



From Revelation to Revolution: Walking Together in Radical Love 2021 Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions

Mark your calendars! The 201st annual sessions of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting will be Wednesday, June 16, through Sunday, June 20.

The 2021 theme is: "From Revelation to Revolution: Walking Together in Radical Love."

Our traditional gathering site in recent years, Earlham College, is for the second summer not hosting any conferences or camps; and many other venues also anticipate limited activities because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. That reality along with our own prayerful sense that the coming summer is too soon to hold large in-person gatherings, even if group restrictions are lifted, prompted the Planning Committee, with approval by Executive Committee, to decide this fall to present annual sessions in an online format for a second year.

With the success of 2020's online gathering, and many lessons learned from that experience, we feel confident that 2021 sessions will offer a substantive opportunity for connecting, learning, inspiration, worshiping and spiritual nurture. And business, too.

Also, with the roll out of vaccinations and, we hope, a decrease in COVID case numbers by mid-June, we are considering the possibility of closing sessions with an outdoor, in-person Meeting for Worship, with recommended safety protocols in place and an online connection for Friends at home. The Planning Committee will make a decision about this idea in the spring.

In the meantime, we are working to finalize the plenary talks, and are planning to offer one of the two plenary sessions as a panel presentation titled "Stories of Radical Love" and featuring experiences of OVYM Friends.

Please let a Planning Committee member know if you have any questions or thoughts about 2021 sessions. We are: Kristin Brethova, Gloria Bruner, Ben Griffith, Peter Hardy, Carol Simmons, Terri Holada and ex-officio members Kaia Jackson, Youth Secretary; Hannah Branson and Susan Hyde, Children's Committee; and Eric Woolf, Registrar.

Workshop proposals related to the theme and volunteers for the Healing Center, Worship Sharing, and tech support also are welcome.

Who: All of us!

What: OVYM's 201st Annual Sessions

When: Wednesday, June 16, through Sunday, June 20

Where: Online; links will be provided in advance and on the OVYM website

Theme: "From Revelation to Revolution: Walking Together in Radical Love"

Submitted by Carol Simmons

Dear Friends:

On New Year's Day, I joined my neighbors at the Peace Pole for our annual vigil. It is a time for reflecting on our hopes and dreams for the year ahead, a time for affirming that we are a community that cares about the well-being of our neighbors and of the planet. As our vigil began, puffy clouds were lit by the late sunlight. The billows shone bright white against the blue sky, a sky that had been predicted to rain on us. So I felt doubly blessed. As the half hour came to a close, I saw that the clouds had closed in and turned an ominous gray. Then I knew. Despite the hope I feel at the turn of a new year, there will be more dark days ahead. Indeed the challenges of 2020 are still with us, and the first few weeks of this year have shown that clearly. Nonetheless, like my neighbors and me on January 1, we are not alone, and each of us is a bearer of light. May we look to each other, to

Martha Viehmann



our family of Friends, to help us keep faith, hope, and love alive. May we help each other face the dark days and find our path to help bring more love and light into the world.

Yours in loving service,
Martha Viehmann

Youth News

On December 12, 2020 25 youth and 13 adults joined together in virtual space for the Quake that Rocked the Continent. Friends ages 11 and up came from 20 states and provinces across the US and Canada, from the original lands of the Potawatami, Wampanoag, Cherokee, Anishinabewaki, Odawa, Mississauga, Fox, Sauk, Ho chunk, Kizh, Chumash/Tongva, Tsalaguweti, S'tsoyaha (Yuchi), Raymatush, Massachusetts, Ohlone, Haudenosaunee, Lenni Lenape, Menominee, Patwin, and Amah Mutsun peoples.

We came with intentions of learning, purpose, sharing, knowledge, building community, grounding, connection, curiosity, meeting, interest, intrigue, community support and helpfulness.

We are Friends who are radical, adventurous, loving, interesting, open, conscious, horsey, wonderful, almighty, respectful, inquisitive, magical, helpful, epic, listening, gregarious, devoted, awesome, merry, neat, vivacious and snowy. We are multi-lingual and musical. We identify as Black, African-American, Multi-Racial, Middle Eastern, Asian and white. We run, swim, read, sleep, dance, ride horseback, and search.

During the Quake, we worshipped together, strategized about how to pressure a fictional local government to respond to a flood, and shared in racial affinity groups. We practiced mindfulness exercises to stay embodied throughout the day. We knit and crocheted, in the company of our dogs, cats, ducks and other family members. We played games and enjoyed each other's company.

Several Friends shared,

The event helped me "feel less isolated in my Quaker identity"

"The most important part of being a Quaker for me is the community which was absolutely affirmed by this gathering."

"I felt a connection to the spirit/light, it was great to connect with other Quakers."

The event "reminded me to use Quaker beliefs as a diving board into complex subjects. I am more appreciative of the diversity (geographically, ethnically, ideologically) within the Quakers and feel connected."

"I feel much more connected to a greater community now, I feel like I have been losing that bond since everything is virtual but this brought it back."

