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March 16, 2020

Dear Friends,

On Friday, March 13th, the Canadian Yearly Meeting Committee of Clerks met electronically, as we do monthly, and after much discussion and careful discernment, and with regret, decided to **cancel the sessions of CYM scheduled for this coming August.**

We are well-aware that this decision will be a great disappointment for many Friends who cherish our annual gathering, but we hope that it will also seem prudent and wise. Many of our members are in the higher-risk categories (over 60 and/or with underlying conditions such as hypertension), and many make their travel plans well in advance of the CYM dates. An early decision is desirable for these Friends.

To be clear, it is not simply a matter of the existing pandemic crisis of the Covid-19 virus, although that, of course, is the prime motivator here. Some Friends may be reacting to this news with a sense that the decision was made too early, but the fact is that our YM sessions require a great deal of preparatory work, much of which is done by volunteers. To ask this of our short-handed Program Committee and then to cancel after much work has been done seemed to us unfair. We believed it would be preferable to cancel the sessions now for the sake of the many people who work hard to make CYM the wonderful gathering that it is; then work can proceed toward a joyous gathering in 2021. As you probably know, there is already much discernment underway about changes to be made to CYM to ensure sustainability. This decision allows these discussions to be more relaxed and thorough before our next gathering.

This unexpected cancellation of sessions will necessitate some new plans: for instance, an earlier and/or extra Representative Meeting; consideration of the terms of committee members and other Friends serving YM; and designations of individuals or groups to carry forward the business of Yearly Meeting until next year. You can be sure that the Committee of Clerks will be working on these plans and will keep Friends in CYM informed as they develop.

In the Light,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is "Beverly Shepard" and the second is "Marilyn Manzer".

Beverly Shepard and Marilyn Manzer, Clerks