



## *Navigating the Depths of our Sacred Connections* 2019 Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Epistles

### **Epistle from the 199th of Session of the Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends held at Earlham College, Richmond Indiana June 19-23, 2019**

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting lovingly greets Friends everywhere from its 2019 sessions.

Our theme this year has been “Navigating the depths through our sacred connections.” We were enriched by fine plenary speakers, workshops, and worship sharing centered especially on themes of deep healing for us as a yearly meeting, for our monthly meetings, and for our personal relationships and our inner selves.

Serious business for this annual session began when our statistician brought our attention to our ten percent drop in Yearly Meeting membership for the second year in a row, and one monthly meeting withdrew from the Yearly Meeting. We discussed possible responses to this situation and were unable to find a strong response. It was felt that each monthly meeting needs to address this problem.

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting has been engaged in a process of revising our Book of Faith and Practice for nearly twenty years. Although there are more efficient and rapid ways of doing this the Yearly Meeting has benefited from this deliberate pace. By taking on relatively small amounts of text for revision each year, we have allowed our monthly meetings to engage in close consideration of what it means and who we are as members of this particular Yearly Meeting in the 21st Century. This year monthly meetings were asked to consider revised sections on Meeting for Worship and Civic Responsibilities. We spent considerably more time in our business sessions than expected in consideration of the profound and essential differences between communal Quaker worship and individual meditation.

At last year’s annual sessions we began a serious discussion on how we as Friends should respond to sexual misconduct. Over the course of the last year we’ve had a task force charged with considering how the Yearly Meeting should respond to these kinds of situations. The Task Force has developed drafts of two documents that were brought to Meeting for Business this year: a policy for investigating allegations of sexual misconduct and a set of guidelines for educating ourselves about sexual misconduct.

*(continued next page)*

### *Dear Friends:*

Conflict seems especially challenging to Friends. We are very good at avoiding it, which means that when conflicts arise, they may be especially intense because they have grown larger while we were diligently looking elsewhere or hoping they would go away on their own. Deep and painful divides may make us feel even more hesitant to tackle our disagreements, yet how much better off we would be, how much closer we would be to becoming a Beloved Community if we faced our conflicts.

Moving from avoidance to resolution is a leap of faith. We have to believe that facing conflict will be transformative and help us grow. The first steps are inward: acknowledging that a problem exists and recognizing one’s role in it. Once we stop minimizing or dismissing an issue, we may try to place blame or pass judgment on someone else for creating it. We have noticed a conflict, but we are blind to our own darkness. That in itself should make us hungry for transformation, so let us be brave and face our faults with humility.

### **Martha Viehmänn**



The deepest conflicts require engagement. Those with different views must be heard and listen lovingly to each other. Do we have faith that all of us are committed to the well-being of each other and to the good of the whole, whether that is the monthly meeting or the yearly meeting? If so, then we are ready for listening, asking for forgiveness, and cultivating a sense of love for those with whom we disagree.

Resolving conflicts takes time, love, and faith. That is also what it takes to create a Beloved Community.

(continued from page 1) The task force recognizes that the policy they presented is incomplete and will continue working on it in the coming year. They have asked our constituent monthly meetings to set aside time to look over the current materials and send their comments. We were impressed by the quality of their work and are thankful for their diligence.

As always, yearly meeting was peppered with fun. We sang and worshipped together each day, played intergenerational games together, and had an astoundingly delightful variety show. We greatly enjoyed the presence of our young people and urge you to read the epistles that they have written and are attached.

### **Middle Youth/Teen 2019 Epistle**

This year at the 199th annual sessions, there were 10 Middle Youth/teens in attendance, Reid Pfaltzgraff-Carlson, Bing Pfaltzgraff-Carlson, Bryan Rivera Garcia, Cece Branson, Elana Branson, Elise Snarr, Toby Dean, Max Dean, Theo Swank, and Chhya.

On Wednesday, June 19th, (the first day) most of us arrived, we did an icebreaker to learn everyone's name and pronouns, we made a stress ball craft with flour and rice, and participated in an intergenerational welcoming activity.

On Thursday, June 20th, more youth arrived, we did the first half of a peace and non-violence activity, we did a session of our youth business meeting, and attended a panel of spiritual healers. A CERTAIN INDIVIDUAL SLEPT THE ENTIRE TIME IN THE NONVIOLENCE WORKSHOP!

On Friday, June 21st, even more youth arrived, and we were supposed to go on a river rafting trip. However, the river was too high, so we instead volunteered at a farm. While we were at the farm, the same individual, who will remain anonymous, said "All of us together are worth one actual worker." Teens got a lot of work done, and we believe the crew was pleasantly surprised. After we were done, we went to the local pool, and completed the second half of our peace and non-violence workshop. We also went to a plenary speech about restorative justice circles. In the evening we made soft pretzels to eat during a movie that we did not end up having time for since every teen wanted to sleep. We decided to watch it the next day for lunch.

On Saturday, June 22nd, we did a peace circles workshop with the plenary speaker Arica Barton and heard a presentation about FCNL lobbying from Elise Snarr. After Elise's presentation, we went to lunch, which was a simple meal. During lunch and dinner, we watched *Spiderman: Into the Spiderverse*. After lunch, we chose workshops to attend with the rest of the adults in the yearly meeting. During the morning and the afternoon, we worked on our improvised variety show puppet skit, featuring Porky the porcupine. We then had great fun performing and watching the variety show, where Porky & Co. drew a few laughs. That evening the anonymous individual left.

On Sunday, we wrote this epistle I am reading now, and we hope it is approved... so approve it, please. Thank you.

