

## Dear Friends: Greetings from the Clerk

By Betsy Neale

Dear Friends,

First, another reminder that this summer's OVYM sessions will be in June! Specifically, June 14 – 18, 2017, at Earlham College. See more information from our Planning Committee inside this issue!

In October I attended the annual meeting of Friends General Conference Central Committee. As an incoming yearly meeting clerk, I was invited to attend even though I am not a member of Central Committee. We met in a lovely, rural conference center outside of Baltimore. The food was fresh and delicious (keep that in mind if you are ever invited to serve on Central Committee or attend its annual meeting).

It turned out that this meeting had a very important and challenging piece of business on its agenda — addressing structural racism within FGC.

For years, Friends of Color have raised the issue -- and examples of their concerns --but questions about their safety while attending the 2016 pre-Gathering and Gathering highlighted the urgency. Central Committee was asked by interested individuals, Monthly Meetings and a number of Yearly Meetings to hire a qualified consultant to train us to conduct an institutional assessment of structural racism in FGC. We would be guided to identify, understand and correct the flaws and inequities within our organization.

A clear presentation was made about the reasons for and advantages of doing so. In addition, we were told that AFSC had recently done such an assessment and found it valuable. This would be our first step in a broader examination and removal of barriers to the full inclusion of the diversity of humanity in FGC. It was seen as a model and training ground to carry this into Yearly Meetings with similar needs and interests. FGC Friends would be active participants in the assessment process. The skills would be transferred and available to help with similar audits among FGC member meetings. We were told that the cost could be covered by additional gifts and should not be a barrier to having the assessment done.

Before I go further, let me give you a little background of my own journey around race and privilege. For the last couple of years I have been meeting monthly with five other people, most of them Lexington Friends, to learn about racial issues. We have read books together and attended presentations. We share resources we find to educate ourselves on racial justice and on understanding our white privilege and blind spots. Several of us attended the 2015 White Privilege Conference when it was held in Louisville.

In this group I have experienced what in the

1970s feminist movement we called 'consciousness raising.' I have come to a fuller understanding of how whiteness works in our culture and how my conscious and unconscious attitudes and behaviors are influenced by my whiteness.



The first business session at which the proposal for an institutional assessment was presented turned into a threshing session. There were a number of Friends of Color, mostly Friends of African descent, in attendance, and it was clear that they very much wanted Central Committee to take this step. The white Friends (and they were the vast majority of those present) asked many questions and raised many concerns, including about the cost of such an assessment, even after it had been explained that the cost could be covered.

I kept wondering what the Friends of Color were feeling as they listened to all the questions and concerns raised. As the session dragged on, I experienced those gathered as largely polarized between many (though not all) of the white Friends holding back after the Friends of Color had urged us forward. This was extremely painful, and I imagined it was painful to the Friends of Color. I wondered what thoughts and emotions the white Friends experienced. Did they feel uncomfortable? Did they reflect on how this might be experienced by the Friends of Color? Did this serve as a moment of increased awareness? Many white Friends seemed oblivious of this. Were there some who were reticent to speak the Truth in that room?

Suddenly, I had an 'aha' moment. I believe that the Spirit was moving in me. I remembered that one of the major features of our white privilege is that white people can ignore racial issues, ignore the indignities and oppression suffered by African Americans and all People of Color in our racialized society. And it seemed painfully clear to me that I was watching a group of white Quakers struggle as we were being asked to engage in a process whereby we would not be able to ignore racial oppression in our beloved organization. Although I was a bit of an outsider, I felt compelled to rise and speak in favor of the proposed evaluation.

Eventually (after a distressingly long time of doubts and skepticism that seemed to me to go beyond legitimate laboring), the decision was

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made to conduct the assessment. I was very glad that the group finally came to that decision, but my eyes had been opened to the workings of white privilege in a new way. I hope the evaluation process and the resulting report will be fruitful, even if painful, for Friends. I look forward to hearing the results. I think it may have much to teach those of us who are white about our Society and things we may be doing that serve as barriers to becoming more racially balanced for the co-creation of our Society's future.

I hope other Friends will consider forming support groups to meet regularly to study how whiteness operates and shapes our attitudes and experiences. In a recent article, "Undoing Racism as a Spiritual Practice," Lucy Duncan of AFSC recommends such groups. She writes of her experience in such a group, "For me it feels as though we are supporting one another in mindfulness, in being awake, and in living our commitments. It feels as though we are learning together how to really answer that of God in everyone." She notes that such work can help us in the struggles we face in the future, though she cautions that we must also live integrated lives. Lucy's entire article can be found at [www.afsc.org/friends/courageous-many-undoing-racism-spiritual-practice](http://www.afsc.org/friends/courageous-many-undoing-racism-spiritual-practice).

I welcome Friends' responses to this column. In recent years OVYM Friends have made a commitment to addressing racial issues. What steps are we---individuals, Monthly Meetings, and OVYM---led to take for a future of openness and equality in our corporate life together?

Finally, I'd like to thank a number of Friends who read drafts of this column and made useful editorial suggestions!

### **OVYM Spring Retreat Nourishment from Quaker Roots for Witness in these Times**

**Facilitator: Brian Drayton, New England YM**

**Sponsored by Religious Nurture & Education Committee**

Many of us are anxious about the future of our country. What sources of strength and wisdom might we discover within our Quaker tradition? How might our Quaker practices become deeper grounding for witness? Facilitator Brian Drayton, New England YM Friend, has written on Friends' practices and has traveled in the ministry among Friends. His recent book is "*On Living with a Concern for Gospel Ministry*."

