator for Junior High retreats, during the year, came with people going into 6th grade and talked about JHYM retreats. Young Friends came by to take our 8th graders to dinner.

We did a lot of work but we also had some time to go to a state park in Connecticut. One friend described it as “park-tas-til-ici-our-if-fic.”

Most people are going to sleep on the way home but we can’t wait for next year’s NEYM Sessions.

The Junior High Friends of New England Yearly Meeting

Epistle from the NEYM Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM), grades 3–6

Greetings from 44 JYMers in New England.

The theme of this year's adult YM Sessions was *Sanctuary*. Ours was *This Little Light of Mine* (TLLOM). We had singing, games and activities and guests on the two themes.

In the fifth and sixth grades, we adopted rules: 5. help others; 4. one talker at a time; 3. act your age; and 2. respect others and their property. The number 1 rule was: have fun, which we remembered the most. For fun, we did things like: JYM ball; capture the flag; sanctuary tag (with refugees, border patrol and sanctuaries); and "snake" (a rolling-on-the-floor game). A bunch of times we held hands in a circle and rushed to the middle shouting, "JYM is awesome!" In third and fourth grades we made ice cream used kits to make wooden toys which we painted, made a mandala of different colored beans and did shadow puppet shows.

We started our day about 8:15am with singing and a Bible 10-minutes. One bible story was about the Ark of the Covenant which was kept in one of the worlds first sanctuaries. Later we made arks from craft paper and used clay to make cherubim to put on top. We learned that the original ark was destroyed or lost during a war. We had a nominating committee for clerks and committees and business meeting every day. We ended our day about 9:00pm, after vespers.

We had a visitor who works in Iraq with the Christian Peacemaker Teams. The visitor led a role-play where each of us was a Palestinian or Israeli at a checkpoint. One of us role-played a child who tried to pass through to the other side to go to school. We didn't see any sanctuary in the role-play. Many of us were interested in the Middle East so after the main program we went to a separate room and had a question and answer session.

We also had Quaker visitors from Kenya. Both were teachers. They showed pictures of how crowded their schoolrooms were. They talked about how hard it was for parents to find sanctuary for their children during land wars.

In 5–6 we sang TLLOM in French, Spanish, and Farsi. We read and talked about, sang and worked on memorizing Psalm 23, *The Lord is my Shepherd*. We had a big screen we used with the Internets Goggle earth to Zoom-in from above on places we heard about during JYM, like Kakamega Kenya, Gibara Cuba, Israel, Gaza, and Baghdad Iraq. One of our 5–6 staff talked about her 2007 visit to Cuba YM and showed us some very interesting pictures of Quakers there.

We learned about how sanctuary can be anywhere: a special place; a person you are comfortable with; or in our body, mind, and soul. We would be honored to have you with us next year. Have fun!

The Junior Yearly Meeting, grades 3–6, of New England Yearly Meeting

Epistle from the NEYM Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM), grades k–2

Dear Friends All Around the World,

We are the kindergarten, first, and second graders from JYM in NEYM. We have been at Bryant University in Smithfield RI for YM Sessions, from August 4th through the 9th.

We have had a lot of fun this week. We played many games, including "Don't Break the Ice" and "Monkey in the Middle," and we made lots of lego and art projects. We listened to stories especially about the boy who saved worms, and sang songs. We especially liked singing with

all of JYM. We also did a lot fun things at Afternoon Choices. Kevin Lee came and did parachute games with us, including a funny one where we yelled “How do you do?” to each other. We liked having snack every morning with Little Miss Sunshine. We laughed a lot and made a lot of new Friends. We like our friends, here very much.

We made a “Shining Lights Board” of all the ways our lights have been shining all week. There are a lot of things on it about how much we shared, listened, worked things out, and helped each other. Some of us have been thinking about people who don’t have as much money or food as us. All of YM Sessions ate a simple lunch one day so that we could send money to others for food.

We liked our visitor with her Seeing Eye dog and wished other dogs could come to YM Sessions. We want to especially thank the two Quaker women who visited us from Kenya, and we hope that a copy of this letter goes around the world to them. We wish that they could come back with their children sometime so that we could get to know them too. We had fun and hope you do too.

The Junior Yearly Meeting, grades k–2, of New England Yearly Meeting

Epistle from the NEYM childcare program

To all Friends everywhere,

During our time together at the childcare program, we delighted in the spiritual work of early childhood: sharing resources (paint, clay, and glue); trading for what you need (a dump truck for a backhoe); making choices that honor your leadings (art room, outside or free play room); and, finding our voices to make our feelings and needs known (“I feel lonely without my family,” “I need a hug.”).

We were blessed with inspired staff gifted with deep “listening ears” as we transitioned from the care of our families to our children’s sanctuary. The steady stream of loving volunteers who joyfully completed our community also delighted us.

Following the teachings of “Peaceful Piggy Meditation,” we practiced quieting out busy-ness, our minds and our bodies to listen. We learned “birthday candle breathing” to find the peace in our centers and share that peace with our Friends. One very young friend wondered if the caterpillar does “birthday candle breathing” in her chrysalis as she awaits the moment she will be changed and emerge as a butterfly.

We practiced yoga and the art of releasing out bodies and minds to sleep. We practiced giving each other loving attention as we sang hello to our Friends each morning, when we shared our thoughts, and, as we entered our very first meeting for worship with attention to the business on our hearts: whether we could find way open to play outside on a rainy wet day. Older Friends were inspired by our ability to find the sense of the meeting and younger Friends were proud to have done such important spiritual; work.

At this YM Sessions, Friends young and old joined in finding the sanctuary in our own spirit and breathing the fullness of deep love and listening into our childcare community. We have been blessed.

The childcare program of New England Yearly Meeting