### **Greetings to Young Friends everywhere. The Children's Program of OVYM met June 19-23, 2019 at Earlham College in Richmond Indiana.**

We focused on the theme of *Navigating the Depths Through Our Sacred Connections*. We learned how we are connected to all creatures, all living things and people. We talked about deep connections with God and the animals in the garden and our family and friends and ourselves. We read books about mindfulness and kindness.

We shared our concerns about not being heard and how to speak up in a kind way so people will listen. We realized we need to know our feelings and our needs so we can speak up about them.

We send a message to all to go out into the world to sit in a quiet, calm place and listen to the children of the world.

In Peace and Light,

The Children of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting





## Got healing?

If you've ever been to the Gathering organized by Friends General Conference, you may have visited the Healing Center. It's quite a vortex of energy that has attracted me when I have attended, either as a receiver or a transmitter. And for me, those distinctions aren't firm, which is why I enjoyed that space at the Gathering. When I say the distinctions aren't firm, I mean that healing energy is always available (call it "the Light"), and we probably understand healing best through our own brokenness. This summer, Gloria Bruner and I decided to initiate our own nascent healing center at OVYM Annual Sessions.

The previous year our Annual Sessions had been tumultuous for many when we unexpectedly had to deal with the trauma, triggers, and aftermath of a past sexual assault/misconduct. Out of that disruption, I felt the need for healing. The Planning Committee and the Task Force on Sexual Misconduct were charged with coming up with programs and policies to address the issues raised. I simply wanted to create a space where those who were in need might come for respite and renewal – a place I knew that I would feel safe as well.

The healing center commenced with an interest and practice group on healing Thursday evening. With a tight schedule, we only found two times that we could open our designated center during the rest of the Annual Sessions and not conflict with other activities. Nevertheless, we were fortunate to have some wonderful practitioners volunteer their time for listening, foot massages, healing touch, music therapy, contemplative walks in nature, and other processing work. We were also fortunate to have some people drop in and partake of these offerings – including the fluidity of practitioners becoming participants when there was space. I'm not sure what will happen next year with a healing center, so stay tuned. It was a small experiment where we tried to let the light in – and maybe that was enough.

*Deborah Jordan, member of Community Friends Meeting, OVYM Administrative Secretary, and early morning yoga teacher at OVYM Annual Sessions*

## MIDDLE YOUTH/TEENS ACTIVITIES

Dear Community,

It is with gratitude and pleasure that I recount a few highlights from our summer programming for OVYM Middle Youth and Teens.

As many of you know, Annual Sessions invited our middle youth and teens to come together with peers and multigenerational community alike. From our original series on Peace and Non-Violence, co-led by an incredible staff—including Travis Christian, Alondra Garcia and Adam Funck—to service work at Earlham's Miller Farm and swimming at Richmond Municipal Pool, we stayed active and engaged throughout! We also witnessed and celebrated a rising wave of youth leadership, including Cece Branson's wonderful job as this year's Variety Show Emcee, and Theo Swank's nomination as our new Teen Secretary. We couldn't have pulled it off without the support of families, mentors, Youth Service Committee members, staff and community. With our ongoing work, care and dedication, we can be the village where youth will thrive!

In late July, teens and adult volunteers came together to embark on another big adventure: a Teen Service Trip to Louisville, KY. With youth coming from meetings in Louisville, Lexington, and Cincinnati, we set out to learn about ourselves and one another (with guest facilitator Jardana Peacock), Alternatives to Violence (with JT Taylor), the area and its influences (beginning with a visit to the Muhammed Ali Museum), and so much more! With the guidance and support of Hand in Hand Ministries, we had the opportunity to meet local residents, and directly participate in outdoor home repair projects in under-resourced neighborhoods of Louisville. Our visit culminated in a presentation at Louisville Friends Meeting, which had graciously hosted us at the beginning and end of our journey. Our teen participants displayed kindness and open-mindedness with one another, and a clear dedication to making a difference in the lives of others.

What's next? Well, that's for all of us to decide! But I am excited to announce that youth feedback has led us to plan a **Bystander Intervention Training** for our OVYM Middle Youth and Teens at Miami Quarterly on **Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup>** at Louisville Friends Meeting. We're also exploring the possibility of co-organizing an extended Alternatives to Violence Training Series in Indianapolis. Additionally, we're on the lookout for a teen representative for our **2020 Quake that Rocked the Midwest** planning committee (mark your calendars for MLK weekend next January!).

Finally, we will be seeking participation and feedback from all teens and their families on planning our upcoming **2020 Teen Service Trip**. If you would like to tune in or share your ideas for any of these programs, or something else entirely new and different with us, please don't hesitate to get in touch! I would be overjoyed to hear from you 😊

Yours,

Kaia Jackson

OVYM Youth Secretary

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Facebook: OVYM Middle Youth and Teens

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# Faith and practice

## Proposed Sections for the OVYM *Book of Faith & Practice*

The OVYM Faith & Practice Committee has written a draft of what may be the final bits of text for the new *Book of Faith and Practice*. These complete the section on **The Monthly Meeting**, much of which was previously approved. The placement of the previously approved text is marked by notes in square brackets.

These have also been sent to the monthly meetings for their review. The revision committee will collect the suggestions and comments from the OVYM monthly meetings and prepare a revised version which will be brought to the annual sessions next June, hopefully for final approval.

The deadline for responding is Thanksgiving. Please send your reply to our clerk, Rex Sprouse, at [rsprouse@indiana.edu](mailto:rsprouse@indiana.edu).

