



Friday, April 3

Hello Friends,

I hope that many of you had the chance to see [the video](#) created by Katie, our Director of Communications. Our mission is central to the video; in good times and difficult times, our mission serves as both our compass and our north star.

As you know, this storm began to brew in the U.S. during our spring break. My family was fortunate, a good friend lent us a beautiful house on the beach. A lovely place for me to begin pacing, thinking about charting our course through this storm. On the bookshelves, I found a book that was an old friend, "Piloting and Seamanship". (I have my dad's copy; he used it for years as the text for classes he taught on boating skills, safety, and navigation.) Paging through it, I began to remember what I learned years ago about getting safely home when the conditions of the sea change abruptly. Before there were GPS systems, I learned that keeping track of a boat's position and heading were critical, but chart plotting in rough seas was close to impossible. You had to depend on your "seaman's eye" or the ability to keep track of as many visible landmarks as you could.

Our mission of inclusivity, innovation, and attention to honoring and developing each person's gifts is guided by Quaker beliefs. This is both our landmark and the beacon that lights our path. I cannot think of a time in the history of our community when it has been as instructive as it is right now.

The COVID-19 crisis feels much like what on the sea is called a chop, the condition where wind, waves, and currents combine to produce a confused surf that seems to batter boats from all directions at once. NGFS does not face these conditions in isolation, each family in our community and communities around the world are coping with massive change, the adjustments required are staggering. When navigating through chop, a reduced speed is crucial. A slower approach allows one to steer into each peak or trough of a wave individually. For some of us, slowing down may feel like surrender, but it is necessary. It's the only way to keep the boat under control.

While our goal is to provide an engaging educational experience for our students, we are mindful that today's choppy seas demand responses from families that are by necessity, shifting and changing. It is impossible for our teachers, staff, or division directors to know how your family is being affected and what may be most needed at a particular time. Please be sure to reach out to your students' contact teacher or advisor if experiences or expectations are causing additional stress. Although we cannot customize our teaching for the ever-evolving situations our families are facing, we can do what we do best, listen deeply, and approach the education of each student with diligence and empathy.

The generosity of heart in this community is palpable. We are separated only by space and we are drawn together by purpose and care for each other and for our neighbors, near and far.

Many thanks,  
Kim