

## **BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING MINISTRY AND PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE STATEMENT AND QUERY ON USE OF PREFERRED PRONOUNS AMONG FRIENDS**

Some Baltimore Yearly Meeting Friends have recently approached the Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee about the use of preferred pronouns among Friends. They have a concern about Friends adding preferred pronouns to their Zoom name during Interim Meetings and Annual Sessions as well as on other occasions.

Preferred pronouns refer to the set of pronouns that an individual prefers that others use to reflect that person's gender identity. In English, when declaring one's preferred pronouns, a person will often state "she, her, hers", "he, him, his", or "they, them, theirs". Preferred pronouns have come into use as one way of promoting equity and inclusion for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer.

Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee reminds Friends about the Baltimore Yearly Meeting statement on diversity:

We Aspire to Recognize and Affirm Diversity as a Means to Truth  
“We Friends are of many skin colors, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, stages of life, and socially constructed racial identities. We are all seeking the Spirit’s presence in our lives, and in our life together. We recognize that some of us have experienced oppression and marginalization in ways that others have not. We aspire to live as members of the blessed community, which is one of liberation, equity, and great diversity across all differences”.

Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee knows this is a tender concern for some Friends. While some Friends value sharing pronouns, others have concerns that this practice can inadvertently cause harm.

In this statement, we hope to bring our light to this concern: **Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee has heard the request for Friends to identify their preferred pronouns in meetings. In light of this, we encourage Friends to respect those who share preferred pronouns and respect those who do not share preferred pronouns.**

We also want to share a query: **“How can Friends move into the truth and the light to support Friends of differing gender identities?”**