### The Monthly Meeting

The monthly meeting is the fundamental working unit of the Society. As the spiritual home of its members and attenders, the monthly meeting provides for their spiritual and temporal needs, fosters the depth of its meetings for worship, supports Spirit-led ministry, and is a source of religious education. It receives and records the names of members, promotes their spiritual development, extends pastoral care and, when necessary, material aid to its membership. It oversees marriages and funerals. The monthly meeting deals, in a spirit of restoring love, with those who fail to live in accordance with our principles and testimonies and removes names from the membership list, if this course seems necessary. It collects the funds required to carry on the work of the meeting, holds titles to property and provides suitable administration of all funds.

When a concern arises to extend the work of the Society of Friends into a new field or to take up specific work under the care of the meeting, it is usually first introduced in a monthly meeting. A monthly meeting is free to undertake any work and to assume any function consistent with our testimonies and not specifically referred to a quarterly meeting or the Yearly Meeting.

### Organization

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting does not impose a specific committee structure on its constituent meetings; rather, each monthly meeting is advised to discern a structure of officers and committees needed to fulfill its functions and to meet its responsibilities.

### Officers

Monthly meetings customarily name a suitable person to serve as clerk. The primary duties of the clerk are to conduct all business sessions of the meeting, to see that a full and correct record of all proceedings is kept, and to carry out the instructions of the meeting on all matters pertaining to the accomplishment of its business. Assistants to the clerk may be appointed if needed.

Many meetings appoint a recording clerk who makes a written record during monthly business meetings and records decisions that are made. The recording clerk often reads the “minutes-so-far” during the business session, and the clerk asks for approval of those minutes.

A treasurer shall be appointed to perform the usual service expected of such an officer, and shall be governed by such rules as meetings think suitable for the safe and orderly holding and disbursement of funds. The treasurer shall report regularly to the meeting and accounts should be audited annually.

[A previously approved section on **Meeting Trustees**]

### Committees

It is the experience of Friends that duly appointed committees are beneficial to the functioning of the monthly meetings by bringing together people with unique skills and experience to address a particular set of issues. Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting leaves the number and definitions of committees to the discernment of its individual constituent monthly meetings. In especially small meetings, the entire meeting community frequently takes responsibility for many or all of its responsibilities. In some cases, committees directly carry out specific tasks; in others, committees season proposals for presentation and consideration at a monthly meeting for business.

Most often, a Nominating Committee is named to bring forward the names of members or attenders to serve the meeting for clearly defined terms. In doing their work, the Nominating Committee balances seeking Friends who already have appropriate gifts and skills for each office and committee, while keeping in mind the opportunity for Friends to grow once they have been appointed to a particular role. All nominations are subject to approval at meeting for business.

The work of committees is facilitated by the appointment of a committee clerk, who is responsible for calling and clerking committee meetings and presenting committee reports to the monthly meeting. In some meetings, the committee clerks are approved by the monthly meeting; other meetings appoint conveners who are responsible simply for calling an initial committee meeting, at which committee members discern who should serve as committee clerk.

Friends are advised to hold committee meetings in the manner of Friends meetings for business. This includes opening with a period of centering worship, striving to listen with an open heart and mind for Divine Guidance, loving and respectful treatment of all participants when disagreements arise, and searching for unity in the Spirit rather than voting. Committees are helped by the practice of recording minutes that are read and approved in the face of the committee. Standing committees meet on a regular basis, generally once a month.

### Fostering the Meeting for Worship

Fostering the right order and spiritual depth of meeting for worship must be done in humility of spirit – confident that the power of God working in us will yield greater consecration in worship and vocal ministry, opening new avenues of usefulness. It is not appropriate for individuals to assume they have the right to intervene when problems arise in our meetings for worship. Rather,

meetings are urged to appoint a committee to focus on the spiritual well-being of the meeting as a community and, in particular for the meeting for worship.

This committee should offer encouragement, support, advice, and useful feedback to those who are led to speak. The committee should be mindful that there are differences in ability, training, fluency of expression, and power of interpretation. Having tested an urge to speak and found it a genuine leading, no one should hesitate because of inexperience. The spirit of a message is more than its form and the example of one struggling to be faithful in a difficult task may be more helpful than the most polished address.

Though vocal ministry is important, we must be mindful that quietly waiting for direct communion with God and one another is the basis on which our meetings are held. When this stillness is unduly limited by excess of vocal expression, this committee is tasked with calling attention to our need for silent waiting during worship. This committee may also be called on to labor with a member or attender who habitually speaks unacceptably, providing the speaker with prompt and loving counsel.

### **Pastoral Care**

There are times when some members and their families need added consideration and compassion. This may result from changes in material circumstances, whether joyous events, such as the birth of a child, or adverse ones, such as illness or the loss of a job. At other times, a member or attender may be in the midst of an emotional or spiritual struggle. The meeting should be ready to provide help or assistance, to whatever extent it is able. Such work can be an overwhelming burden for individuals in the meeting to carry. A committee for pastoral care can bring to bear a variety of skills and proficiencies from Friends who feel a special responsibility for the welfare of members and attenders. These Friends are charged with encouraging all members and attenders to faithful performance of their duties. This will require that committee members become acquainted with all members of the meeting community and keep informed about various needs for encouragement or assistance. This committee seeks to help all members and attenders to grow spiritually and to work cooperatively for the strengthening of the monthly meeting and of the wider Religious Society of Friends.

