

Dear Friends everywhere,

We send you greetings from the 107th Annual Sessions of Great Plains Yearly Meeting.

We gathered in Wichita KS, at Heartland Friends Meeting, May 29-31st, 2014. We came seeking God's way together, standing on the promise of James 1:4.

Thursday evening, our speaker Jan Wood, brought us a powerful message and invited us to participate in a process of corporate confession, forgiveness, and healing to mend brokenness from our corporate past so that we would be released to do God's work now and to thrive as a beloved community.

She declared that "God has you on His mind" and that He has been at work on our behalf in unknown ways. We were reminded of the promises of Jeremiah 29:11-14: "'for I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" She laid before us a confession from someone outside our yearly meeting about events that happened 57 years ago, that separated Friends from each other.

She invited us to identify and discard the burdens the yearly meeting and our monthly meetings have borne and the conflicts we have repeated in a deeply moving exercise. We voiced our corporate burdens and brought them to God to remove and heal. We felt as if God had lifted the weight of many stones from the body of Christ. What a miracle of healing! We expect great spiritual fruit from this process of confession, forgiveness and healing.

We were helped to search within ourselves to find ways to move forward. Conflict and strife can take up a lot of our energy. We asked the spirit of God to descend upon our hearts and were challenged to look to the future and to re-envision our yearly meeting. We came up with images of gathering at an open pavilion for a meal at the Lord's table, gathering everyone in to be welcomed among us. We want to open our arms to give and receive in trust and vulnerability and to be joyful in a conga line dance of inclusion! We need to scoop up our scattered and isolated Friends and set our personal agendas aside. And being nurtured, we will have the strength to go out to do God's work in the world.

We are learning that being ordinary and living in the moment is ok. The most important thing is to TRY! The adventure can be awesome, but it can leave our feelings all over the map, and that's ok. Vibrancy comes from a life enfolded in God's presence. We must strive to do as Jesus would do and love one another, even the difficult ones. When we are loved, it is easier to change but it is hard to flourish under judgment.

Great Plains Yearly Meeting is seeking ways to move forward and implement a seed that was planted two years ago with the Revitalization & Leadership Development Project, and making this a permanent part of our landscape. We seek to raise each meeting up affirmed in their own identity and increase the interconnectedness within our yearly meeting.

There is hard and good work ahead of us, and we are feeling energized to move forward following the Holy Spirit's leading. God is moving and working in GPYM. Thanks be to God!

In Christ,
Great Plains Yearly Meeting