

Elders recommendation regarding Cherry Grove's choice for future affiliation

The Administrative Counsel of Northwest Yearly Meeting has offered three options to local churches in its plan to reorganize. A church may remain within NWYM, become an independent congregation or join a new yearly meeting. If a church makes no declaration, it will remain within NWYM.

In light of that, over the past year or so, Cherry Grove has gone through the following steps in examining its future affiliation:

- A presentation was made to the congregation of the AC decision to form two yearly meetings, the background leading up to the decision and issues that went into making it.
- Part of that presentation also gave the background Cherry Grove has gone through over the previous 5 years regarding this issue.
- We gathered in a listening meeting to express our thoughts, questions, concerns, and even pain.
- We provided ongoing pastoral and/or elder contact with concerned persons, couples and or families regarding the decision, listening closely to the issues involved
- We engaged in ongoing discussion and prayer concerning this proposal along with feedback we received.

Through prayerful consideration of the above, and with our own prayer and discernment towards where God seems to be calling Chery Grove, the **Elders recommend that Cherry Grove Friends Church remain part of Northwest Yearly Meeting.**

Our Rationale:

- We value the benefits of our connection with a larger communion of believers such as NWYM, rather than becoming an independent congregation.
- We have affirmed throughout the years, our responsibility as followers of Christ to make disciples of all people, loving them as God has loved us, in ways consistent with the clear teachings of Scripture and as practiced by Friends in NWYM.
- We do not sense sufficient unity or calling for Cherry Grove to pursue a connection with any other yearly meeting.

Our Future:

We recognize that as a congregation we never have been and never will be anything more than a group of imperfect humans lovingly seeking God together. This means we have both received and need to grant grace to others. With a sense of expansive love, we will welcome all to worship, experience Christ and grow with us. We will not assume that people who worship with us are, or will be, behaviorally pristine, Biblically literate followers of Christ. This means we will be patient, gracious and forgiving in person-to-person ministry, both inside and outside the congregation. We do this trusting that the Holy Spirit will make apparent those changes of thought, word and behavior needed for our spiritual

condition, capacities, and maturity, in His perfect timing. We also recognize that the Holy Spirit must speak in correlation to Scripture, as both are from the same source.

We want to be known as Jesus was – as a friend to sinners, because that is what He has been to us. We invite people to join us in our life together: to know and be known, to learn with us, to understand Christ's call to follow as disciples, to gather for worship of our Savior and Creator, as well as attending to how the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives for our spiritual growth. It is our great hope as a compassionate, loving group, that persons will be drawn deeper into a personal relationship with Christ and experience His life transforming power.

It is with this vision that we call on all those who attend Cherry Grove Friends Church and especially its members, to offer grace, love and patience with all who join us as we seek to be faithful followers of Christ, now and into the future. Because we are all works in progress, we intend to worship together, serve together, learn together, respect and listen to each other, without rancor or malice.

We also call on NWYM churches, both remaining and leaving, to “go and do thou likewise”.