Sometimes, the increased need is because a commitment to Quaker principles has resulted in some form of hardship. Meetings should be sensitive to the conditions of their membership and prepared to release individuals to witness in whatever manner they feel called. This may mean taking on the care of a family, giving public support to the witness, or simply helping the individual to clarify priorities. Oversight of such cases may fall to the committee charged with pastoral care or it may be the charge of a specially appointed Clearness Committee. When an individual requests a Clearness Committee, our usual practice is for the committee charged with pastoral care to assume responsibility for naming the committee in consultation with the individual concerned.

In addition to encouraging faithful action, the committee needs to be alert to instances of failure. If a member repeatedly disregards Friends' principles, the meeting's standards of proper conduct, or the obligations of membership, this committee is charged with counseling that member in a spirit of loving concern, endeavoring to effect a change in the individual's conduct and in their relationship with the Meeting. If these labors are unavailing, the committee may be obligated to bring the matter to the attention of the monthly meeting with a report of their efforts. It is never acceptable for the committee to act alone in excluding an individual from attendance or participation in the monthly meeting.

Responsibility for pastoral care may be assigned to the committee charged with fostering the depth of worship or it may be the primary charge of a separate committee. It is important that both sets of responsibilities receive adequate attention. In the case of two separate committees, there needs to be a clear understanding of the division of labor between the committees and Friends have found it useful for the two committees to hold joint meetings at least once a year.

[Previously approved sections on **Religious Education** and **Outreach**]

### **State of the Meeting Report**

An annual State of the Meeting Report is intended to describe the meeting's spiritual condition and needs, together with an account of its own efforts to meet those needs. These reports are typically drafted by the committee charged with the care of the meeting for worship and presented to monthly meeting for business for consideration and final approval. The State of the Meeting report is then presented in a timely manner to the appropriate quarterly meeting and forwarded to the Yearly Meeting in advance of annual sessions. The committee charged with drafting a State of the Meeting report may be aided in its deliberations by considering some or all of the following:

1. What is the general spiritual condition of your meetings for worship and business?
2. Does your meeting assemble quietly and reverently for worship?
3. Do most of your resident members attend and find the meetings for worship and business valuable?
4. Do members assist according to their ability in making meetings spiritually profitable?
5. Is the vocal ministry helpful to the meeting? What steps have been taken to deepen the vocal ministry?
6. Do Friends feel a lack of vocal ministry when little or none exists? How do you think this lack can be met?
7. Are you careful to protect your meeting for worship from too much speaking or of irrelevant addresses lacking spiritual value?
8. Is care taken to keep Friends' basic principles clearly before your members and attenders?
9. What are the most pressing needs which you feel for the meeting?
10. What conditions and activities have affected the life of your meeting in the past year?

It is important to avoid submitting a list of events and activities undertaken over the course of the year as a State of the Meeting report. However, reflection on the spiritual benefits or hazards associated with a particular event or activity can in some cases be useful in helping others understand the spiritual state of a monthly meeting.

The Yearly Meeting's Religious Nurture and Education Committee reviews the State of the Meeting Reports, which helps inform the Yearly Meeting's State of Society Report. The State of the Meeting Reports are published every year in the Yearly Meeting Minute Book.

[Previously approved sections on **Membership**, **Marriage**, etc.]

(end)

## Sexual Misconduct Task Force

As most OVYM Friends are aware, our yearly meeting has been looking at how to address sexual misconduct when it occurs in our community. To review how this issue arose, here is some background:

OVYM's exploration of this issue began when our Religious Nurture and Education Committee (RN&E) became aware of an allegation of sexual assault within one of our monthly meetings. Without a policy or clear guidance, this committee struggled with the appropriate way to respond.

In 2018, RN&E brought this issue to annual sessions with the request that the yearly meeting develop a policy for responding to allegations of sexual misconduct. That year the Friend alleged to have committed the sexual assault attended annual sessions. A number of Friends who were aware of the allegation felt strongly that he should be asked to leave because his presence made some Friends, especially young women, feel unsafe. After some deliberation and consultation, and hearing about other incidents of inappropriate behavior by this Friend, he was asked to leave.

This incident reinforced our yearly meeting's need for a policy for how to handle allegations of sexual misconduct. At a subsequent business session, the yearly meeting approved the formation of a task force on sexual misconduct whose responsibility was to 1) draft a policy for responding to allegations of sexual misconduct and 2) develop guidance for Friends to come to a better understanding of sexual misconduct, a topic seldom discussed in our meetings.

Betsy Neale, outgoing clerk of OVYM, agreed to lead the task force and recruit other members. The resulting task force includes nine Friends (listed below). (Several Young Adult Friends who do not have time to serve as full members have agreed to consult with the larger group. We are sensitive to several ways in which these issues can be perceived differently by younger Friends.)

At the 2019 Yearly Meeting sessions the Task Force presented two draft documents, one a policy for responding to allegations of sexual misconduct, and the other a set of queries for helping Friends discuss and grapple with the sensitive issue of sexual misconduct. The Yearly Meeting accepted these documents as working drafts that we may modify based on developing understandings and experiences.

These documents have been distributed to monthly meetings and are being posted on our website – see the new *Sexual Misconduct Resources* tab above the red ribbon that runs across our home page. We invite your monthly meeting's feedback as the Task Force further discerns the way forward toward a policy and procedure for reporting and evaluating allegations of sexual misconduct. We seek to develop a policy that meets our collective aspirations to be fully welcoming, inclusive, and committed to equality and justice in communities of compassion and Spirit-inspired love. Some monthly meetings may be led to adopt these policies for their own use or to use them as a starting point for a custom-appropriate set of their own.

