



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	Northwest Yearly Meeting
<p>This yearly meeting would embrace a revised <i>Faith and Practice</i></p> <p>This group would be composed of meetings that have decided to practice and/or have recorded an affirming stance.</p> <p>This may include churches who have internal disagreement but have agreed to align their practices with the newly formed yearly meeting <i>Faith and Practice</i>.</p>	<p>This yearly meeting would be composed of meetings who align with current Northwest Yearly Meeting <i>Faith and Practice</i>.</p> <p>This may include churches who have internal disagreement but have agreed to align their practices with current NWYM <i>Faith and Practice</i>.</p>

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.



OLYMPIC VIEW FRIENDS
CHURCH • CHILD CARE & LEARNING CENTER

July 6, 2017

To our Northwest Yearly Meeting AC Board,

This letter is to inform you of Olympic View Friends discernment regarding the recent events that have been occurring in our Yearly Meeting.

As a reminder of who we are, Olympic View Friends has been blessed to be one of 62 Northwest Yearly Meeting (NWYM) Evangelical Friends Churches in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington who join together to worship God, serve Jesus (both personally and through outreach ministries) and pray that, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, we will impact our society with love in action.

Recently, the NWYM (and our local appointed church representatives) met in January 2017 to discuss our churches' various views on sexuality. For around 10 years, our denomination has been seeking God's wisdom and Spirit in regards to sexuality and how we as Evangelical Friends believe God is calling us to minister and acknowledge those who have different sexuality views than what is stated in our Yearly Meeting's Faith & Practice.

In regards to sexuality, our Faith & Practice currently states:

"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. 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. "

While many members of our Yearly Meeting believe the above statement is outdated and needs revision to be "seasoned with grace", we have yet to come to unity as a whole regarding what changes should be made to our Faith & Practice and what our stance on sexuality should be.

Olympic View Friends met in July of 2016 and again in July of 2017 to discuss what was happening in the NWYM and to discern, as a whole community, our view and stance on sexuality. The end result of both meetings is that our overall OV Friends family (both recognized members and non-members) were divided on our views and beliefs.

Even though our community is divided, our leadership, the OVFC Elders, discerned we are not divided enough to warrant leaving our denomination at this time (when our larger Northwest Evangelical Friends community does not have unity regarding this subject). We plan to continue to seek the Holy Spirit's wisdom and direction in the next year (with our recognized YM members) regarding our identity and place within the NWYM. If our YM members should decide this decision needs to involve all of our Olympic View Friends community (whether they are recognized members or not) we will continue our discernment as we feel led by God's Spirit.

What the OVFC Elder's did clearly discern, was that our Yearly Meeting seems to have lost it's appreciation and involvement in our local churches. The loss of that connection has resulted in our YM leadership making a decision outside of the approval of our

local church representatives, and that our YM has made a “top down” leadership decision because our overall denomination could not be unified on how to move forward. This decision was made outside of our Faith and Practice, which requires unity from all our NWYM church representatives before overarching decisions are made final.

While we understand the process and value our YM leadership’s discernment on these matters, we feel like each churches’ representatives should have more input and a larger voice in decisions that effect the majority of the NWYM churches, and that we should take the time to value that process more going forward.

A request we would like the AC Board to consider for Olympic View Friends (and each YM church as a whole) is the possibility that an arrangement could be made for churches who, like us, desire to remain in the NWYM but have major reservations on what we as a YM will be in the coming years. Our request is that we (and other churches) could have an extension to transfer the rights to our property for a limited number of years (in our case, 5 years) so we can choose to leave the YM, with our assets, should the YM evolve into something we can no longer support. If our concerns are found unwarranted after the 5 years, ownership of all OV Friends assets could stay with the NWYM. Aside from faith and practice differences, owning one’s property is the biggest reason for each of our churches to consider leaving during this allotted season of transition. Your approval (or provision) of this type of request shows that the NWYM AC Board still has faith and confidence in who we as Evangelical Friends are and that they not only recognize our concerns but believe the values and structure of our Yearly Meeting will not change.

In summary, even though our Olympic View Friends community is divided, we plan on remaining part of the Evangelical Friends Northwest Yearly Meeting at this time, but will discern that relationship more in the next year. We do however have reservations regarding who we as Evangelical Friends are becoming (and the voice that each NWYM individual church has) in that process.

We hope our NWYM Elders & Administrative Counsel will allow our local churches' voice to have more authority and that we will take the needed time to find unity with issues such as this going forward.

In Grace & Love,



Mike Halliday (Clerk of the Meeting)

along with the OVFC Elders Board

February 19, 2018

Mike Halliday, Presiding Clerk
Olympic View Friends Church
201 Browns Point Blvd NE
Tacoma, WA 98422

Dear Mike,

I am writing in response to your email of February 13, 2018 to the Yearly Meeting Elders and Administrative Council. First of all, I apologize on behalf of the AC for not having responded earlier, however, I do want to let you know that I could not find any record of the yearly meeting office having received the letter.

We are encouraged that Olympic View Friends interests are to remain in NWYM and that you are spending meaningful time and prayer as you consider this matter.

Currently, the Administrative Council has made provision for churches who are currently in discernment regarding their maintaining membership in NWYM. If a church is currently in the discernment process and anticipating more time will be required past June 30, 2018 before a final decision is reached, the church must notify NWYM Administrative Council in writing on or before June 1, 2018 to request an extension beyond June 30, 2018. Under these conditions, it would be possible for a church to leave NWYM after June 30, 2018 and retain their property, including any indebtedness. If you want the letter from Olympic View to serve as an official request for an extension, please give me written notification.

If you have any further questions or if we could be of any assistance as you and the church works thru this process, please contact myself or Retha McCutchen, Interim General Superintendent.

In His Service,

Debbie Harrison
Asst. Presiding Clerk
NWYM of Friends Church

c: Rob Willoughby, Pastor, Olympic View Friends Church
Brad Holton, Presiding Clerk, NWYM
Retha McCutchen, General Superintendent, NWYM
Gordon Crisman, Clerk, NWYM Finance Committee