This event is a manifestation of a collaborative effort of many affiliated FGC Yearly Meetings. It creates a unique opportunity for Quaker Youth Workers to feel supported by a larger community of colleagues. As one of the co-organizers of the December event shared, "It's another world to collaborate with so many staff people, at no point did I feel alone in the programming, as I often do as the only Youth Worker in my Yearly Meeting."

The event was cohosted by Pacific and Ohio Valley Yearly Meetings. Great thanks to Kaia Jackson and Rebekah Percy for their leadership with this event. Many thanks to Nathan Lasersohn, Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch, Vanessa Juley, Aaron Ruscetta, Aurelio Anderson, Larissa Gil-Sanhueza, Greg Woods, Euclid Bautista, Regina Renee Ward, Ben Hustis, Ethan Chiddicks, Olivia Chalkley, Liam Gardner, and Sarah Glazer for their valuable contributions.

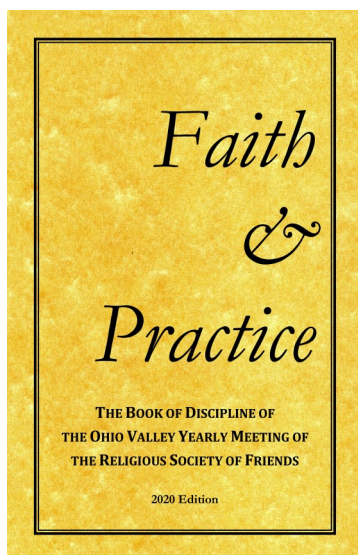
FGC plans to co-host another Summit in early 2021 in partnership with Illinois and Philadelphia Yearly Meetings. For more information please visit: <https://fgcquaker.org/year-round-youth-programs>.

By Marian Dalke of FGC, submitted by Kaia Jackson, Emphasis added by editor

SAVE THE DATE!

The next Youth Quake will be hosted on the weekend of Saturday, February 20th, 2021!

Contact Kaia Jackson, OVYM Youth Secretary, at ovymyouthsecretary@gmail.com for more details!



New OVYM Faith & Practice on its Way!

As this is being written, the new edition of the yearly meeting's *Faith & Practice* is at the publisher to be printed and scheduled to be sent out to each monthly meeting! The book will be available in hardcover, paperback, and eBook editions.

For the past 15 years, the yearly meeting has saved up money to pay the full cost of providing each of our members with a copy free of charge. Each meeting has informed our Administrative Secretary, Deborah Jordan, how many hardcover and paperback copies it wants and who in the meeting will be responsible for distributing them to individuals. Deborah has submitted those orders to the publisher. If they have not yet arrived, they soon will.

For the future, if a meeting needs multiple copies, the Administrative Secretary will be able to place orders. But if individuals want single copies, it will be easiest to purchase those from a bookstore or on-line from Quakerbooks.org or another retailer.

For those who prefer an eBook copy, the *Faith & Practice* has been converted into that format, but it is not available as of this writing. As soon as we know how to download a copy, directions on how to get a copy will be posted on the yearly meeting website (OVYM.org). The text is also available on the website as a PDF.

Submitted by Paul Buckley

News from Monthly Meetings

Bloomington

Like people the world over Bloomington Friends struggled with the demands of the year 2020. We have had at least 4 Friends test positive for Covid-19 and several become ill, one seriously enough to be hospitalized, but thankfully all have recovered. Several other Friends have experienced acute and chronic health problems and the Meeting has come forward to make and deliver meals, give rides, run errands, or send cards.

Our Meeting leadership have periodically reflected on what our community needs in this time of turmoil and isolation. We determined that we very much miss the fellowship we used to share when meetings for worship were held in person. The Clerk held 2 meetings with committee clerks and officers, which was mainly to give voice to our frustrations and lend encouragement to those feeling either overwhelmed by responsibilities or else feeling isolated and temporarily directionless. Ultimately we held a "Recognizing and Naming Spiritual Gifts" workshop lead by Diann Herzog and Gloria Stearns Bruner that inspired and strengthened our habits of appreciation. Here is a list of ways that we responded to our felt needs:

Our Ministry & Counsel Committee surveyed our interests in activities outside of Zoom worship to help build our community bonds. This resulted in 2 ongoing Zoom worship-sharing groups, a Walking-in-the-Park group (with masks and social distancing), and a Zoom book study group (*So You Want to Talk about Race* by Ijeoma Oluo).

Pastoral Care has been tireless in actively responding and reaching out to Friends who are particularly vulnerable and in coming up with creative ways to include everyone. Since our young adults, teens and children appear to resist use of Zoom for making contact, this committee has delivered school supplies and favorite snacks to our children. While weather was hospitable they gathered for an outdoor worship sharing group for mothers.

Our Retreat Committee arranged for an informal, less structured retreat in an outdoor evening gathering around a fire pit (with masks and social distancing) at the Meetinghouse. We brought our own meals, shared freshly toasted s'mores, sang songs, and began and ended with worship under the stars.

And our Social Fellowship Committee put together our Evening of the Arts (via Zoom for the first time) during which Friends shared their poetry, music, and crafts projects though we missed the usual culinary arts component. But it did include a live demonstration of the challenges of homemade soap-making and some good advice, "Don't make too much at once or you will spend all day beating it trying to get it to set up."

