

Should/could SCYM host the 2019 FGC Gathering?

Grinnell College, Grinnell IA, June 30 to July 9, 2019

Interim Report Respectfully Submitted by Jane E. Houser, LOFM

Background

In early March, David Haines, the clerk of Friends General Conference's (FGC) Long Range Conference Planning Committee (LRCP), contacted Liz Yeats, clerk of SCYM, to ask whether SCYM would be willing to host the 2019 FGC Gathering. (LRCP is the committee that has the care of ongoing policy for the FGC Gathering.) Liz and I talked on the phone and we put together a list of people who had attended a Gathering or been appointed to FGC Central Committee at some time. This group was never expected to be any kind of representative sample of SCYM Friends. An email went out to those 18 individuals and then on March 13, I sent out a follow up e-mail to the same people.

We received a total of five responses, one of them orally, not by email. Those responses ranged from enthusiasm to no "bandwidth" to even think about it. One person thought that agreeing to "host," might help increase interest in SCYM for all things FGC, not just the Gathering and that those who attend the Gathering might be more open to active participation in SCYM. Another felt while maintaining good discernment, practical considerations may need to be acknowledged.

What we are being asked to do

Hosting the 2019 Gathering would mean SCYM would establish a naming committee to identify co-clerks for the Gathering. The Co-Clerks would then:

- meet with Gathering staff and the clerk of LRCP to better understand their role,
- set the theme with the help of FGC staff and Friends from LRCP (theme is announced and materials distributed at the 2018 Gathering in July),
- attend the 2018 Gathering where they would learn more about their role,
- help establish and clerk the 2019 Gathering Planning Committee made up of some from SCYM and others from LRCP and other yearly meetings. That committee will meet at least once in the fall of 2018.

There is a Gathering Manual that will help guide the clerks and the committee through the entire process and there will be experienced members of LRCP on the committee as well as experienced staff people to assist along the way. SCYM is not being asked for any financial commitment.

Moving Forward

- A time and space have already been reserved during the Friday evening committee time to further consider this opportunity. I hope many will be able to attend and help discern the way forward before the matter comes before the body of the yearly meeting for decision on Saturday. While maintaining good discernment, practical considerations may need to be acknowledged.
- If we decide to host, a naming committee will be appointed to select Gathering Co-clerks.
- SCYM Friends would join the Co-clerks on the committee, as led.
- SCYM Friends would hold the Gathering Co-clerks and planning committee in the Light as they moved forward to plan and carry out the 2019 Gathering of Friends. Hopefully, some of us would attend!

(As you may know, the Gathering was held in Stillwater, OK in 1993. That Gathering was clerked by Byron Sanford and Francis Forester, with committee members from many of our meetings. Many SCYM Friends attended the Gathering at Stillwater.)