

Cielo Grande Quarterly Meeting Proceedings September 11 2021

15 Friends attended via Zoom link from San Antonio, Dallas, Ft Worth, and Austin

Jim Spickard acted as Clerk and welcomed Friends as they arrived.

Clerk reviewed the proposed agenda with Friends.

We entered into a period of worship

Checkins

San Antonio (Jim). Got to meet in person in blended format for 3 weeks and then had to break up again and that was very hard. We're understaffed. Down to 30-40% of precovid attendance and are worried, have suffered losses of energy. On the other hand, we're trying to maintain hope, figuring out how to cope with surroundings. There is a core and then many visitors and other people who come periodically. (Val) We were meeting in person in a different space earlier in a blended meeting. Tomorrow there will be masked/vaccinated meeting in person on the porch early, and at 10 meeting on Zoom.

Austin (Liz). Were away for summer but participated several times. Worship has stayed steady with 30+ people. We've been very active, including a covid fund, including forums that are really engaging in life of city. We opened the Meeting House to a group that does unhoused food prep. We're very short of committee staffing, trying to see if a restructure will help. Going to meeting gives me hope. (Andrea) moved back to Austin, has gotten involved again in the meeting and it was good when we were open for a couple months. Getting used to seeing the screen. It has been a challenge, will have to see how things change.

Fort Worth had been meeting in a park, and then the church we were meeting in reopened. We had been wearing masks, there were some who couldn't get vaccinated. Have had a lot of newcomers, especially young people, who've shown interest.

Dallas met by conference call for a bit over a year, started in person in May again, first in parking lot, then moved inside with masks and distancing but going to readdress it at next business meeting due to concern about rising cases. Dallas took advantage of the time when the Meeting House wasn't in use to work on it: it's a house in a residential neighborhood. We levelled the pier and beam foundation and did other exterior/interior work. For about a year we started having a silent vigil in solidarity with Black lives at White Rock Lake Park at a place where there is a lot of car and foot traffic, and got mostly affirmative reactions, and almost always someone would come up to talk to us about race and racism and the situation in Dallas. It was something we can do outside during the pandemic.

Can we brainstorm ideas for bringing meetings together, add to agenda at the bottom?

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Quarterly Meeting organization.

Our last business meeting didn't discern a clerk. We got a committee for next quarterly but it didn't happen. The next year we met in San Antonio in the context of a public talk. A quarterly meeting was extensively planned and scheduled for March 2020 but was cancelled due to covid – this was before we had figured out how to do things on Zoom.

How can we create regular connections between meetings in the quarter in absence of also having quarterly meetings? For example, Austin meeting showed up as a group in San Antonio's worship.

Historical perspective: Think about when quarterly attendance was via horse and buggy. Those here today are older and have mostly experienced meetings outside the quarterly and yearly. QMs are important because not only do we have a responsibility to YM, but it's importance to have experience outside the Monthly Meeting. In 1998 Cielo Grande had a fairly strong QM, but these times don't even allow us to get together for a day where kids can participate. It feels really good to be here together, we represent larger meetings in this quarter. Historically it seems important to preserve this practice and try to meet more than once a year, say 3 times, even over zoom. Nice to add in person possibility, furthest drive is a few hours. QM is a very important part of SCYM.

How we proceed will depend on pandemic. We have had zoom success but that doesn't replace the kind of fellowship we have with in-person attendance. Quarterly Meeting is about business, fellowship, community gathering, and personal connections. The business part is easier over zoom, other things are more difficult over zoom. We could consider having more QMs, but some via zoom for business, and others more focused on community gathering and building. We could gain participants who aren't interested in business.

Andrea mentioned that in a previous yearly meeting when her children were young, they would have half yearly meeting at a state park that was about fun and fellowship. They had regular quarterly, which felt more academic, and there might be someone presenting there for discussion, more spiritual contemplation. Can't remember if business happened there. Pacific YM had their yearly in summer so quarterly was the first weekend in November. They did a blended camping at a park with cabins. Were very planned events, quite some time.

There should be different things to do, Business Meeting or canoeing.

Bayou Quarterly meets twice yearly in campgrounds, Ark/Ok in alternating campgrounds in two states. In other YMs, quarterlies get together at least twice a year. Planning takes quite a bit of work.

We need a location with resources for all ages and interests. The strongest quarter in our YM is Ark/Ok which in part is strong because their individual Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups

are smaller and eager for fellowship, whereas Cielo Grande has bigger meetings in our quarter and are so more self-enclosed. Looking at the percentage of those in meetings who come all the way from Arkansas and Oklahoma to YM, it's a higher percentage than those who drive from Austin or San Antonio. If we could get smaller worship groups in our area involved. But lots of rebuilding work.

If we split business and fellowship meetings, could we pick something like 5th Sunday, as meetings have less programmed than typically.