We were the first organization in Indiana to sign up for the Braver Angels "With Malice toward None" campaign to address post-election polarization with the goal of embracing and affirming the value of political diversity and mutual respect despite differences.

The Maintenance and Grounds Committee has pretty much finished rebuilding our playground; installed acoustic treatment in the Fellowship Room; and recruiting Friends to regularly water the required landscape materials during the lengthy drought.

On the technology front, our community Facebook page has been particularly active recently mainly to share joys and concerns in addition to announcements. Our wonderful Website Coordinator migrated our website to the FGC platform this year and has been keeping information up-to-date and making gradual improvements. You can contact her via the website to obtain the Zoom link for our meetings, if you wish to visit with us. Everyone is welcome.

Photos below show part of our new playground and some of our walking group last fall.

Submitted by Christine Carver



Campus

Campus Friends moved back into our meeting room in the Quaker Heritage Center on campus at Wilmington College in September when classes resumed. The meeting room is large enough and our meeting small enough that Friends are comfortable meeting with masks and social distancing every First Day at 10 a.m. Our Fifth Sunday discussion this year was to share our response to the query: "How have you stayed Centered during the pandemic?"

We learned of and mourn the December death of Bob Powell, a faithful member of Campus Friends who had moved to North Carolina to be closer to family.

We are troubled by the on-going reality that we cannot hold meeting for worship with two of our senior members living at Cape May retirement community and continue to pray the Tuesday evening Cape May worship group can resume in 2021.

Submitted by Patricia Thomas

Clear Creek

Clear Creek Friends had previously enjoyed Meeting for Worship outdoors in a socially distanced lawn chair circle over the summer through September, later moving to indoor, socially distanced worship for a time this fall when the frost was on the pumpkin. However, in November, COVID-19 positivity in our area rose to alarming numbers, leading Friends to begin meeting virtually again, over the Zoom platform. In December, a slate of nominations was approved, including Erica Pearson and Gwen Halsted serving as Co-Clerks and Michael Birkel serving as Recording Clerk.

Clear Creek's Peace and Social Concerns Committee led study, discussion and action on matters of anti-racism and on carbon use awareness this fall. The Adult Religious Education Committee presented information and facilitated discussion on various topics including giving vocal ministry in Quaker meeting, and on spiritual journeys. We have an active book discussion group and a small group that meets for Experiment with Light.

Ten Clear Creek Friends have been meeting by Zoom to work on antiracism, using the recorded webinars on the AFSC website called "Radical Acting in Faith for White People." We had four meetings in November and December, and are continuing with four more in January and February.

We miss gathering to share snacks and meals together, but a safe method of sharing Thanksgiving dishes to take home was a welcome innovation. Friends gathered for worship on Christmas day in Spirit and via Zoom. We wish everyone peace and joy in the coming year.

Submitted by Karen Bays-Winslow

Community

Community Meeting continues to make the best of the pandemic situation we find ourselves in. Besides our usual weekly Meeting for Worship and "2nd hours" over zoom, there have been several on-going "in-reach groups" and also some special holiday gatherings. A worship sharing group began meeting on the morning of the 3rd Wednesday of the month with such topics as "How is Spirit moving in your life?" And a monthly book discussion group has been meeting, based on the book, *Lives That Speak: Stories of 20th Century Quakers*. Adult Religious Education Committee has planned a 9-session reading group based on Ibram Kendi's book, *How to Be an Anti-Racist*, following up on the invitation of OVYM for meetings to explore more intentionally the issue of white supremacy.

In December, we had what has become an annual tradition of celebrating each other's gifts by way of a variety show, featuring friends from all generations. We had our children sharing dance and instrumental music. We shared poetry and stories and songs and some seasonal humor as well. Everything went well over Zoom but of course we all wished we could have celebrated together in person. A separate event for families was an evening holiday Woods Walk at the Cincinnati Nature center. Everyone reported that they had a great time. Also on New Year's Eve, there was a candlelight vigil over Zoom in the last hour of the year, with hearts joined in prayer for all that is to come.

Our faithful FCNL group has continued to meet and is preparing an in-depth lobby visit with our conservative Republican representative of Congress on Jan. 28th, focusing on the issue of repealing the 2002 Authorization for the Use of Military Force and avoiding war with Iran.

We are praying for Erin Bagus' husband, Josh Phillips, who is dealing with brain cancer. They recently obtained full custody of his young children, and we would appreciate your joining us in prayer for him and the family.

Submitted by Paulette Meier

Dayton

Several in our meeting have had health challenges the past few months. Beth Lewis had surgery which went well. Sue Brezine is continuing to recover from health issues. Mariah's father was diagnosed with cancer after being hospitalized. We were sad to learn that Marty Walton (who was active in the meeting about 20 years ago) passed away on June 11, due to cancer.

Dayton Friends have had to make adjustments because of the pandemic. Our retreat and a discussion have been postponed until it is safe. We are also not serving meals at St. Vincent's in December, but making a supplemental gift instead.

