

AFSC Online Corporation Meeting, SCYM Representative report

On November 9th from 10am - 1pm (central time), the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Annual Online Corporation Meeting took place via zoom. More than 75 Friends from Meetings from all across the United States, as well as Friends in Kenya and Canada joined online.

We opened the Meeting with an extended time of heart-felt Worship. With the Meeting taking place just days after the US presidential election, there was a somber peace that was felt during Worship. AFSC Board and Corporation Clerk, Alvaro Alvarado welcomed Friends and spoke about the joy he felt in seeing us all there after the election and that being together, as people that are guided by integrity, peace, simplicity and love, gave him hope that things would be alright.

Moving into business, the Standing Nominating Committee submitted nominations to Members-At-large and Yearly Meeting Corporations. Friends approved in unity those new and renewing nominations for Members-At-Large. The Standing Nominating Committee then recommended the new Yearly Meeting appointees from six Yearly Meetings, including South Central Yearly Meetings. All were approved in unity by those present.

Friends from the Executive Committee shared inspiring projects that AFSC has worked with in Kenya, Guatemala and Gaza. In Guatemala, AFSC is working with indigenous youth to reclaim their identity by supporting their efforts through a civic-political training diploma program working alongside Chemol Txumb'al ("Weaving Knowledge") youth network. The work in Gaza has been at the forefront of AFSC efforts. As of October 17, 2024 AFSC staff members, alongside volunteer organizations in Gaza have provided hot food for more than 745,000 people, distributed backpacks with school supplies to 1,500 children, clean drinking water for 513,000 people, hygiene kits for 54,400 people including women, girls, seniors, pregnant women and newborns. Incredible work has been done, but there is still so much more to do. Learn more about how you and/or your meeting can help or donate at afsc.org.

After the presentations regarding a few of the service projects around the world, Friends held space for a vibrant and varied Q&A session. Heavy discussion was held about the best ways and practices to support the new yearly meeting appointees. There were several requests by Friends from Yearly Meetings for more resources and training to be provided by AFSC staff so that Yearly Meeting representatives can be better prepared and educated in how to engage with their yearly meetings and their communities. Frustration was felt and agreed upon by many in attendance. The Clerk, as well as the Executive team sincerely understood Friend's concerns and expressed struggles that we all feel regarding the struggle of balancing time and effort and often feeling overworked. There was an understanding that more work would be done by the Executive team to better prepare and support all Yearly meeting appointees. The AFSC annual meeting will be held in Philadelphia on April 24-27, 2025.

All Friends were able to express their sorrows and concerns for the state of the world and the country. Yet, Friends also recognized the efforts, successes and joys that were happening around the world. Together, with hope, patience and the guidance of the Spirit, the upcoming year will be one with much to be joyful.

Holding you all in the Light,

Cassie Hardee - Member of the Fort Worth Friends Meeting and South Central Yearly Meeting's AFSC representative.

11/19/2024