

Epistle South Central Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends 2010

To Friends Everywhere,

The Spirit lifted us as we began our jubilee year, celebrating our first 50 years as a yearly meeting. We shared memories revisiting our roots as small meetings banding together to support one another across a vast geography. Through worship, worship sharing, panels, skits, and songs we learned about who we were and who we are now.

Reading our state of society reports transformed us, leading to a deep, heart-felt meeting for worship. Friends gave ministry that God is our rudder guiding us through the challenges facing us and our yearly meeting: the struggle to nurture the meetings on our fringes and to educate and engage our young people.

We have found strength through looking at our history, realizing we have matured over the years and yet have remained much the same – light hearted, ready to sing and dance through the night yet going deep when we need to. Our steady commitment to actively living our testimonies has led us time and again to cutting edge witness on civil rights, abolition of the death penalty, peacemaking, and same gender marriage. Friends were particularly heartened to realize that in 1994 a seed for Friends Peace Teams was planted in SCYM.

In a region where Friends sometimes find themselves hundreds of miles from the closest meeting, we were delighted to embrace Norman, Oklahoma as a new monthly meeting, their latest step on a 40-year journey. Friends from around the yearly meeting have volunteered to drive great distances to join Norman Friends Monthly Meeting in an inaugural celebration. We met with and provided support to Friends who are forming the Kiamichi Worship Group in eastern Oklahoma and we are encouraging a group meeting in Waco, Texas and San Angelo, Texas.

We approved an initiative for the yearly meeting to facilitate small retreats and conferences at our geographic fringes, meeting the needs of Friends longing for more fellowship around faith and spirituality while also nurturing our small meetings. We renewed our intent to write a faith and practice, on hold since 1993, establishing a standing committee to develop an inclusive process that will encourage discernment from every monthly meeting.

Sustained by the wonderful music, humorous antics and the deep Spirit which we shared, we left, Greene Family Camp in Bruceville, TX, to go long distances home to rejoin other faithful Friends seeking to continue to live our lives in that power of God that continually transforms us and the world.

On behalf of South Central Yearly Meeting,

Bill Wilkinson

Clerk