The Peace and Social Concerns Committee sent a petition to the Secretary of State to assure that all votes were counted. Also, we had a discussion about sending an interfaith police reform letter.

Phil Henry and other members made progress on the patio. More work was done on the garden while the children completed a fence mural in the side yard! The meeting continues to have regular book discussions and one of our past members (Timothy Snyder) spoke on a local program discussing his new book, *Our Malady*. He also spoke about his near death health experience this past year. Karen Tibbals (from Rahway Meeting, Washington, NJ) led a timely Second Hour discussion on "Seeing 'That of God' in Those We Disagree With."

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(Dayton news continued) With help from Al McGrew and Phyllis Tonne, Dayton Friends Meeting raised money to provide an ample Christmas to a recent Congolese immigrant family of ten. Gifts included coats, socks and warm footwear. In addition, we were able to partner with local organizations to provide several hundred dollars in clothing, shoes, and toys/games for the youth. Also, Al has been volunteering with the Miami Valley Immigration Coalition food drive to deliver groceries to immigrant families in the Dayton area who lack the ability to fully access available food aid.

We have several new attendees joining us in on-line worship. Dayton Friends is happy to have received requests for membership from both Tom Townsend and Trent Applegate!

Submitted by Scott Hadley

Eastern Hills

Eastern Hills Friends were able to briefly resume limited in-person worship this fall with hybrid meetings; however, all in-person worship has now been suspended until the latest surge in the pandemic makes this tenable again. Despite these bumps, we have presented several Second Hours and workshops, including “Read the Bible, who me?” led by Franchot Ballinger and “Let's Talk About Race” led jointly by Martha Viehmann and Rhonda Pfaltzgraff-Carlson.

We feel our meeting has been blessed more than many this year and felt the need to express our good fortune by expanding our year end giving to various charities. These included Christian Outreach and Wellness Ministry, Cincinnati Freestore Foodbank and Shelterhouse Cincinnati.

We are looking forward to better times. To promote our good wishes for the future, members of Eastern Hills gathered with our neighbors on New Year's Day to observe the candlelight vigil at the Peace Pole in Beech Acres Park sponsored by Greater Anderson Promotes Peace. This annual event symbolizes our dreams for peace and a better world – so important in these challenging times.

Submitted by Eric Heineke



Lafayette

The Lafayette Friends have been growing in number during the last few years. After having emptied our meetinghouse of tenants and deliberating on our choices for a year, we decided last year to keep the house. We completed renovations on the basement apartment, wiring and plumbing in the summer and currently have a tenant back in the basement. We look forward to the ebbing of the virus threat, so we can again have caretakers in the upstairs.

After starting with virtual Meeting for Worship, we very much enjoyed meeting outdoors in our back yard which lasted from the early spring through the late fall. We enjoyed adding music before worship a number of times in the summer! We will consider continuing outdoors in future as the weather allows. We did move indoors for Meeting for Worship in October/November for a brief while, but were forced back to virtual by the COVID-19 numbers. We have been pleasantly surprised at the richness possible with virtual worship.

We worshipped and shared a potluck meal at the Farmer's Institute in the fall. Though we weren't able to share worship with the Farmer's Institute Meeting, we were very happy to learn about the history of the facility from our own Jill Hutchcroft, who is a part of the life of both LFM and Farmer's Institute.

Spurred by our newer attenders, we completed discussion of *The Quaker Way* by Gulley. Spurred by the desire to get to know each other better, we have begun a biweekly pairing of attenders who are encouraged to get together virtually, with a call or a walk to share some time one on one. We have a very longstanding and close relationship with the Lafayette Urban Ministry, and have been involved recently with their drive to supply meals to people suffering homelessness when their shelter has been closed due to COVID.

Submitted by Karen Atcheson

Lexington

Zoom! Zoom! Since March Lexington Friends have been meeting over Zoom because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Maybe your meeting has been also. About a quarter of our regular worship attenders do not attend because they find this method of meeting and worshipping is not fruitful for them. This includes our families, who, understandably, do not feel that more screen time will be good for their children. We miss them all and look forward to being able to return to our meetinghouse later this year! On the other hand, the ease of attending (no driving, no dressing up!) even from a distance, has actually increased our Sunday attendance.

For those of us for whom Zoom is workable, it's enriching to see each other on a regular basis and join together in worship. We have enjoyed some rich ministry in our virtual meetings for worship. In addition, we continue to hold our Sunday morning First Hour sessions (adult religious education) via Zoom. We also hold drop-in sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays. These are opportunities for Lexington Friends to connect and combat the isolation of being home bound and socially restricted.

We continue to hold 'potlucks' twice a month. We don't share a meal but do gather for a program or joint activity. Tonight, poet George Ella Lyon will join us for readings and song. On the fifth Friday of the month we gather for Artzapalooza (also called ArtZoomapalooza), a meeting community variety show. This tradition was begun several years ago by Friend Kevin Holm-Hudson, who is a professor of music at the University of Kentucky. In spite of the limitations of Zoom, we have had a number of wonderful Artzapalooza evenings since the pandemic descended on us.

