

Report on the Discernment Process with Windy Cooler
May 7, 2024
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Windy met individually with 12 members of our community. She sent the notes of each meeting to each individual, for their information and also for them to edit, if they wished. These notes were not shared with anyone else.

Last Sunday afternoon, we gathered here in a hybrid meeting with Windy. Windy read to us a compilation of our individual thoughts as we had expressed them to her. She asked that we say, out of worship, what we heard.

Here are a few of the thoughts that were heard:

In the tone was a sense of disconnectedness and appreciation.

It is hard to reconcile the phrase, it hurt me but the meeting does not always think to protect us."

The Meeting has not focused on protecting the members of the meeting.

The feeling of loneliness and fear of being vulnerable.

Deep concern for those who feel abused or threatened.

I heard that there was some question of whether we are doing the right thing.

The most loud thing I heard was a need for connection and friendship. I had not heard that before.

I was struck by the lack of the words "we" or "community" or "Quakers". I heard a lot of "I" statements, not "we" statements.

After a short break, Windy read back to us our reactions and asked us to say what we were curious about as we heard them.

After another short break, Windy read our curiosities to us and asked for us to formulate some queries that we could use in our deliberations in the future.

Here are the queries that were devised based on our curiosities:

How do we make the space to explore how our own life experiences are giving us the tools for looking at our community?

What is the center of a beloved community?

How does a beloved community address violence?

How does a beloved community address loneliness and isolation?

What information do we need to give people so they can feel included in discernment?

What steps can we take to restore the sense of safety, connection, and trust when this is needed?