

## Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting: 16 October 2021

Friends from three southern Ontario Monthly Meetings zoomed together on Saturday morning to the Fall Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting from Yonge Street, Hamilton and Toronto, for a workshop on Peaceful and Clear Communication within Meetings. This was facilitated by Matt Legge (Canadian Friends Service Committee) and two members of the CFSC Committee, Trevor Chandler (Interior BC) and Christina Tellez (Halifax MM); all three led Breakout Rooms.

The program was organised by Toronto Monthly Meeting Planning Committee and produced by the TMM Zoom Committee who set up the online framework and provided tech. support for the day, which began with Meeting for Worship, included an update by Lyn Adamson on her Kitchen Table Climate Conversations, and ended with Meeting for Worship for Business. There had been no call for a virtual children's program, but the customary sharing at lunchtime continued, arranged through familiar voice communication, augmented by virtual zoom visits.

Many had read Matt's recently published *Are we done fighting yet?* He reminded us to be present, in "worshipful attention," and to be aware of challenging the discomfort of leaving our comfort zone by withholding the previous back story of an encounter. He referred also to non-verbal communication of ideas, which includes silence, and to the Thomas Kilmann 5 styles of Conflict and the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument. Matt reviewed a range of human behaviours during conflict, from assertiveness to cooperativeness, which included directing, avoiding, collaborating, accommodating and compromising. He posed several questions on which we began to share reflections, one to one and in small groups, and emphasised the importance of using these skills.

The breakout rooms after lunch provided more practice in respectful dialogue with "time to listen between...pauses" and active listening, also the intention to have "purposeful communication" in discussion with disagreement : "...glad to know (your view): I am not there but know where you are". Matt gave us a quotation by Douglas Steere: "to listen another soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another".

Our next YSHYM will be hosted by Hamilton MM in the Spring of 2022.

Report by Rosemary Meier (Toronto MM)