

Dear SAYMA,

It has been a very full year this year for Friends General Conference, and I have been honored to serve as one of SAYMA's representatives on FGC (with Mark Wutka, Larry Ingle, and others). I hope that many of you will be able to go to the FGC Gathering this coming July when it comes to SAYMA for its first Gathering in many years in North Carolina. There will be many thoughtful speakers, including Parker Palmer, Carrie Newcomer, and Tieraona Low Dog, MD. There are already over 1250 registered attendees to the 2015 Gathering – as many as attended last year. ☺

Friends of Color are invited to join the FGC Ministry on Racism in a pre-gathering retreat for Friends of Color and their families. For Friends of Color who can't attend gathering, there will also be a retreat for Friends of Color and their families in Clarkston, MI on Nov 6-9 later this year.

FGC has many different programs and ministries. One of the newest ones, the FGC New Meetings Project, has resulted in the birth of around over 17 new Meetings – from Virginia to Texas. If there are any Friends feeling led to consider starting a new Meeting, expert consultation is available from FGC New Meetings project staff person Brent Bill.

The Quaker Cloud project of FGC has brought more of a web presence to over 100 different Quaker Meetings – including quite a few in SAYMA (like my very own Nashville Monthly Meeting). If you don't have a website that is easy to use and pops up quickly when searched for, you might want to consider looking at your Meeting joining the Quaker Cloud. Also, there are some features on the Quaker Cloud (like the minute manager) that are very helpful to Meetings and not in typical website platforms.

For my entire tenure serving in leadership with FGC Central Committee and Executive Committee, there has been quite a bit of discernment in process regarding QuakerBooks. Due to the advent of Amazon.com and ebooks, there has been huge disruption to the publishing and bookstore industry, and FGC's QuakerBooks has been hugely affected as Quakers have followed the rest of Americans in choosing cheaper ways to buy books. FGC has responded by trying to have a more efficient and streamlined offering, and this year FGC Quaker Books has moved locations to a spot at Pendle Hill (a Quaker retreat center outside of Philadelphia). Their new hours are Monday, Thursday, and Friday from 9:30-4:30pm and Saturday from 10-5pm. Their new address is 338 Plush Mill Rd, Wallingford, PA 19086, and the Phone: 1-800-966-4556. Friends can order books from quakerbooks.org, by calling, or by walking in! If the ministry of QuakerBooks is important to you, please consider showing that financially through purchasing books from it.

One of the FGC ministries that is newest and is dearest to my heart is its Spiritual Deepening program. This is being piloted this year. Friends wishing to provide feedback for this program should check out fgcquaker.org/deepeningfeedback.

For most of 2014 I was completing my term as Assistant Recording Clerk of FGC, and I transitioned into a new role of Assistant Presiding Clerk after Central Committee. Due to new family responsibilities that limit my travel, I had to step down from that position in April of 2015. I wish SAYMA leadership and the nominating committee much success in choosing a representative to FGC in the future. Serving FGC as a board member (an especially serving as Clerk of the Evaluation Working Group and on the Organizational Discernment working group) has been incredibly valuable experience for me.

Many blessings to you all in your journeys,

Christina VanRegenmorter