Location: Benedict Inn Retreat Center, Beech Grove  
(Indianapolis area) Indiana

Date: April 22, 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Cost: \$20, scholarships available

The retreat center is located in suburban Indianapolis, and has a labyrinth and a Peace & Nature Garden which they describe as "a serene environment for meditation and reflection, a welcoming gateway to the Beech Grove neighborhood, and a native plant oasis." They are accessible. Friends traveling from a distance can arrange to stay at Benedict Inn overnight for \$30-55, depending on whether you are willing to share a bath or room. We will be distributing a registration form to meetings, but please email [nikkitousley@hotmail.com](mailto:nikkitousley@hotmail.com) if you plan to attend or want more information.

### **Request from the ad hoc Committee on OVYM Contributions**

Every few years, an ad hoc committee is named to review the donations that OVYM makes to other Quaker organizations. The committee would like to offer you the opportunity to make recommendations and suggest other organizations that deserve our collective support. To do that, we are preparing a short survey. You should receive an email with a link to the survey soon and we hope you will participate. For those who don't have an opinion or who trust the Yearly Meeting to make these decisions wisely, there will be an opportunity to answer a single question and be done. Please help us.

### **Update and Call to Action from the Western Young Friends' New Year's Gathering**

Two Friends from Lafayette Friends Meeting attended the 2016-2017 Western Young Friends' New Year's Gathering, held on the West Coast (California and Oregon) annually to bring in the coming year with an intentional, Quaker community. During this year's Gathering, the Western Young Friends were led to create a Call to Action Committee that drafted and approved a minute, which was shared with our Meeting. At the request of the Lafayette Friends Meeting, we wish to share it with the Quaker Quill and broader community of Friends for reflection and consideration.

"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning."

Luke 12:35 (NIV)

Enduring the past year's national rhetoric, and watching the spread of violence and hateful speech, we see that we are in times that demand more from the Religious Society for any hope of love and justice and peace. As the Western Young Friends' New Year's Gathering, we call on meetings of every size and kind to consider: How can we prepare for the times ahead? How can we join hands with other communities of faith, honor our tradition and history of action, and find courage in the face of fear? For five days at the closing of each year, this Gathering draws young Friends from along the West Coast and beyond to bring a small Quaker community into being. We create the community in which we wish to live, filled with peace and vitality. This takes loving labor, but we know, experimentally, that it is possible to live with intention while responding quickly to challenges. **Living in this possibility, we call on our elders, national Quaker organizations, and meetings at all levels to help us prepare ourselves to be the right tool in the hand of the Spirit for our times.**

Because of these Gathered experiences, we understand that the process and strength that comes from unity can take time. This creates in us a sense of urgency to begin the work now. We offer our energy, ideas, and commitment to change; we ask that the broader Quaker community, including all branches, offer its wisdom and resources.

We see faithful individuals and small groups acting on Quaker testimonies, with support from their respective meetings. But we of this Gathering hunger for action that we have not seen taken recently by *bodies* of Friends, actions equal or greater to anything we have done before. We ask that meetings heed this call to communal action, and discern their right collective contribution towards national and worldwide work.

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## Epistle from Quaker Women in Public Ministry

Please find, below, the Epistle from those who gathered at the *Quaker Women in Public Ministry* Conference October 21-23, 2016.

Forty-five participants, from eleven yearly meetings, across North America, gathered for the *Quaker Women in Public Ministry* conference, in North Andover, MA. It was quickly apparent that there was a felt need for a gathering of this sort. Indeed, many Friends, across both age and geography, who were carrying ministries, felt a significant lack of support and engagement around care for their ministries, on the part of their respective Meetings. A collective voice yearned to report the truths that were uncovered back to the Quaker circles from which all of these Friends had come - and beyond!

The attached Epistle stands as not just a report but an invitation to join in the vital work of naming spiritual gifts and leadings, claiming them as received by the local meeting/church, and then supporting them spiritually, socially, and, if needed, financially, so that ministries fully develop and bear the fruit of renewal and transformation, peacemaking and right sharing in the world, as they were intended.

We hope that this communication of our experience, and the wisdom of the Spirit, is of use to you.

With Gratitude for God's Goodness,  
Kristina Keefe-Perry  
Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting  
New England Yearly Meeting  
for the Epistle committee of *QWIPM*

To All Friends Everywhere:

A gathering of Quaker Women in Public Ministry met from October 21 to 23, 2016 at Rolling Ridge Conference Center in North Andover, Massachusetts, with the intention to listen for our gathered condition. The Unconference Model shaped our time together and created a space that invited all voices to lift up emergent work, share experience of calls to ministry, and recognize how local meetings and churches have held and supported that work. The joy of companionship and the challenges often faced were woven together and leavened by voices lifted in song and prayer.

We stood in the Presence and in our present condition. We reached back to our Quaker foremothers in ministry, to the mothers who bore us into the world, and forward to the children who will come after us. Our hearts were filled with the hope to leave a legacy of a vital Quaker movement: bold prophetic voices, faithful lives, community transformation, and environmental stewardship.

We were mindful of the centrality of ministry in Quakerism's dynamic of Spirit renewing and restoring all people and communities and the natural world. It is our tradition as Friends, and our collective experience, that God gives gifts of ministry through individuals and elders for the group of Friends, and those ministries in turn do God's work in the world. Despite a tradition rich with practices like Travel Minutes and Clearness, Support and Anchor Committees to bring these ministries first to flower and then to fruit, Friends' understanding of these processes seem to have in some places fallen into atrophy and disuse. Quaker women in public ministry seldom reported adequate holding and supporting of ministries. This was often the cause of anguish and pain. We call ourselves to inform and educate Friends about nurturing ministries.

