

An Epistle from the New Association of Friends

October 2019

To Friends Everywhere:

We send greeting from our 2019 Autumn Business Meeting, held in Dublin, Indiana, in the United States of America.

This year we give thanks that God has inspired 200 years of ministry at Dublin Friends Meeting. Those years have included noteworthy efforts on behalf of women's equality and suffrage. We also give thanks that one among us, Nikki Holland, has been called to serve as Director of Belize Friends Ministries. She is the first missionary to come from the New Association of Friends. We give thanks for this year's well-attended Gathering for Nurture and Fellowship in New Castle, Indiana. We held workshops with the Friends Committee on National Legislation, with the Manchester University Peace Learning Center, and participated in the town of New Castle's annual Peace Walk.

As a somewhat new and small association of monthly meetings, we continue to wrestle with how to best exercise our collective ministry as an Association of Friends. How much can a small collection of meetings expect to do? How do we cope with a small population of volunteers who are able to conduct our Association-wide ministries?

While some of our monthly meetings are growing and welcoming new Friends, we are also aware that some of our meetings are struggling. Some struggle with low membership and worship attendance. Some struggle with meetinghouses that are too large for their current needs. Some struggle to find enough spiritual gifts to fill essential congregational functions. Some of our meetings struggle with combinations of all three problems. And so we wonder about how we can be of mutual help to one another.

We go forth from this meeting for business, knowing that God has called us together, and that God is sending us forth. We are sent into the world to make incarnate Jesus' teaching to love God and our neighbors.

Epistle Writing Taskforce

Karen Coffey of First Friends Meeting, New Castle, IN

Derek Parker of First Friends Meeting, Richmond, IN