

## PEACE AND SOCIAL CONCERNS REPORT June 2016

From last year's sessions we have on our plate the continuing stalemate, and its great human cost, between the Israelis and the Palestinians. What more can Friends do to help resolve this stalemate and move the peace-with-justice process forward? Several of our Meetings have held sessions on this topic this past year, and two SAYMA Friends, Chip Poston (Celo) and Steve Olshewsky (Berea) have made themselves available to all our Meetings as resource persons. At this 2016 Yearly Meeting we are hosting for the first time a worship service in which Friends are asked to hold the Israelis and the Palestinians in the Light. And just days before this Yearly Meeting, Swannanoa Valley Meeting adopted a minute, based on actions called for in the May newsletter of FCNL, urging SAYMA's response to an impending drinking water crisis in Gaza. That minute will be presented by Peace and Social Concerns to our business sessions this year.

A very significant event occurred at Pendle Hill this April, and at least three of our SAYMA Friends, Carol Nickle (West Knoxville), Beth Keiser and Susan Lathrop (Swannanoa Valley) attended. This event, attended by several dozen Friends from around the country, as well as several internationals, marked the rebirth of the Quaker Palestine Israel Network, or QPIN. In this coming year, Peace and Social Concerns will make sure that materials designed for Friends Meetings by QPIN reach all our SAYMA Monthly Meetings.

In just this past week we have learned of Asheville Meeting's minute calling on SAYMA to establish a standing Racial Justice Committee to support SAYMA Friends of color and to educate the SAYMA community on issues of race and racism. This minute has not been referred to our committee and will be presented to this Yearly Meeting by Asheville Meeting's SAYMA rep. We are gratified that all of us are together struggling with racism this year, and we are prepared to help advance concerns and/or minutes that Friends want to share with each other and with the world.

Bob Welsh, Convenor