Clerk summarized by saying that there is a split between meetings for business and meetings for fellowship and other engagement. Also there's the issue of how we conduct ourselves before and after restoration from Covid. Before we get to normal, we could alternate in Austin and SA and we could have a planned time to attend worship and stay for a forum. Forums are a big attraction. SA Friends would like to take suggestion back to SA that we pick a time and put on a meeting for worship and forum and invite the whole quarter to zoom in, and maybe Austin would want to and we coordinate a few months apart.

Meetings typically don't have much programmed for 5th Sundays. There are 2-3 a year, and October 2021 is the next month with a fifth Sunday. Then in 2022 the months with five Sundays will be January, May, July, and October. Austin will stay in touch with San Antonio regarding alternating scheduling.

Quarterly leadership and steering committee notions.

Start by using steering committee structure as we have informally. Designate a MM to spearhead each time. We do need a clerk for business meetings. A working circle that was standing that was planning circle, with someone appointed who is a convener and perhaps acts as clerk during business meeting. Rotate that person, through various MMs. Also, a designated recorder, get a group or a meeting to plan. Jim observed he can clerk but not plan. Following an agenda is easy to do. Planning circle could pull things together and we wouldn't need much more formal. Almeta: planning circle idea is good in that it pulls everyone into actively participating without calling anyone out. Could be done by passing minutes from previous meeting on to next convener, no expectation of responsibility of meeting going forward. On discussion about planning meetings, we should have two different setups ready to go, one for in person, one for lockdown situation.

So Austin/SA/Dallas/Ft Worth could have folks on the planning circle to set a time for planning the business and its agenda and then pull together other people and other meetings. Do we want people to step forward now for next planning circle? How could we get those not present today to be interested? We want to avoid one or two people just taking it on by default in perpetuity. We want the 3 large meetings, maybe others such as Fort Worth. Conundrum is that we should all go back to meetings and find a person who can be quarterly meeting person for a year on this year, maybe having up to 4 meetings. Someone needs to take responsibility

for finding these people, and that group would say “Austin is doing the program,” “San Antonio is doing the program.”

Are we all willing to take this back to our monthly meetings to see who might want to be on the circles? Notion of fifth Sundays, aiming for either October 2021 or January 2022. Have a program and attend each others’ worship. Maybe next adult forum for Austin could be our program.

Quarterly meeting rep to YM Nominating.

The larger meetings each provide a member to Nominating Committee as well as one from each of the Quarterly Meetings. No one volunteered to be a representative so “we” will each go back to our own meetings with a look at finding someone to be this representative for CGQM.

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YM Program

Joanna Vaughn couldn’t be here but wanted to offer a singing tree project as part of YM program. Could be an intergenerational activity, together or in zoom. Leaves which say something from all on YM together on same tree. She’s willing to coordinate. If in person, tree would be standing at YM and she could bring a supply of leaves to put on the tree and could be decorated or worded by anybody. If not in person, people could send leaves to her (she could mail blank leaves, say in a postcard form) and we could then make a picture and put it on the SCYM website. Could happen any time in yearly meeting I person, or some other timeframe if not in person. Or how we could do it in a mixed space. We would need to work out logistics. Would need physical leaves by Saturday morning. Matter for YM Planning.

CGQM approved sending this proposal forward to Representatives’ Meeting.

Report of YM programming committee from Val. [insert here]

CGQM approved to forward this on to Representatives’ Meeting, with flip of workshop and plenary, and including reference to the peace and justice forum on the previous (Palm) Sunday.

Jim Spickard’s daughter has contact with young activists who could remote in. Val can talk with her. SA has young activists who aren’t connected with traditional faith community.

Discussion of how broadly we want to cast outside of our own faith community. Title might be misleading about how broadly we define “faith.” The planning group had in mind a broad understanding of faith. Faith as opposed to political motivation.

Idea of how we carry the SCYM week’s results back to our meetings. So the two workshops at the end of the day are a good idea. Not sure how we’ll be doing the final booking of

presenters, so our planning committee isn't off the hook yet. Different groups: our YM Adult Program Planning Committee, then the YM Planning committee. This will be affirmed at Rep Meeting for Adult program, then it will fit in with YM Planning contribution. If we need funding for something we go straight to YM treasurer once our program's approved.

Concerns about equipment for two zoom setups for workshops, one for auditorium available to people with microphone and large screen. That equipment is from the camp or will be YM's property, but there's only one set of it due to cost and cumbersomeness. Perhaps second one would not be as sophisticated. Could some of us bring own equipment, absent issues of bandwidth on wifi. Could talk with tech committee about it. YM planning has a good tech committee and have given us information on this point.

2023 plenary keynote speaker

Bill Sweet reported that he communicated very briefly with FCNL and they'd like their new exec secretary (coming on board in November 2021) to speak in 2023.

We closed in worship