The gathered group included forty-five participants from eleven yearly meetings; we also invited into our collective consciousness the women who were not with us in body: the mentors, mothers, and sisters who have gone ahead, and those unable to attend. We seek to connect across generational bounds, inviting collaboration and flexibility in partnerships to rise from many models of mentorship. We hold a deep longing to step away from discriminatory practices that take any form, rejecting structures which silence us and gathering in sisterhood to reach for possibilities, helping each other move from fear to faith. From our shared condition and the differences in our experiences rise the needs of women in ministry today. The need for self-care, spiritual, emotional and financial support, and healing work. The need to support parents and caretakers who are called into ministry work and travel. The need to seek new ways to share information about the availability of resources for supporting ministry. Friends for whom ministry is their primary vocation, and others who are bi-vocational, bring skills and practices from our work in the world to ministries. Even as we share new tools for reaching and supporting one another, we must also reach into our toolbox of Quaker process; a "Quaker Practice of Email," grounded in queries and community, was lifted up as an example. We want to actively seek creative areas of overlap, where we can share and learn new ways of doing and being, and be released from falsely constructed barriers.

We were reminded of these Truths: the world needs the voices and witness of Friends; the Divine is never in a hurry; there is a sufficiency of grace. We call for new forms to recognize, hold, and nurture public ministry, but innovation alone won't meet the needs; we must be grounded in faith, aligned with the Divine and seeking balance so that we do not outrun our Guide. We invite Friends everywhere to hold what we have named, and work together to find new ways to support ministry and eldership for all Friends. We are called to transform the pain of the world into the labor pains of possibility. We boldly call each other sisters, and we minister to the world from a place of Love.

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## Faith and Practice Committee

The Faith and Practice Committee has decided that the material on marriage procedure from the 1978 *Book of Discipline* can be retained in the revised *Faith and Practice* with light editing, mostly to eliminate language that refers to the couple as a man and a woman. " Lightly edited texts do not require the extensive review given to new or heavily rewritten sections and are simply published in the *Quill* before being presented to the yearly meeting for approval. The following text will be presented at this summer's yearly meeting sessions.

### Marriage Procedure

(Read Section on Close Relationships)

The covenant of marriage is solemn in its obligation, fundamental in its social significance, and should be lifelong in its duration. When a Meeting assumes oversight of a marriage, it makes an enduring commitment to support and strengthen that marriage. The Meeting is asked not only to approve the wedding and see it performed in good order but also to care for and share in the marriage and help in its success with advice and counsel. Friends consider that asking a Meeting to take a marriage under its care places responsibilities on both the couple and the Meeting.

For its proper accomplishment under the care of our Society, the following procedure is recommended:

The couple proposing marriage should communicate their intentions to the Monthly Meeting under whose care the wedding will be held by writing a letter, signed by them both, requesting the meeting's approval for marriage.

The Ministry & Counsel Committee will then name a Clearness Committee to meet with the couple. When one or both members of the couple is a member of another religious community, an invitation may be extended to them to participate in the clearness process.

The Clearness Committee will meet one or more times with the couple to determine their readiness for marriage. The couple is part of the committee and participates in this discernment.

If the Clearness Committee recommends approval, this is presented to the next Monthly Meeting for Business for its approval. The Monthly Meeting should approve that the marriage be carried out.

Two or more Friends are appointed by the Monthly Meeting to have care and oversight of the wedding. Proposed names for the Oversight Committee may be brought forward by the couple.

The wedding is held under the care of the Meeting.

This Oversight Committee shall report to the next Monthly Meeting concerning the following: the observance of good order in the wedding, delivery of the marriage certificate or duplicate to the recorder of the Monthly Meeting for recording, compliance with legal requirements and the names assumed or retained by the couple.

### Clearness Committee

The Clearness Committee for a proposed marriage was originally intended to determine if the couple was clear of any obstacles to marriage. It inquired into the character and obligations of the couple, compliance with the provisions of state laws, and to see that the rights and feelings of any children were taken into account. Contemporary committees assume a broader role: searching deeply into the relationship of the couple and helping them determine their readiness for the commitments of marriage. If one or both of the partners has been divorced, the committee should determine that the special challenges of re-marriage have been carefully considered.

The committee should help the couple explore questions and areas of their relationship that they perhaps have not considered. Such a procedure is intended to enable the couple to understand as fully as possible the new relationship into which they may enter, as well as to identify their own expectations and capabilities.

The committee obviously cannot present all of the possibilities of a marriage to a couple, nor can all potential problems be considered, but deep searching in a spirit of love and tender seeking can help the couple find a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of marriage.

### Marriage of Two Non-Members

When two non-members request oversight of their marriage, the Ministry & Counsel Committee should inquire into the reasons for the request. If the Committee approves the Meeting's assuming the responsibility, they shall bring their recommendation to Monthly Meeting. If the Monthly Meeting agrees to the oversight of the marriage, a Clearness Committee shall be appointed. This Committee shall proceed in the manner of Friends, with the same care as when one or both parties are members of the Society of Friends.

### Marriage Ceremony

When a marriage has been authorized and the meeting is gathered at which it is to be accomplished, it is advised that a period of silent worship be observed, during which the parties to the marriage should rise, and taking each other by the hand, each should declare in words to this effect: "In the presence of God and before these, our friends, I take (you/thee), \_\_\_\_\_, to be my (husband/wife/spouse), promising, with Divine assistance, to be unto (you/thee) a loving and faithful (husband/wife/spouse), as long as we both shall live."

