MORE THAN 50 FRIENDS gathered on a snowy morning at Germantown Monthly Meeting on January 18 to learn, share, and discern how to effectively address environmental injustice and the climate crisis. Over the course of the Thread Gathering, we discussed the urgency of cutting our carbon emissions in half in the next ten years and how to actually meet this challenge. Understanding that the most vulnerable among us are the least able to adapt to or withstand climate change, and recognizing the tragic history of environmental racism, we focused throughout the day on urgent economic reform and environmental justice.

Pennsylvania is the nation’s third largest carbon-emitting state. At the meeting, Liz Robinson (Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting and the Philadelphia Solar Energy Association) stressed the importance of action to convince our state officials to clean up our state’s act. Steve Olshevski (Radnor Meeting) and Ed Dreby (Providence Meeting) dove into the need for major economic reform, exploring divestment from fossil fuels and the creation of public banks as steps we need to take. O (from Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting) and Nathan Anderson from Serenity Soular helped us explore eco-justice and shared about successful solar training projects in Philadelphia that can be replicated elsewhere. Liz also shared about EnergyFIT Philly, a very successful home repair/energy efficiency program for low-income homes in poor condition that is being replicated statewide.

Together we sketched out a vision of a sustainable energy future for our region and developed a set of action steps we can take as individuals, meetings, and as Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Diving deep into clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transportation, sustainable food production, a just
economic system, resilience issues, health care, spiritual strength and community cohesion, we created a roadmap to the future we seek. We believe Quakers have much to contribute to the movement to transform our world and solve this crisis.

We ended by discussing a draft minute which asks all parts of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to take action on the climate crisis and make it a top priority and major corporate witness. The Eco-Justice Collaborative is asking monthly and quarterly meetings in our region to endorse this minute in preparation for its consideration at the Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting at the end of July.

For more information on the Thread Gathering and the Eco-Justice Collaborative, please contact Patricia Finley. Find us on Facebook under “Eco-Justice Collaborative of PYM.”

**Minute to Address the Climate Crisis as One of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting’s Top Corporate Witnesses**

In 2018, climate scientists told the United Nations that the effects of climate change were occurring much sooner than expected. They warned that, unless carbon emissions are cut by 50% in the next ten years, i.e., by 2030, and then to net-zero by 2050, humanity will probably experience a global climate catastrophe of incalculable severity before the end of this century.

We know that while all will suffer, the most vulnerable populations will face certain calamity. Institutional racism has already harmed communities of color, as manifested in part in environmental injustice. Continued exploitation of the earth’s resources has already caused mass extinctions and put life as we know it at risk. Conflicts due to rising sea levels, food insecurity, water scarcity, and mass migrations are already causing horrific injustice and threatening world peace.

For these reasons, our historic testimonies for peace, justice, integrity, and stewardship call us to make climate justice a clear and urgent concern for corporate witness, and for all manifestations of our Yearly Meeting to take immediate and resolute action.

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