The meeting's anti-racism work continues. On Monday afternoons, we host a drop-in Zoom session to discuss racial issues and concerns. About a dozen Lexington Friends attend regularly, but it is always open to anyone. Friends find this a very useful opportunity to discuss and explore racial issues and grow in our personal knowledge and attitudes. Princess Nelson, an African American Friend, is a regular at these sessions. We deeply appreciate her loving, patient, devoted ministry to helping white Friends understand racial dynamics in our culture, especially for African Americans. We recognize the importance of taking action against racism and its effects as well as participating in discussions. The meeting has formed an Anti-racism Coordinating Committee to help Friends take action. And finally, our anti-racism book club continues its monthly meetings.

On Wednesday afternoons the meeting hosts either a meeting for healing or an Experiment with Light session.

So, at Lexington Friends Meeting there's a whole lotta' zooming going on! It is helping many of us stay engaged and active in this very challenging time. One wonderful benefit of Zoom is that it enables people in any location to attend our sessions – no transportation needed! Several far-flung Friends (one in New Orleans!) attend our worship regularly.

What's happening at your meeting? Have you found Zoom or other video conference options helpful? How about your families and children? Have you found ways to include and/or connect with them? Shall we schedule a Front Porch session to share our experiences?

In the meantime, I hope you and yours stay well.

Submitted by Betsy Neale

Miami

We treasure meeting together in our meetinghouse, the ancient clock moderating the silence. Given our small numbers and our huge space, it was not hard to remain physically distant. Some Friends stayed away due to COVID, so we averaged around six in attendance.

In November, we felt we had no choice but to switch to virtual Meetings for Worship. They have been surprisingly gathered and intimate. The best part is that distance barely matters. Milton and Gary Cook, in Indiana, and Travis Cook in Chicago; Ginny Wilson in Massachusetts, Lonny Burger in Georgia, Tom Nowel in Cleveland can all join in. Other, more local, Friends with situations which would make attendance a health hazard can be part of meeting again. We often have a larger group than we would during a "normal" winter. We are now beginning to think that the laptop will be part of our worship even when we are able to gather again in person, since it brings so many distant Friends closer. Email Milton at miltoncook425@gmail.com if you would like more information.

We were saddened by the passing of John Fischer, who married Jenny Lee Braddock (daughter of Raymond and Sara) at Miami Monthly Meeting in 1953. Jenny Lee and a few family members travelled down from Wisconsin to bury him in the Red Brick graveyard on December 9. No one else had been buried there since the late 1940s. The weather co-operated for an outdoor service in the manner of Friends, shared via Zoom.

Looking back, our meetinghouse, built in 1811, was modernized with the addition of a furnace in the 1870s. The meeting hired workers with horses to dig out a cellar. Eula McDermott still has the receipt, showing they paid \$700.

When plumbing and other mod cons were added to our meetinghouse in the 1960s, replacing outhouses at the end of the front porch, a furnace was installed on the ground floor. The subterranean one has gotten rusty over the years. This summer, Friends removed standing water and several truckloads of sheet metal, broken bricks, etc. Phil Stone stands in the photo with the half-ton remains of the boiler.

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(Miami news continued) We hope to continue our annual Fort Ancient Worship this year on July 11th 2021. All are welcome to attend. This continues a tradition established when Yearly Meeting was held in Waynesville. One day was set aside to have breakfast at Fort Ancient with meeting for worship afterward. The children then explored Fort Ancient the rest of the day.

In this time of great need we continue to support the Waynesville food pantry.
Submitted by Gretchen Stone and Milton Cook

North Meadow

We here at North Meadow Circle of Friends continue to meet weekly, both in the meeting house and virtually on Zoom. Twice a month we meet jointly with a video connection at meeting. We are able to conduct meeting for business this way as well. It is a delight to see people at the meetinghouse. We are spending some time after meeting on Zoom checking in with friends, and keeping each other up to date on our lives and concerns. It is less formal than our usual closings, but we can't gather in the kitchen afterwards to talk, so it will do for now. In the meetinghouse, people are masking and social distancing. One of our members donated a microphone/speaker for the meeting house to connect with an iPad, and it has been working quite well. We are resuming spiritual journey on Zoom, and are planning to return to sharing reading discussions via Zoom soon. So far, most of us have stayed healthy, and those who have had COVID are recovered. We are grateful for our ability to stay connected with others from meeting.
Submitted by Jane Rapinchuk

Oxford

This fall, two of our members have served as panelists for The Interfaith Center to present Quaker perspectives. Cecilia Shore represented us at a session on diverse sexual and gender identities, and Gillian Murray represented us at a session on how faith relates to social justice issues. We held our annual Advent Event online this year, which included worship; a Christmas toast; "show and tell" of a favorite Christmas item from our homes; readings of stories, songs, poetry and the Biblical account of the nativity; nibbling cookies that we had baked from the same recipe; attempted carol singing; and candle lighting (see photo). In recent months we have been meeting exclusively by videoconference, which has been a benefit by enabling us to include distant Friends. We are blessed by the sense of a gathered meeting that can occur in this medium.
Submitted by Cecilia Shore



Yellow Springs

Once our wonderful outdoor canopy had to come down in early November we fully embraced Zoom for most of our meeting needs. We have early morning, daily meeting for worship, worship on first day, business meetings, "Intro to Quaker Faith and Practice," worship sharing after meeting, various interest groups and intergenerational chat sessions organized by our Young Adult Friends.

