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April 14, 2020

Dear Friends – Monthly Meetings and Committees of Canadian Yearly Meeting,

The clerks and staff of Canadian Yearly Meeting are holding Friends across Canada in the Light as we learn new ways of being in the world. We hope you and your loved ones are well and safe and able to cope with the enforced isolation that will help us to slow the spread of CoViD-19. Aren't we blessed in the 21st century to have so many ways to stay connected, to still feel a sense of community!

Since the decision by the Committee of Clerks to cancel CYM-in-session for 2020, we know that there are many questions, which we're working hard to find the answers for. As a start, we're asking Monthly Meetings to send your State of Society reports, Memorial Minutes, and records of births and adoptions, deaths, new members, and marriages, and committees to send your annual reports, to the Yearly Meeting office as usual, but with a later deadline. Please have these documents in the CYM office *by the end of May*.

What we want you to know right now is that we are going to do our best to offer and to accomplish all that CYM usually does, in some form or another. Business will be conducted. There will be opportunities for sharing concerns, educating ourselves, and worshipping. A meeting of the clerks of Yearly Meeting committees with the clerks of CYM took place last week to address the many issues arising from the cancellation of CYM-in-session. One decision, made with the support of the presenters, was to postpone the Sunderland P. Gardner lecture and the Quaker Studies till 2021. A working group was formed to find ways to offer as many of the activities we expect at Yearly Meeting as possible, by some means, and to help as many Friends as possible to use these means. Here is a notice from that group:

The committee is tentatively called the ad hoc Interim Program and Support Committee (IPASC). Chris Hitchcock (clerk of Program Committee) will be clerking, and many members of Program Committee will also be part of IPASC. The aim is to coordinate across committees (Education and Outreach Committee, Publications and Communications Committee, and Program Committee, as well as Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel), and with others who are led to help. We hope to create opportunities to connect among Meetings as well as to connect with local Meetings and share experiences. Ideas and offers of help are welcome by phone (905 844 9849), email (chris@hitchcock.com), or on the CYM Facebook page. CYM Program Committee will next meet on August 8, 2020, and will concern itself with the next in-person CYM-in-session to be held at CMU in Winnipeg in 2021.

For now, we hope that you are all finding ways, as many Meetings are, not just to conduct your business, but to stay connected and grounded, and to continue to be the beloved community we all value. Some Meetings have found that using electronic means to share worship has enabled distant Friends to participate, and has even attracted new people. There are blessings in even the hardest of times! If your Meeting or Committee needs advice about using these new platforms, please contact the CYM Secretary, Cameron Fraser <cym-secretary@quaker.ca>.

Stay well, Friends, and stay faithful. We will come through this.

In the Light,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beverly Shepard".

Beverly Shepard
Presiding Clerk