

Gathering Anew LGBTQ Focus Group: 9/13/22

Friends introduced themselves.

Ruth gave some background about the Gathering Anew Project, and the history of the Gathering.

We know we can't go back to the world prior to 2020. So what's ahead? Environmental concerns. Financial concerns. Antiracism. People need community and fun. How do we honor new Friends and longtimers.

What will the Gathering look like as we move forward? We're in for a period of experimentation and exploration. Goal for tonight is what can we do going forward.

Ruth offered these three questions for Friends to consider in small groups:

1. What is important to take forward?
2. What concerns or fears arise for you?
3. What hopes and possibilities arise for you?

Friends went into two breakout rooms and returned after 20 minutes.

A whole-group exploration of the questions followed. Friends also recorded their thoughts on the Jamboard.

#### **For Question 1- What themes rise?**

Fun, unstructured time, spiritual immersion, contact between generations. Evening Plenaries are the least likely to foster these.

FLGBTQC's welcome to the Gathering is something that helps with the goal to transform into an actively antiracist faith community. Our experiences over the years show that the Gathering can change. Have trailblazed new structures new theological views for Quakers.

Gathering is big and awkward, hard to get to and deal with.

People come with different expectations or needs for the Gathering. For some people it's a vacation. Good food, comfort, a/c. For other people it's a social thing to be around Quakers or Queer Quakers. For others it's an integral part of their seeking - spiritual search - like a retreat.

#### **For Question 2: What concerns or fears rise for you?**

#### **For Question 3: What hopes and possibilities arise for you?**

We know how to do this. We can use the skills we have as Quakers to do this.

Other structures outside of Gathering to take some of the pressure off of Gathering to be all things to all people.

Would love to see FGC become more of a resource to the west coast and Gathering is not going to do that.

Progressive Dinners. Different dinners, different places, different topics.

The meeting concluded with a period of grateful worship.