In October we participated in indoor and outdoor work bees to spruce up our meetinghouse and grounds.

We have approved our new annual budget and updated and distributed a new meeting directory.

We have discussed and approved changes to our religious education for children. Going forward YSFM will shift to offering our children's religious education program during the meeting for worship hour. If we have a need for childcare during the adult religious education hour (starting at 10 a.m.) we will hire childcare providers. This is a major change, and we hope that it will make it easier for more families with children to participate in the life of our meeting.

For the health and safety of the small number of in-person users of our meetinghouse we have installed an air purification system and UV light on our furnace. We are all looking forward to the day that we can return to our in-person community.

Submitted by Heather Snediker-Morscheck

Tips for better Zoom meetings

Look for icons on your screen by scrolling your cursor around. The location depends on your computer type; for most in the lower left corner of the Zoom screen. On small screens look for three dots to click on.

- Mute/Unmute your microphone (far left)
- Turn on/off camera (“Start/Stop Video”)
- Invite other participants
- View Participant list – opens a pop-out screen that includes a “Raise Hand” icon to raise a virtual hand
- Change your screen name that is seen in the participant list and video window
- Share your screen

Somewhere on your Zoom screen you will also see a choice to toggle between “speaker” and “gallery” view. “Speaker view” shows the active speaker. “Gallery view” tiles all of the meeting participants.

Lighting is critical. If you can, sit facing a big window. Natural light is almost always better than artificial light. Make sure the light source is in front of you, not behind you, so you don’t get accidentally silhouetted.

Control your background. Be mindful of what is in your background.

Position the camera right. Ideally, you want the camera to be straight on or slightly above you, pointing downward for the most flattering angle. If the camera is angled up at you, you’ll show off your nose hair and a lot of chin.

Fill the frame. Position yourself so you’re squarely in the middle of the frame, with your nicely lit, smiling face filling up at least one-third of the space.

There’s a mute button. Use it. Spare the rest of the meeting from hearing all the background noise at your house.

Sources: <https://tinyurl.com/FGCZoom>, <https://tinyurl.com/SeattleTimesZoom>

But the faith and the love
and the hope are all in the
waiting...So the darkness
shall be the light and the
stillness the dancing.

T.S. Eliot, “East Coker,” (Four Quartets)



Quaker Earthcare Witness collaboration with QuakerSpeak (*Friends Journal* project)

We’re excited to share Quaker Earthcare Witness' collaboration with QuakerSpeak, a project of *Friends Journal*.

Quaker Earthcare Witness is a network of North American Friends (Quakers) and other like-minded people who are taking spirit-led action to address the ecological and social crises of the world, emphasizing Quaker process and testimonies.

QuakerSpeak launched in March of 2014, and in five years, the videos have been viewed over 2.4 million times. These videos have helped people all over the world discover the Quaker way as a spiritual path, and they have helped countless Friends go just a little deeper. They have exposed a great many people to the patterns and examples of Friends in a direct and powerful way.

The video features Shelley Tanenbaum (General Secretary, QEW), Hayley (Communications Coordinator, QEW), Beverly Ward (Southeastern Yearly Meeting’s Field Secretary for Earthcare and Representative to QEW) and Barb Adams (Baltimore Yearly Meeting’s Representative to QEW). <https://tinyurl.com/QEWQuakerSpeak>,

Sources: <https://www.quakerearthcare.org/>, <https://tinyurl.com/FriendsJournalQS>, <https://quakerspeak.com/>

Pendle Hill offers online programs and worship

We continue to offer many [educational and spiritual programs online](https://tinyurl.com/PendleOnline) (<https://tinyurl.com/PendleOnline>). And even though our physical walk-in bookstore is closed, you can still purchase Pendle Hill pamphlets, pamphlet subscriptions, and a variety of new and gently-read books from our [online store](https://tinyurl.com/PendleStore) (<https://tinyurl.com/PendleStore>). **Thank you again for your continued support and prayers.** Please join us online for [worship, 8:30-9:10am Eastern](https://tinyurl.com/PendleWorship) (<https://tinyurl.com/PendleWorship>), each morning.

Source: <https://pendlehill.org/>

Friends World Committee for Consultation 2021 Section of the Americas Meeting

Online, March 12 - 21, 2021

"We seek to gather in faith and hope. Let us turn from lamentations toward the Light, for "God is my refuge and my strength." [Psalms 46:1] We acknowledge the world as it is and work to spread the Light that will change it, to offer pastoral care for Friends, to move toward the Quakerism that the world needs, and to turn hearts to our refuge and strength.

The FWCC Section Meeting is being held online from March 12 through March 21. The Section Meeting is the biggest conference organized by the Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas. It is held every two years. All Friends are welcome to attend! The schedule includes opportunities for worship, workshops, business sessions, and small group activities. It is a great opportunity to get to know and connect with more Friends from North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean and to learn more about the Friends World Committee!