After these declarations, the marriage certificate should be signed by the couple and read by someone from the Oversight Com-

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mittee. Worship should continue and the meeting closed by the Oversight Committee.

Changes may take place in wedding forms and procedures with the approval of the Oversight Committee. The marriage certificate may be modified and the wedding may be planned to suit the needs of the couple.

### Form of Certificate

The form of the certificate may follow one of these examples:

#### Traditional Certificate Example:

Whereas, A.B. of \_\_\_\_, child of C.B. and D.B., of \_\_\_\_, and E.F., child of G.F. and H.F., of \_\_\_\_, having declared their intentions of marriage to each other to \_\_\_\_ Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, held at \_\_\_\_, according to the good order used among Friends, their proposed marriage was approved by that Meeting.

Now this is to certify to whom it may concern, that for the accomplishment of their intentions, this \_\_\_\_ day of the \_\_\_\_ month, in the year of our Lord \_\_\_\_, A.B. and E.F., appeared in a meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, held at \_\_\_\_; and taking one another by the hand, did on this solemn occasion declare that they took each other in marriage, promising with Divine assistance to be loving and faithful spouses to one another, as long as they both shall live. And, moreover, they, A.B. and E.F. did, as a further confirmation thereof, then and there, to these present set their hands.

We, whose names are also signed below, being present at the said marriage, have, as witnesses thereunto, set our hands the day and year above written.

#### Contemporary Certificate Example:

R.B. of..., child of F.W.B. and V.H.B. of ..., and C.S. of..., child of T.W.S. and R.G.S. of ..., declared their intention to marry each other, to the ... Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. Their proposed marriage was approved by that Meeting.

On the ... day of the ... month of the year ..., during an appointed Meeting for Worship, R.B. and C.S. declared that they took one another in marriage, promising with Divine assistance to be loving and faithful spouses to one another as long as they both shall live.

R. and C. in an outward and visible confirmation of the marriage then signed this certificate.

We who have signed this certificate have witnessed this marriage while worshipping together.

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## White Privilege Conference in April

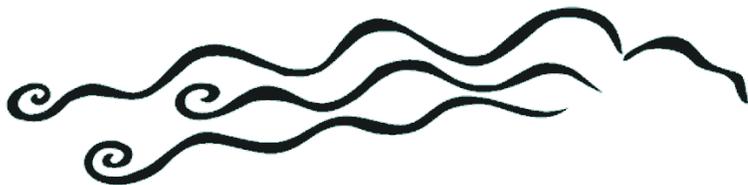
[Registration is open now. A form is available at the FGC website.](#)

### 2017 FGC Gathering

July 2 -8, 2017

Niagara University, Niagara Falls, NY

Theme: Ripples start where spirit moves



### Peace & Social Concerns Listserv

Hello Friends!

The Peace & Social Concerns Committee is getting active and anticipates having a variety of information to share.

We've set up a listserv (thanks Shawn Tulecki!), and are inviting anyone who wants to be on it to let us know so we can add your name. What kind of information will it have, you may ask? Examples include: calls for action by FCNL and other organizations, details about local social justice actions organized by various regional groups, letter writing campaigns, etc. We want to share information, but don't want to burden the email boxes of people who don't want or need the info -- thus the listserv.

So, if you want to be included, please send me a reply email at [csimmons45387@yahoo.com](mailto:csimmons45387@yahoo.com). Thanks!

In the light,  
Carol Simmons  
[937-232-4250](tel:937-232-4250)

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## Faith and Practice texts for review by monthly meetings

Responses due March 31, 2017

We are now in the second year of our expedited process of revising our book of *Faith and Practice*. We are aiming to finish the revision next year! The Faith and Practice Committee has prepared three texts for review by monthly meetings.

Spiritual Friendship. This is a new text for our book.

Trustees. This is also a new text.

Queries. These 12 queries are reorganized and revised from the versions in the 1978 *Book of Discipline*. These revisions and reorganization represent the committee's discernment of queries that are relevant for our times.

As you review these three texts for this year, we ask Friends to remember that the perfect is the enemy of the good. To achieve a revised book of *Faith and Practice* in a reasonable amount of time, we must accept that texts meet the standard of adequacy to convey our faith and practices rather than be a perfect expression of them.

In addition, we remind Friends that the 3 texts below sent with this letter are the first drafts of what is intended to be a 2-draft process. **This is the opportunity for monthly meetings to suggest substantive changes.** Based on your feedback, the Faith and Practice Committee will develop a final draft that will be brought to the summer 2017 OVYM sessions for approval.

Please send us (see email address and phone numbers below) your meeting's comments and suggestions **absolutely no later than March 31, 2017**. We ask that these comments and suggestions arise from the discernment of a group of the meeting's Friends rather than from individual Friends. Thank you for your faithful contributions to the revision process.

In the Light,

Betsy Neale, Faith and Practice Committee Co-clerk

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859 277-6101

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### SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIPS

A Spiritual Friendship is an intentional, structured relationship between two or more people committed to help one another in their spiritual journey. The focus is on each person's relationship with God and how God's presence may be felt – or not felt – in their lives.

The establishment of spiritual friendships can deepen and strengthen the life of a Meeting. Two or perhaps three people agree to meet for at least two hours on a regular basis. The topics of conversation can vary according to the needs of each person, but the overall goal is to support one another during conversations through deep, Spirit-led listening and to pray for one another between gatherings. Often such friendships last for years.

Those Friends seeking assistance in forming a spiritual friendship can consult *More than equals: Spiritual Friendships [Pendle Hill Pamphlet, #345]* where Australian Friend, Trish Roberts explores the particular ways that Friends can benefit from such relationships. She grounds the practice in Quaker theology and suggests three key features: confidentiality, mutuality, and intentionality.

