

Report of SAYMA Earth Justice Committee
Roy Taylor, Charlie Wilton, Steve Livingston (clerk)

Our committee has had a lot of turnover recently and the sudden loss of our clerk has left us feeling like we have to ask some very basic questions: what is the purpose of our committee? how do our actions align with our goals as stated on the SAYMA website? how can we work to be of the greatest value to the Yearly Meeting?

What's stated on the website is a set of goals that we have hardly begun to meet, they are clearly aspirational. We've only just begun meeting regularly again, an essential practice, as meeting is an essential prerequisite to doing, just as meeting is a part of doing.

The three Friends who were present at the 5/15 meeting feel committed to discerning and proceeding with the work of the committee. But we question whether the Yearly Meeting shares our sense that climate change is an existential crisis, and that mitigating climate change among other aspects of Earth Justice deserves more than merely a reassurance that "we have a committee for that." Being present at annual Retreat and Sessions may provide an opportunity for people to gather around issues of Earth Justice, particularly climate change, if the urgency rises to the point that some Friends are willing to prioritize it over other activities. Similarly in monthly meetings, we are looking for those Friends who are prioritizing these issues over other issues.

Ultimately, we hope to discern whether there is a common "sense of the meeting" among our constituent meetings and worship groups, that climate change is an existential crisis. We are determined to reach out to as many SAYMA Friends as possible to identify those who are led to participate in this committee's work as defined in our "statement of purpose" on the SAYMA website. We hope to learn in what ways SAYMA Friends are showing up and taking action. Ultimately, we hope to draft a statement that describes actions that are being taken, or may be taken, or are not being taken, by Friends so led.

Ultimately, we may find that our own leadings around the Climate Crisis and other aspects of Earth Justice may be better served outside of the framework of our Meetings. This would mean at the very least that we would not continue to serve on a committee that does not have the active support of our Yearly Meeting, and we would recommend laying the committee down until such active support is evidenced by a new cohort of Friends determined to carry on the work on behalf of the Yearly Meeting.

But that choice is far beyond the next step along the way, and we intend to exhaust many other options before we get there.

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Livingston, clerk