If addressing this matter is new to your meeting, or you anticipate some resistance or discomfort, the Task Force members extend an offer of accompaniment during this process. A number of us (and other OVYM members with experience and expertise in this area) have committed to attending, accompanying, and assisting all monthly meetings who express a desire for such resources. We also welcome offers to help with this work from additional Friends who are interested. Please contact Betsy Neale ([bneale@twc.com](mailto:bneale@twc.com)) or Gail Koehler ([gmkkentucky@gmail.com](mailto:gmkkentucky@gmail.com)), co-clerks of the Task Force if you are looking for a facilitator or want to volunteer to help with such facilitation.

In Friendship,

Sexual Misconduct Task Force

<u>Name</u>	<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Contact info</u>
Joanna Badagliacchio	Lexington	<a href="mailto:joanna.badagliacca@gmail.com">joanna.badagliacca@gmail.com</a>
Susan Lee Barton	Clear Creek (living in Philadelphia)	<a href="mailto:susanleebk@juno.com">susanleebk@juno.com</a>
Bill Cahalan	Community	<a href="mailto:earthawaken2@yahoo.com">earthawaken2@yahoo.com</a>
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## FROM THE OVYM CALENDAR

### SEPTEMBER 2019

**21:** Saturday: 9:30am-5pm. *Eldership and Spiritual Accompaniment: Becoming a Community that Encourages and Supports Gifts* at the Quaker Hill Retreat Center, Richmond, Indiana. Facilitator: Susan Smith of Ohio Yearly Meeting (C). Sponsored by Religious Nurture and Education, Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting.

### OCTOBER 2018

**06:** Sunday: World Quaker Day. FWCC invites people to join Quakers around the world for the 6th annual World Quaker Day: *Sustainability: Planting Seeds of Renewal for the World We Love*. Celebrating all expressions of Quaker Worship. For more information, see the [World Quaker Day website](#).

**20:** Sunday. Miami Quarterly Meeting at [Louisville Friends](#). Community will provide the adult program and Louisville will provide the youth program.

### NOVEMBER 2019

**02:** Saturday: 12-4pm. OVYM Executive Committee will meet at Earlham College. In the event that you need it, you may download the full [Map of the Earlham Campus](#).



## News from Monthly Meetings

### Bloomington

We moved back to our meetinghouse in July after almost three years at Harmony School. At our final meeting there Gloria Stearns-Bruner and Nora Barber led us in composing a song of farewell to Harmony, expressing our gratitude for use of their space. There are still many projects to complete before we can say we are done with this transition. We invite all to worship with us in our remodeled/rebuilt meetinghouse.

We are blessed by participation in our community by people of all ages, from 102 to under 1 year old. Despite spotty attendance by school-aged children, we have dedicated, committed, and passionate First Day School teachers who are ready every Sunday to teach from our chosen curriculum, Sparkling Still. We cherish teaching our children when they do come. Many young adults and families participated in the half-day spring retreat at the Solsberry Retreat Center in May. Our youth also travelled with Gloria Stearns-Bruner to a Quake event in Chicago and have had special programs once a month here at home. We also have several attenders from Common Home Farm, a Catholic Worker project that further enrich our community.

Our Peace, Earthcare and Social Concerns Committee (PESC) drafted a minute on immigration, which was adopted by our Meeting. It was then published as a guest column in the Herald Times newspaper. The same committee has undertaken planting of several new trees to replace several which we lost this past year. The parking lot landscaping plan includes many native and drought resistant plants in alignment with the city codes



and our ongoing commitment to our Backyard Wildlife Habitat designation. Another PESC member, Don Byrd, is the Indiana State Coordinator of the Better Angels organization,, which actively works to bridge political divides. Many Bloomington Friends are involved in environmental and social justice issues on a local and international level. We have an active FCNL Advocacy Team that meets monthly and sees to it that opinions from a Quaker perspective are published in Letters to the Editor and that our lawmakers are familiarized with our viewpoints both in person and through writing campaigns.

We have accepted Rex Sprouse's transfer of membership and welcomed a new attender, Elizabeth Terney, from Patapsco Friends Meeting in Maryland. We are already missing Lillian Henegar and Leo Quirk, both of whom relocated this summer.

As we write this, plans are in the works for many activities that we can report on next time.

*Submitted by Elaine Emmi and Christine Carver*

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### Community

After Meeting for Worship every week, we always take time for holding people and concerns in the Light. Lately we have had a number of our members who have been in need of prayer, and we'd welcome our broader OVYM community to join us in this. Wilhelmina Branson, who continues to work as a psychiatric nurse in the juvenile justice system, broke her pelvic bone and collar bone when a client angrily pushed her down. This was the first time this has happened in her 40 years there. She has managed to come to meeting, walking slowly with a walker, and is grateful that Hannah has been available to help. Also, Alvin Jose has become so frail of late that he is no longer able to attend. His daughters have been faithfully getting him there in a wheelchair for years, and we miss his presence. Also, Susan Gerke is having her third bout with lymphoma, and this time has had to be hospitalized for more intense chemotherapy as well as a stem cell transplant. Her recovery from the treatment will be arduous and long. We are grateful for member Sunny Rhein's pastoral care support with those suffering in our community!

Our annual pancake breakfast and outdoor meeting for worship occurred again in June. This is always a special time: sharing a picnic breakfast outside, and then, surrounded by the summer breeze through our forested land and the sound of birds and squirrels, centering into the stillness of our collected spirits and appreciating our oneness with Life. Someone always asks "Why don't we do this more often?" But it seems to remain our annual June ritual!