### TRUSTEES

Friends recognize that all worldly property belongs to God and that we are merely its stewards. In some cases to meet the requirements of the law, a number of individuals are named as the legally responsible agents for real property or a financial asset. These trustees exist to fulfill the requirements of state and local governments. Although they may be the legal owners of a meeting's property, they are the agents of the meeting and subject to the authority of the business meeting in all matters. To prevent problems, all legal correspondence should be directed only to the Meeting's mailing address.

### QUERIES

The queries invite Friends, both individually and corporately, to examine themselves periodically relative to the standards of conduct that Friends have established. Faithful consideration of the queries in openness to the Spirit has been found to enrich the life of the meeting and its members.

Friends have found different ways to make use of the queries. Some read them as a starting point for personal inward reflection. Meetings may consider a query in a period of meditation and worship at the beginning of their business meetings. It is advised that each query be considered at least once a year. A meeting's responses to the queries may provide a basis for writing its annual state of the meeting report. The presentation of the queries to the local meeting is the responsibility of the clerk unless assigned to a committee, such as Ministry and Counsel.

Each query consists of several questions. Those that are specifically directed for corporate consideration are printed in italics.

#### **First Query - (Waiting Worship & Vocal Ministry)**

Does corporate worship deepen my relationship with God and increase my faithfulness? Does it refresh and renew my daily life, both inwardly and in my relationships with others? How do I prepare myself to join with others in prayerful worship and seek to be obedient to Divine Guidance? Do I attend Meeting regularly? Am I careful not to disturb the spirit of the Meeting by late arrival?

*As a Meeting do we wait together expectantly and patiently? Do we listen for the presence of the Spirit as it becomes evident in the gathered community? How does our Meeting respond when the vocal ministry seems inappropriate, or when the meeting for worship is consistently not gathered?*  
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### **Second Query - (Personal Spiritual Disciplines)**

How do I cultivate practices of seeking divine wisdom and guidance throughout each day? Do I order my daily life to include prayer, reading, and meditation to know more of the presence and guidance of the Divine Spirit? Do I find this enriches my experience of corporate worship?

*What does the meeting do to support and encourage each other in the practice of personal spiritual disciplines? Do we remember to pray for others, holding them in the presence of God?*

*Do we encourage one another to discern both personal and collective leadings, seeking the advice of our meeting communities, making use of Clearness Committees and other Friendly practices?*

### **Third Query (Business Meeting)**

Do I regularly attend business meetings? Do I speak briefly and without repetition? Am I tender and considerate of differing views? Do I come open to the guidance of God and willing to forgo previously formed opinions? Do I help others in our search for unity? Am I willing to speak what I have in my heart even when it is difficult or may lead to conflict?

*Do we hold our meetings for business in a spirit of worship? Do we seek the guidance of God, rather than a compromise? Do we come to a decision only when we have, with Divine assistance, found a sense of unity?*

### **Fourth Query (Community)**

In my family and community relationships, how do I manifest a forgiving spirit and care for the reputation of others? How do I help to resolve conflict when it arises? Am I sensitive to the needs of others, including my Meeting family? Do I recognize and encourage the spiritual gifts of others? Am I ready to assist my religious community in serving its members? Am I equally willing to accept graciously the help of others?

*How do we foster love and unity within our Meeting community? Do we practice conflict avoidance or do we take prompt action in a spirit of meekness and love?*

*Do we support the children in our meeting to attend Quaker events and institutions? How do we assist our members when they are in need? Do we provide aid and comfort in a way that respects and lifts up the gifts of one another? What procedures do we employ to keep in touch with inactive and distant members? What efforts are we making to increase the meeting's understanding of our religious principles?*

*What do we do to invite others to share in our fellowship? Do we welcome newcomers and include them in our Meeting community? How is our meeting a model to others of living in close relationship with God, each other, and all of creation?*

### **Fifth Query (Integrity & Simplicity)**

How do I practice integrity, simplicity and moderation in my speech, manner of living and pursuit of business? How well am I balancing the demands of my work and outside activities with the needs of my family, spiritual growth and service to my religious society? Am I just in my dealings, careful to fulfill my promises and prompt in the payment of my debts? Do I regard my possessions as given in trust, and do I part with them freely for the needs of others?

*How does our worship space and meetinghouse present a simple, calming, uncluttered and harmonious aspect? Are marriages under our care and other Meeting events conducted with moderation? Will we open a dialog with members whose lives seem to be drifting away from the principles of integrity, simplicity and moderation?*

### **Sixth Query (Peace)**

Am I willing to admit my own use of violence and coercion? In their place, do I nurture the spirit of love and nonviolence in my own life? Do I live in the life and power which takes away the occasion for all wars? Do I refuse to participate in or cooperate with all military efforts? Do I work actively for peace? Do I teach my children to live in harmony with others?

*Do we endeavor to cultivate good will, mutual understanding and equal opportunities for all races, creeds and nations? Do we educate our youth in conscientious objection to war? How do we support our members who avoid payment of war taxes? How do we serve as models to the wider community of another way to live with each other?*

### **Seventh Query (Seeking Harmony with Creation)**

Do I endeavor to live in harmony with nature, avoiding pollution and the destruction of our environment? What am I doing about my use of the world's nonrenewable resources? Am I concerned for family and population planning so that future generations will be able to live on the resources available to them?