Registration is now open through February 28 and full information is available on the Section website (<https://fwccamericas.org/wp/event/2021-section-meeting/>).

Submitted by Foote Lund

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Change starts with you! If you're looking for a way to get involved with FCNL this year, a good place to start is with a 30-minute online *Learn to Lobby* interactive call. These sessions are offered twice a month by FCNL staff who conduct a short skills training and answer your questions on how to plan and schedule an online visit with your representative. Go to the *Events* page at <https://www.fcnl.org/events> to choose a date.

If you're not yet ready to jump into lobbying but still want to be part of FCNL's advocacy, visit the FCNL Action Center. FCNL has many resources to help you send an email to your representative, write a letter to the editor of your local paper, join an advocacy team, or lobby locally in your community.

Submitted by Jamie Young



American Friends Service Committee

MLK still guides us to healing justice. For many years I have worked with AFSC's healing justice network to end mass incarceration and build systems that actually support the well-being of our communities. Today, I am reminded of how Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's words and spirit continue to provide me with guidance and inspiration in my efforts to defend the human dignity of all. The work of healing justice calls us to set aside our individual sense of comfort for a collective sense of justice. That is the challenge King presented to us when he said, "An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity." Read more at <https://tinyurl.com/AFSCDrKing>. By Lewis Webb, AFSC blog post, Jan. 14, 2021

Incarcerated people and prison staff should be prioritized for COVID-19 vaccine. Public health experts have stated the need to prioritize those who are medically vulnerable and at high risk for exposure. With cases in prisons spiking, incarcerated people and staff in prison, jail, and detention centers should be priorities. Read more at <https://tinyurl.com/AFSCprisonCOVID>. By Lida Shepherd, AFSC blog post, Dec 30, 2020

AFSC Midwest Youth Art Showcase focuses on #RealStudentSafety. AFSC St. Louis is asking students: "What would you do to create #RealStudentSafety if you could redirect the money used for your school district's policing, security and safety services?" St. Louis Public Schools spend more than \$6 million each year on "security services." Young people ages 14-21 are asked to learn more about these issues, submit an art piece and share about their work at an upcoming showcase. <https://tinyurl.com/StLouisAFSC>). Source: Email from Jon Krieg

Friends Association for Higher Education

Purpose of the Friends Association of Higher Education is to strengthen the Quaker mission in Higher Education by:

Providing a supportive relationship and opportunities for fellowship among all who share Quaker ideals of higher education, whether on Quaker or non-Quaker campuses.

Enhance member appreciation of Friends religious heritage and nurturing the individual and corporate search for Truth.

Lending support to the Quaker ideal of integrating spiritual commitment, academic excellence, and social responsibility.

Lending support and encouragement to scholarly research directed toward perceiving and achieving a more perfect human society.

Helping to clarify and articulate the distinctively Quaker vision of higher education, in terms of both curriculum and teaching.

Assisting Friends Colleges in their efforts to affirm their Quaker heritage.

Fostering greater communication and cooperation among Friends educational institutions and the various Friends constituencies to which they may be connected.

Source: FAHE website

Friends General Conference

Quakers and Mental Health. This resource is meant to support Friends to reduce distress and engage in self-care during the pandemic. <https://tinyurl.com/FGC-mental-health>

FGC's Anti-Racism Ministry. Parts 1 and 2 of a series on how a Quaker meeting can work toward becoming actively anti-racist. <https://tinyurl.com/anti-racism-part-1> and <https://tinyurl.com/anti-racism-part-2>. Upcoming events include: March 5-7 Virtual Retreat for Friends of Color and their partners <https://www.fgcquaker.org/FOCRetreat> and Saturday, April 3 Virtual Retreat for Youth of Color <https://tinyurl.com/FGCYouth-color>.

FGC Gathering 2021 will be virtual! The theme for this year's online Gathering is *Way Will Open*. It will be held June 27th – July 3rd. <https://www.fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering>

Religious Education Programming for Children During COVID-19. Here is a series of queries and resources to support your meeting in religious education for children during the pandemic. <https://tinyurl.com/religious-ed-COVID>

Strategies to Foster Interfaith Community. Finding common ground in our spiritual journeys through interfaith relationship-building is a powerful way to connect in the age of social distancing. Here are four ways to quickly start interfaith relationships that can make a difference for us all. <https://tinyurl.com/FGC-interfaith>

Register for the next Family Place event (for children birth to 5th grade) 3/27/2021 at: <https://tinyurl.com/FGCFamily3-27>

Sources: Vital Friends newsletter (August, September and November/December 2020, January 2021) and email from Susan Lee Barton

Quaker House at Chatauqua Institution

Chatauqua Institution (chq.org) was started in the mid-1800s as an educational training ground for Sunday School teachers and a retreat respite center for missionaries returning from far-off lands. While it has its roots in religious education and has many denominational houses on the grounds, it now has multiple components, including theater, lectures, book societies, daily church services, organ concerts, art galleries and summer programs for students of dance, and voice as well as young musicians. They hold a 9-week summer session. Each week is a different theme and speakers and activities are built around those themes. Last summer, the entire Institution was virtual. In 2021, we anticipate being able to have guests stay at the house and enjoy Chatauqua's activities.