*(continued next page)*

(Community Meeting news continued from p. 7) The outreach committee took on a new endeavor this summer. Every July 4th there is a huge parade through the neighborhood of Northside. This parade draws thousands out every year and is known for its diversity, progressive groups, funky floats, and candidates pursuing every political office. This year, it also included six Quakers with bright yellow T-shirts advertising our meeting and carrying a bright yellow banner, made by our caretakers' son John David Sniegocki, bearing the message: *Quakers: Living Peace and Justice*. They gave our meeting's business cards out along the way to bystanders who showed particular interest. Deborah Jordan is credited with drawing extra attention to our group by dancing down the street in front of us, waving a Quaker Oats box on a stick and wearing a large box with the classic Quaker Oats man on the front and words on the back that read: "Out of the Box!" We were pleasantly surprised at all the positive remarks that people called out from the crowd, e.g. "Yay!! Quakers," and exchanging the peace sign with us! (See photos.)



One regular way our meeting is out in the community is by providing a dinner meal once a month to about 40 people in one of the residential homes of "Tender Mercies," a Downtown Cincinnati program transforming the lives of homeless adults [men and women] with mental illness. This ministry has been going on since 2004. David Funck enthusiastically passes around a sign-up sheet each month, soliciting cooks and servers for the next Thursday night meal. A core group of faithful members provide food for nourishment and comfort, as well as create relationships with residents. David frequently shares what a joy it is to be part of their lives. He says, "They know that they can always count on us to be there for them on a monthly basis. In addition, they appreciate and love that we bring homemade food for them." Two years ago, the idea of having monthly themed dinners began, such as Breakfast for Dinner, the All American Cookout, a Fish Fry, and Fried Chicken for All. "There is usually enough food that when another residential home falls short or volunteers don't show up, we can serve food to them as well. Our answer is always 'yes', and it seems that just as Jesus provided fish and loaves, and they multiplied, we encounter a similar situation, and are happily rewarded with the ability to serve more people."

In July, we had a 2nd hour discussion to continue processing our new sexual harassment policy and related issues. In separate male and female groups, in worship sharing format, we addressed queries about experiences that led us to feel strongly about the topic and about how power and privilege affect our interactions with each other. The two groups did not convene together afterwards to share verbally, but we did conclude together with silent worship. Given the potential for hurt and discord that this brings up, it was not surprising that the words of Margaret Fell came through as ministry, reminding us that "we are a people that follow after those things that make for peace, love and unity." Our next step is to have a facilitated discussion with men and women together.

And, something to warm your heart! The youngest member of our meeting, Rachel Ernst Stahlhut's son, Ollie, age 3, was featured with one of the oldest members of our meeting, Tim Leonard, in an FGC video in May. They discussed what meeting for worship is all about! <https://tinyurl.com/Tim-Ollie>

*Submitted by Paulette Meier*

## Dayton

The city of Dayton has had some tough challenges in the past few months. In response to a KKK rally downtown in May, several Friends participated in an alternative peaceful event after a meeting for worship. Nan Whaley, the mayor of Dayton, responded to our petition by designating May 25 (when the KKK group came to Dayton) as "Beloved Community Day." On the evening of May 31<sup>st</sup>, 22 tornadoes hit the area, striking many areas including Trotwood, north Dayton, and Beavercreek. Many lost their homes. Thankfully, no one in the Meeting was affected, but some members assisted others in the community with cleanup. More recently, a mass shooting in the Oregon District occurred about a mile from our Meeting. We were shaken, but none of us hurt. The entire community has come together with mutual support in the face of such a terrible event.

On a brighter note, we welcomed Phil Henry as a new member to the Meeting, Sue Brezine had an exhibit of her artwork at the Lathrem Senior Citizen's Center in June, and our meeting participated in worship with many other west Ohio Meetings at Fort Ancient. Worship was followed by a potluck picnic, hike, and a visit of the museum. The Meetinghouse vegetable garden has been bountiful and the birds are enjoying the enormous sunflowers!

*Submitted by Scott Hadley*



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## Eastern Hills

In June, members of Eastern Hills Friends Meeting got out their work gloves and joined together to further the revitalization of our grounds. But we also found time for more leisurely activities. One of our regular youth attenders entertained us with a piano recital featuring lively ragtime tunes and lyrical classical pieces. The recital was used as a fund raiser to help them underwrite the cost of attending the Friends Music Camp at Earlham College this summer.

Eastern Hills is a bridge meeting, with membership in both Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting and Wilmington Yearly Meetings. Martha Viehmann is the Presiding Clerk position of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting, and J.P. Lund holds the same position on Wilmington Yearly Meeting. This summer, many from Eastern Hills Friends Meeting participated in both the OVYM and WYM Annual Sessions. Eastern Hills is also promoting closer ties between various member meetings and has started what we hope will become a regular practice of intervisitation.

*Submitted by Eric Heineke*



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## Fall Creek

Open House on Sunday Nov. 3rd! The Open House will be in the afternoon and will include music, food, and some presentation, perhaps both historical and spiritual.

*Submitted by Marti Matthews*

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## Lafayette

Summers are usually very quiet for the Lafayette Meeting. Friends go in and out of town a lot, so we suspend our business meetings and our Quakerism 102 study meetings and relax into the silence. This summer is different. We have been considering what to do with our meetinghouse. Donated to the meeting by our Friend Hanna Meisner, our house is a raggedy, comfortable old bungalow that needs a lot of work. Adding to the workload is the fact that we rented space to student tenants for many years, in a sort of co-op arrangement in which the students paid part of their minimal rent in house and yard work. That started well, but in recent years, some of the tenants have shirked their jobs or did not keep up with their rent. What started as a mutually beneficial arrangement has turned into a burden.