*What steps are we taking to support our members in living sustainably? How do we witness to the wider community about our commitments to live in harmony with all creation? How are we acting as responsible stewards of the property, investments, and material goods under our care?*

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(Faith and Practice, continued)

### **Eighth Query (Equality)**

Do I acknowledge the many ways I benefit from unearned privileges, and how these privileges influence my behavior? Do I search my heart to uncover my own theological, political, racial and other hidden and harmful prejudices that distort my ability to rightly see that of God in all persons? Do I bear witness to the humanity of all people, including those who break society's conventions or laws? What actions do I take to stand in solidarity with those who are treated unjustly?

*How do our own biases prevent us from being a more inclusive spiritual community? Are we willing to confront any practices or attitudes in our religious society and in the surrounding culture that unjustly hold one person up and hold another back? Do we stand with people of all races, religions, economic circumstances, gender identities and sexual orientations and work to eliminate legal and social barriers to full equality? In what ways do we express a sincere and loving welcome to Meeting visitors, especially those with a different theological, racial or cultural background?*

### **Ninth Query (Personal Challenges)**

Do I carefully examine my choices regarding time spent in work and leisure activities, my food choices, and my use of drugs, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco, seeking to avoid practices that interfere with my health, my family relationships, and my relationship with the Divine? Remembering the parable of the talents, do I exercise fully the gifts that God has given me? Do I seek appropriate support if I experience difficulty with substance abuse or addiction? Do I bear a faithful testimony against all forms of gambling? Do I resist the desire to acquire possessions or income through unethical investment, speculation, or games of chance?

*How does the meeting community reach out to Friends who may be experiencing difficulty with substance abuse or other addictions? Does the meeting offer resources or contacts with groups such as AA or AlAnon if needed? Do we acknowledge that of God in all people, including those who are experiencing addiction? When might it be appropriate to labor with a Friend whose behavior is unhealthy or disruptive to the life of the meeting?*

### **Tenth Query (Close Relationships)**

Do I make my home a place of love and hospitality? Do I educate myself, my children, and those under my care in Quaker principles and our religious heritage? Do I encourage their interests in constructive, creative activities, and their reading of the Bible and other inspirational literature? How do I maintain open and honest communication within my family to strengthen those ties? When difficult relationships exist within the family, do I reach out for guidance and support from my meeting or qualified counselors?

*How does the meeting provide nurture and support for married couples and families in the meeting? Is religious education, including children's First Day school classes, a priority in our meeting? Do we reach out to each other with love and sensitivity when difficulties arise? Are we willing to risk being intrusive when it seems necessary? Do we recognize when the help needed is beyond our capacity? Do we help our members find professional help when it is needed?*

### **Eleventh Query (Business Relations)**

Are my means of livelihood in keeping with my ideals as a Friend? Am I concerned that my business be primarily a service to people? What am I doing to foster upright practices in business relations? Do I maintain strict integrity in all business transactions?

*Are we aware of how our meeting, and the businesses our meeting uses, treat their employees? Do we have a concern for the working conditions of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting staff? Does our meeting invest in instruments that are socially responsible and divested from fossil fuels?*

### **Twelfth Query (Civic Relations & Social Concerns)**

How do I help to build the kingdom of heaven on earth? Do I give freely of my time and talents to improve the world we share? Do I volunteer with social justice and other civic organizations? What do I do to bring about meaningful improvements in my community and in the world?

*Is our meeting active in social justice and interreligious organizations in our community? Do we steadfastly uphold our Quaker values when working with other organizations? What does our Meeting do to build the kingdom of heaven in the wider community?*



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## New England Yearly Meeting endorses ecumenical statement on refugees and immigration

Dear Friends,

In recent days, Friends across New England have joined demonstrations and reached out with our neighbors to oppose President Trump's Executive Order on refugees and immigration. We continue to hold all affected in the Light. May a deep well of prayer continue to ground our work and our witness in these times.

To offer a common religious witness opposing the Executive Order, the Massachusetts Council of Churches has issued a letter opposing the ban, which is attached to this message. Demonstrating New England Friends' partnership with our wider family of faith, and recognizing that it is especially important for Christian voices to speak clearly and strongly now, NEYM Presiding Clerk Fritz Weiss and I have signed the letter on behalf of Quakers in New England.

Similar statements have been issued by the [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#), the [U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) and others.

We encourage Friends and Friends Meetings in states other than Massachusetts to continue our shared witness on this issue, to share news about what actions you are led to take, and to let us know if there are ways your wider spiritual community can be supportive.

In faith and service,

Noah Merrill

Secretary

New England Yearly Meeting of Friends

<http://www.masscouncilofchurches.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/PDF-Final-Head-of-Church-Refugee-Letter-1.31.17-on-letterhead.pdf>

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## PHOTOS FROM JOINT QUARTERLY MEETING CAMP KERN OCTOBER 2016



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# Save the NEW dates!

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Sessions 2017  
June 14-18, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana

## Moving Together with the Spirit



More information and registration materials will be available later on the OVYM website: [www.quaker.org/ovym](http://www.quaker.org/ovym). If you need a printed copy, please ask your Monthly Meeting clerk, email Deborah Jordan [ovymsec@fuse.net](mailto:ovymsec@fuse.net), or contact Martha Viehmann [marthaviehmann@fuse.net](mailto:marthaviehmann@fuse.net), 513-231-9866.

The Planning Committee and Children's and Youth Committees are putting together an exciting agenda of activities, programs, presenters and workshops for all ages.