The house has four bedrooms available, and a 5th one for the Friend in Residence. Currently, we are completing our website and awaiting the final word from the Institution about the safety measures that will be followed. We, as the Quaker House, join with other denominational houses (Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Episcopalian, Baptist, Jewish, Unitarian among others) who offer reasonably priced accommodations and a community experience.

When the website is launched, I will send another email to invite you to explore the options. Currently, we hope that people will come for a week and enjoy meeting other Quakers at the house. We may very well need some staffing in the form of a registrar or house manager. Please direct people to this email address quakerhousechq@gmail.com.

Right Sharing of World Resources

An Update from the Stamp Program

The Stamping for Dollars team at First Friends Indianapolis worked throughout the year to sort and sell stamps sent in by RSWR supporters! In 2019 the stamp program raised over \$2,400 for Right Sharing projects! Members of the team met with Kenyan Field Reps Samson and Lotan when they visited First Friends Indianapolis in October. Right Sharing is so grateful for this ministry! Send your stamps to: Stamps for Right Sharing c/o Indianapolis First Friends, 3030 Kessler Blvd. East Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46220.

Source: RSWR newsletter

Peace Resource Center

Wilmington College

The Center's Facebook page includes videos of recent programs, including the October Westheimer Peace Symposium, where the keynote was on the abolition of nuclear weapons. Also included is the "Gifts of Peace" program featuring the exchange of artifacts with Japan as a means to reconciliation and healing. You do not have to have a Facebook account to view the videos. If you get a pop-up prompting you to sign up for an account, click the "not now" phrase at the bottom of it. <https://tinyurl.com/WPRCvideos>

Source: PRC website

REGIONAL FRIENDS

Indiana Yearly Meeting

Have you ever left monthly meeting disappointed or irritated by the decision that was reached? Much ink has been used to describe the ideal of the Friends' decision-making process. In fact, the yearly meeting has printed my own interpretation of how it should be done, but recently I came across a story that tells the ideal of Friends' methods much better than I have ever seen before. Ellwood Ellis, himself once clerk of Indiana Yearly Meeting, told of a monthly meeting that had decided to remove the partition separating the men and women in the meetinghouse during the revival period that had made such things seem out-of-date in a modernizing world. Ellis tells,

Many favored and some opposed the change, and one of the latter is the hero of this story. The "weight of the meeting" decided in favor of removing the partition and appointed the next day for the men to gather at the building with their tools and make the change at once. Our hero had spoken earnestly against it, but the next morning he was the first to arrive with his tools, saying to others as they came that while in sentiment he was opposed to the change, he felt it his duty to defer to the judgment of the majority of his friends, and assist in carrying out the plan that had been decided upon, just the same as if he had favored them. If the world were made up of such men, it would be a long step toward the millennium.

Acts 4:32 says of the early Church, "All the believers were one in heart and mind." We know from further reading that differences of opinion were present even in those apostolic days, but a church that is Spiritually-united should be made up of members whose opinions and preferences are surrendered to a collective, Spirit-led discerning of Truth. The next time you are tempted to reject the unity of the believers, think about this Friend who set his preferences aside and used his labor for the building up of the Church.

By Greg Hinshaw, Indiana Yearly Meeting Communicator, Nov. 18, 2020

New Association of Friends

As we celebrate this season of Christ's birth and the close of 2020, I am reflecting on the prophetic vision of George Fox. He tells of having great openings where the Lord showed him the nature of things that "were hurtful without" and were within the hearts and minds of people. Then he records, "I saw, also, that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that also I saw the infinite love of God."

This contrast of darkness and light is a fitting theme, especially during this Christmas season. 2020 has been an unprecedented year, and many of us have confronted the forces of the ocean of darkness. The COVID pandemic is disrupting our lives in nearly every way, closing schools, ordering how we worship, threatening and taking the lives of people we love. Racial tensions are erupting in our streets. Deep political divisions are dividing communities. Domestic violence and sexual assaults are becoming more prevalent. Environmental disruptions are resulting in unnatural heat waves, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, droughts, and locust swarms.

A collective fatigue, stress, and uncertainty are flowing over the earth. And it seems to me that the riptides of the ocean of darkness are strong these days, threatening to pull us out into a sea of despair. According to Fox's vision, more powerful yet is the ocean of light and love, which pushes back the darkness.

This Christmas, as the currents of darkness pull on our souls and cause all kinds of disruptions, we join the ancient longing for a Messiah, a Savior, to come into our world with hope and light. May we gain inner strength from John's gospel:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. John 1:1-9, NIV

By Kelly Kellum, Facebook post, Dec. 24, 2020

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

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ovym.quaker.org

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Cecilia Shore, editor.

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Nothing, I believe, can really teach us the nature and meaning of inspiration but personal experience of it. That we may all have such experience if we will but attend to the divine influences in our own hearts, is the cardinal doctrine of Quakerism.
Caroline Stephen

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