We decided last spring that we would give notice to our tenants that their leases would not be renewed. They have now found other places and are nearly moved out. That has been going much smoother than we feared. Our next steps are to clean and do inventory. A lot of old paper is going to be recycled, old minutes more safely stored, and tattered furniture and kitchen supplies will be thrown out or donated. We expect some surprises, for instance, a small suit case of Hanna's photographs and letters were unearthed and will join the rest of Hanna's archives at the U.S. Memorial Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. Goodness knows else what will turn up.

Beyond that, no decisions have been made. There are a lot of options for the use of an old house. We are taking our sweet Quaker time to discuss, sit with and come to a consensus about what role the house plays in our identity as a meeting before deciding what to do next. The next quarterly meeting is to be held here: it may be the last in this building for the Lafayette Meeting or it may be merely the next in a long line of meetings.

*Submitted by Karen Atcheson*

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## Miami

**Quaker Heights Ohio Living Meeting for Worship.** Although Quaker Heights Ohio Living is no longer a ministry of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting, Miami Friends continue to lead worship services on the fourth First Day of even numbered months. Friends are invited to join us to lend their voices in singing, and share readings or reflections as part of this bi-monthly worship.

**Annual Fort Ancient Worship and Picnic.** Miami Friends and others from the yearly meeting held our annual outdoor Meeting for Worship at Fort Ancient on July 14. Sitting in a circle, listening to all the sounds of the woods and river, helps us feel part of the ways that Native Americans have worshipped here over centuries.

**Transitions.** Long-time member Lonny Burger, our recording clerk, website administrator, and website administrator for Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting, is being transferred by his company to Georgia. His services, as well as his steady presence, will be sorely missed! Friends with similar skills are encouraged to think about how they might help fill the gap.

Now that Gretchen Stone has semi-retired from her work as a family doctor in Australia, she and Phil have more freedom to participate in the life of the meeting. Someone commented the other day that the average age of meeting attendees decreased by a decade or so when they walked through the door. This could be viewed as sad commentary, when retirees start looking like youngsters. We prefer to note our amazement that those in their nineties and late eighties, such as Bob Findlay, Eula McDermott, and Pat Willey still have so much energy and inspiration to contribute.

*Submitted by Gretchen Stone*

## Oxford

Summer has been a busy time for Oxford Friends. Some of our members have beautified the Inter Faith Center where we worship with a garden emphasizing native and pollinator plants. In addition to enjoying fellowship with Friends at Annual Sessions, a group of us attended worship hosted by Miami Monthly Meeting at Fort Ancient. We have also been active in Peace and Social Concerns. Five of us worked two Saturday mornings at our local food pantry, and seven of us participated in a rally protesting conditions at immigration detention centers. We are working on our annual project of collecting materials for school bags and hygiene kits for Church World Service.

*Submitted by Cecilia Shore*



(Above, food pantry crew;  
Right, F/friends at immigration rally)



## Yellow Springs

The summer at Yellow Springs Meeting has been full of good work and joyful occasions! Multiple Friends spent multiple days working hard to improve the meeting house grounds, inside and out. Come check us out. We look good!

We are overjoyed with the many milestones experienced by our members and their extended families! There were marriages, baby showers and births to celebrate! Janeal Ravndal hosted a display of her handmade boxes with quotes and haiku at the Yellow Springs library.

Summer is typically a sleepy time for our meeting, so we are grateful for these many blessings. We look forward to the start of our children and adult first day school programs beginning on September 8th at 10:00. All are always welcome to join us!

*Submitted by Heather Snediker-Morscheck*

### Right Sharing of World Resources

The [Spring Newsletter](https://tinyurl.com/RSWR-Spring2019) (<https://tinyurl.com/RSWR-Spring2019>) includes:

**Making food, changing lives.** Learn how women like Rahuman Bibi are transforming their lives through food businesses started with loans from a Right Sharing grant.

**Cooking with our partners.** Connect to Right Sharing partners by learning how to prepare Kenyan chai tea, chapati, and groundnut stew.

*Source: June 5 RSWR email.*

### American Friends Service Committee

Recent blog posts on the AFSC website include:

**Child detention:** On Aug. 3, the last of more than 3,000 children were taken out of the Homestead detention center in Florida – a significant win in our ongoing work to end child detention. [Here's what you need to know](#) about what happened at Homestead detention center and how we can move forward to protect migrant children in the U.S. (<https://tinyurl.com/AFSC-Homestead>)

**The problem with labeling violence “domestic terrorism”:** In working to stop white supremacist violence, we must not reinforce policies that criminalize Muslims and Black and brown people. (<https://tinyurl.com/AFSC-violence>)

### Friends Committee on National Legislation

Recent resources include:

**A Religious Perspective on Carbon Pricing.** [Watch the recording](#) for an overview of the goals of carbon pricing and how it works; how faith communities are engaging with carbon pricing; the specific questions that religious organizations are using to evaluate carbon pricing legislation; and an overview of the current bills in Congress. (<https://tinyurl.com/FCNL-carbon>).