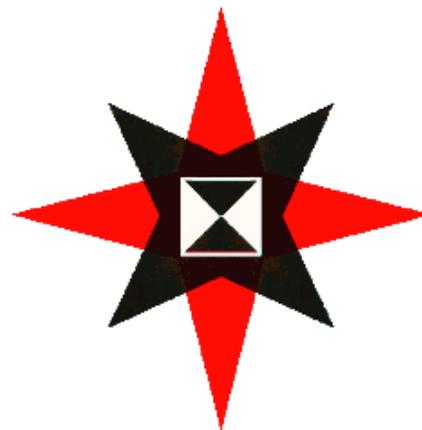
*Come join the fun, fellowship, and enrichment!*

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## Have you heard that 2017 is the American Friends Service Committee's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary?

Here are 8 ways for individuals and congregations to celebrate 100 years of peace and justice work with us:

1. Host the traveling exhibit about AFSC's values and current work at a Yearly Meeting annual gathering or in a monthly meeting—follow [this link](#) to reserve dates and to find out more information.
2. Use our first day school curriculum to tell the story of AFSC's history and current work.
3. Visit [peaceworks.afsc.org](http://peaceworks.afsc.org) to read stories from donors, volunteer, staff members, and program participants about their time with AFSC. Then, share your own AFSC story on the website.
4. Pick up the April 2017 edition of Friends Journal, featuring AFSC's Centennial.
5. Attend Friends General Conference's Annual Gathering in 2017, featuring a plenary address and workshops about AFSC.
6. Plan a trip to visit the "Wage Peace" museum exhibit about AFSC as it moves around the country, 2017-2019.
7. Attend the AFSC Centennial summit on April 20-23, 2017 in Philadelphia. (Registration opening soon.)
8. [Donate to the Courageous Acts campaign](#) in honor of the Centennial and AFSC's continued work.



Visit [afsc.org/100](http://afsc.org/100) for the latest information and [starcafe.org/service/centennial](http://starcafe.org/service/centennial) for more resources. We hope to see you at an event or send you more information soon! Please email Emily McGrew, [emcgrew@afsc.org](mailto:emcgrew@afsc.org), with any questions.

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### *"Centered in Wholeness: Body & Spirit,"*

**Annual Conference of  
Quakers in Pastoral Care and Counseling  
March 23-26, 2017  
NEW DATES!**

We are delighted to announce that, after postponement for speaker emergency last fall, the annual Quakers in Pastoral Care & Counseling (QPCC) conference has been rescheduled for March 23-26, 2017 at Quaker Hill Conference Center in Richmond, Indiana.

QPCC is an organization of Friends and others called into ministry in pastoral care, counseling, and chaplaincy. We share a commitment to Quaker practice and grounding our work in our faith. We include:

Professionals in direct care, clinical training, supervision, and administration

Students/Fellows/Residents in professional programs

Friends called into other manners and ministries of healing

Those involved in pastoral care of monthly, quarterly and/or yearly meetings

Friends who have retired from work in healing/caring fields.

The conference program, *"Centered in Wholeness: Body & Spirit,"* will be led by **Stephanie Ford**, known to many as a longtime Associate Professor of Spirituality at Earlham School of Religion. Stephanie is now Minister of Christian Formation at Binkley Baptist Church in Chapel Hill, NC. She also teaches with the Friends of Christ School (a local ecumenical group), and the Upper Room Academy for Spiritual Formation.

The retreat schedule will include discussion and exercises led by Stephanie, small group sharing, and ample time for recharging/reconnecting with F/friends, nature, Spirit, and yourself. Massage, yoga, aromatherapy, centering prayer, and other self-care opportunities are on the menu as well.

To register, go to <https://www.regonline.com/register/login.aspx?eventID=1837205&MethodId=0&Events> For more information about the conference, speaker, and QPCC itself, go to our website ([www.qpcc.us](http://www.qpcc.us)).

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## NEWS FROM MONTHLY MEETINGS

### BLOOMINGTON

Bloomington Monthly Meeting is now meeting at our interim site: Harmony School. Harmony School is located at 909 East 2nd Street, Bloomington. To enter, find the alley that is right next to the school and follow it to the school's parking lot. After you park, you will find the meeting in the gymnasium, which is just inside the door that faces the parking lot.

Selected from newsletter by Quill editor

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### COMMUNITY

Stephanie Crumley-Effinger led us in a fruitful retreat on Quaker Process in times of conflict and discernment. It was a powerful experience for the meeting, and has led to a practice of checking in with the meeting on a monthly basis on this theme, particularly as outlined in the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

Paulette Meier keeps travelling and developing her music ministry in various parts of the country, extending her commitment to expanding Friends' awareness of Quaker tradition in song.

The meeting continues to serve monthly meals to the residents of Tender Mercies, a residence in Over-the-Rhine for handicapped and poor people. There is a fine comradery among members of the meeting and the residents with whom we meet on a regular basis.

Bill Cahalan and his wife Deborah Jordan continue to lead a movement for community mental health in the city. The group's main concern is finding ways to limit the overuse of psychoactive drugs in times of mental health crises. They have reached a broad audience in the city and the meetings have been well attended.

The meeting has become involved in the Sanctuary movement in the city. A great number of Cincinnatians are rising to the occasion of this challenge, and Community Friends' history of sanctuary activity in the early 1980's has been referenced widely. The meeting is still discerning what our role shall be under the current conditions in the country and the city.