**Fostering Civic Oversight with Law Enforcement: Two Quakers' Stories.** [Watch the conversation](#) with Dwight Wilson and Eduardo Diaz, two seasoned Quakers who have served as national leaders in the work for civilian oversight of law enforcement. (<https://tinyurl.com/FCNL-civic>)

### Wilmington College

**Anniversary.** Wilmington College will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2020. More news later!

**Westheimer Peace Symposium:** Water Justice. October 1. This year's keynote speaker activist, Winona LaDuke. For information, please see the [Westheimer Peace Symposium](https://www.wilmington.edu/the-westheimer-peace-symposium) website. <https://www.wilmington.edu/the-westheimer-peace-symposium>

*Source: Wilmington College website*



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## Regional Friends: Indiana Yearly Meeting

*Good Morning!*

One of the many highlights of Yearly Meeting Sessions was a challenge shared by 18-year-old Sarah Wing, during the "Celebration of Youth" Saturday morning. She began by citing statistics showing the large number of young people who leave the church as they reach adulthood, then shared these remarks: "*Do you want to know what's pushing youth away? Why not ask us? Do you want the church to flourish in the upcoming generations? Do you want the church to continue your ideas and traditions? Then share those. Do you want the upcoming leaders to have knowledge and understanding beyond what the current church does? Do you want us to continue to grow? Then why not share the knowledge you have so that we have the opportunity to learn new things?*"

After citing 1 Timothy 4:12-16 (Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young...), Sarah continued with these observations: "*It's interesting that it's talking to the young and their gifts AND mentions the elders. We all have a story. I challenge you to actively pursue change. Actively pursue relationships and conversations. Let us hear your story. Be a part of our story, and actively pursue to change the story that is being written with youth walking away. This is a Celebration of Youth. We want you to know us. We want you to celebrate with us. We want you to be a part of the youth. If we are ready to stop talking about the past, why not start talking to the future?*"

Are you building relationships with young people in your church? Young adults are unlikely to walk away from genuine friends. -Doug Shoemaker

Source: *Indiana YM Communicator*

### Alice Paul Awareness Project

We are now approaching the 100th anniversary of American women being granted the right to vote by the 19th Amendment, which became law in 1920. Many people have heard of Alice Paul, the Quaker woman who was instrumental in getting that Amendment enacted, but few people **today** know exactly what she did, and fewer still know how her Quaker faith played a strong role in her actions.

A recently published essay titled "Alice Paul and her Quaker witness"; provides an in-depth examination of Alice Paul's life and work from a Quaker perspective. Most Friends who have read the essay find it fascinating. The Bethesda Friends Meeting of Maryland has recently approved a minute recommending that all Friends read this essay.

The essay can be found online on that Meeting's web page at the following address:

<http://www.bethesdafriends.org/Alice-Paul-and-her-Quaker-witness-2019.pdf>

The author of the essay, Roger Burns, hopes that many individual Friends and Friends meetings throughout the United States may be inspired to develop educative events and programs about Miss Paul in time for next year's centennial commemorations of the passage of the 19th Amendment. He notes that Friends may be assisted in such educative efforts by making use of this well-researched article. The author has a wish that over time Alice Paul may permanently become as familiar to all Friends as is John Woolman and William Penn. He encourages all Friends to share this essay as broadly as possible with other Friends. Thank you.

Source: *email from Bethesda Friends*

### Friends General Conference

Following our visit from Mike and Marsha Green at Annual Sessions, Friends may be especially interested in the ministry of Friends Couple Enrichment. At their website, <https://friendscoupleenrichment.wordpress.com/>, you can find information about their programs, upcoming events and exercises for couples. This ministry has been ongoing for half a century.

Following up a 2017 visit from Brian Drayton to our Religious Nurture and Education retreat, Friends may wish to learn more about his work. Quaker Press of FGC has now published the second edition of Brian Drayton's book, *On Living with a Concern for Gospel Ministry*.

Given recent discussions about reporting our racial/ethnic composition, Friends may be interested in resources about systemic racism and white supremacy. Vanessa Juley of the Ministry on Racism Program recommends two publications: *Race and Privilege in Europe* (<https://tinyurl.com/Racism-QCEA>) by the Quaker Council for European Affairs, and *Diversity & Inclusion Report* (<https://tinyurl.com/Diversity-MfS>) by Britain Yearly Meeting's Meeting for Sufferings (MfS).

Inspirations from: June 7 *Vital Friends* newsletter, FGC.

### Friends World Committee for Consultation (Americas)

The **Traveling Ministry Corps** (<https://tinyurl.com/Travministry>) is welcoming applications for a 2020 cohort of ministers. If you are drawn to this work, please follow the link for the **application** [pdf] (<https://tinyurl.com/Travmin-app>). **The application deadline is September 30, 2019.** Email [travelingministry@fwccamericas.org](mailto:travelingministry@fwccamericas.org) if you would like more information or other connection options.

**Sustainability.** In this video (<https://tinyurl.com/FWCC-Earth>) produced by the FWCC World Office, Friends from across theological traditions in North America join together to share their personal testimonies on environmental justice, earth care and stewardship. You can download **suggested guidelines for discussing the video in your meeting or church** [here](https://tinyurl.com/discussvideo). (<https://tinyurl.com/discussvideo>)

Source: *Newsletter from Robin Mohr to Anne Hutchinson*

### Faces of Addiction <https://www.facesofaddiction.net/>

"To create compassion for addicted persons through portraits and life stories. To create, develop, and disseminate program materials for addiction prevention and recovery based on portraits and life stories of addicted persons."



# Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

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Cincinnati, OH 45229

We're on the web:  
[ovym.quaker.org](http://ovym.quaker.org)

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It would go a great way to caution and direct People in their Use of the World, that they were better studied and known in the Creation of it. For how could Man find the Confidence to abuse it, while they should see the Great Creator stare them in the Face, in all and every part thereof?  
~ William Penn, 1644-1718

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