*Submitted by Tim Leonard*

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### EASTERN HILLS

At Eastern Hills Meeting we have held several second hours lately including one that was led by Rachel Ernst Stahlhut who is the FGC Spiritual Deepening Program Coordinator. She joined us for Meeting for Worship and then facilitated a second hour encouraging us to talk about spirituality in Meeting for Worship. Her challenge to us came when she asked if we leave Meeting for Worship the same as we came in or if we had been transformed during Meeting for Worship. Her leadership and the mindful, truthful, and heartfelt discussion that followed was greatly appreciated by all who were in attendance. Other recent second hours included one where Franchot Ballinger shared a slide show and talked about his personal retreat at the Christ In the Desert Benedictine Abbey in New Mexico. Another second hour, which was led by Ministry and Counsel, was on the topic of membership and the discussion touched on what membership means and why some people have not become members of Eastern Hills even though they are quite active attenders.

We had a joyful Christmas celebration after Meeting for Worship one Sunday in December where we shared delicious food, shared and enjoyed many talents, and sang carols until our vocal chords gave out. It was a lovely time with f/Friends! Every year we have a Christmas giving project and this year it was to donate money to help a woman, Gail McDonigle, with travel expenses as she takes medicines and supplies to Haiti.

Below Suzie Pellegrini shows her original painting and Rick Boyce, Linda and Jim Coppock shared their musical talents.

*Submitted by Henrietta Ballinger*



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### FALL CREEK

Our small meeting has recently welcomed a few new attenders.

We are now meeting in the basement, in order to save on heating fuel. The basement does feel more intimate, though some of us miss the beauty and natural light of our upstairs meeting room. We have started studying Marcelle Martin's book *Our Life is Love* monthly, which has led to enriching conversation about spiritual life.

*Submitted by Josh Medlin*

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## LAFAYETTE

### Sharing our values with our legislative representatives through local visits with Congressional staff

In December, Lafayette Friends Meeting initiated a lobbying visit with our Congressional Representative (Todd Rokita) using the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) framework on criminal justice reform. FCNL is an inter-branch, national organization that “lobbies Congress and the administration to advance peace, justice, opportunity, and environmental stewardship” ([www.fcnl.org](http://www.fcnl.org)). In addition to representing Quakers at the national level, FCNL networks Meetings and Friends for grassroots involvement that includes the local lobbying in which we participated. The Friends at FCNL discerned that one of the legislative priorities for the past year was to support bipartisan initiatives to reduce mandatory minimum sentencing, and eliminating them in non-violent cases, in order to provide judges the ability to make context-specific rulings. This spoke truth to our Meeting.

Mandatory minimum policies implemented in the 1990s led to a substantial increase in the imprisonment of citizens for non-violent, drug-related offenses. This has been documented to disproportionately impact low-income and communities of color, specifically men of color. The rise in the prison population has been the basis for increases in government spending within Department of Justice budgets, and interest in privatization of prison facilities. Resources for additional reading include The Marshall Project ([www.themarshallproject.org](http://www.themarshallproject.org)), Families Against Mandatory Minimums ([www.famm.org](http://www.famm.org)), and The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander.

Though there are many social issues in which we do not hold unity with the decisions of our Representative, we used the opportunity for an in-person visit with local staff to share our concerns while listening to the perspectives of those at the heart of our democratic process. What we found most insightful was that this environment was familiar to us as Quakers, and that we were able to find areas of common ground. From our perspective, imprisonment for non-violent offense should be the most severe punishment, not the first option. We also see many problems in the practice of placing non-violent people into traditionally violent establishments, such as federal prisons.

While all of our concerns were heard, we know that our Representative is an advocate for small government and the reduction of government spending. Imprisonment is expensive to society. Our area of common ground was that we both wish for the prison system to be smaller. We were able to discuss how treatment and rehabilitation options have been demonstrated to be more effective in reducing recidivism than incarceration, while being less expensive for local and federal institutions. When our Representative’s staff asked for more details, FCNL helped us find resources and references to share in a follow-up email.

What may have been most valuable throughout this process was the energy we felt to follow a leading and take action. The Friends involved in the lobbying visit had a chance to connect personally and act together towards our shared values. We learned that the process of lobbying locally was not intimidating, and our Representatives have staff available locally whose job it is to listen and respond to concerns of their constituents. It has strengthened relationships in our Meeting, and empowered us to work together.  
*Submitted by Elizabeth Trybula, Liz O’Neil, and Ann Pellegrino*

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## LEXINGTON

Each MLK day Lexington has a wonderful series of events organized by the university and the city. The events include a unity breakfast, rousing gospel music, a march downtown and an inspiring speech by a noted speaker. The speaker this year was Otis Moss III -- a pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago. He reminded us, in eloquent language, how we are the beneficiaries of a long line of predecessors each of whom have sacrificed and suffered so that we can make our own contribution to help bend the moral arc toward justice.

Quakers are good at teaching our stories of courageous early Quakers who disobeyed the laws of England by not tipping their hats to their social superiors, who went to jail to protest unjust laws disallowing freedom of religion, who hid fugitive slaves, who agitated for suffrage for women and those who went to jail rather than serve in war. Knowing these stories is important for our identity and to inspire our convictions. It is therefore important to know as many stories as we can and in that light I wanted to tell one that few of us know.

Just after the Japanese attack on the United States in December of 1942, Gordon Hirabayashi, a native born American and son to Japanese immigrants living in the state of Washington, and a Quaker, was arrested for disobeying the curfew laws believing them to be racially motivated. He was convicted but with the help of lawyers from the AFSC his case went to the supreme court. He lost his case and was incarcerated for most of the war. After the war ended he finished his studies at the University of Washington, ultimately obtaining a doctoral degree in sociology. He taught at many universities abroad and ultimately became the chair of sociology at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. His conviction was overturned in 1987 after Peter Irons, a professor of Political Science in California found evidence which the government had suppressed at the time of Hirabayashi’s conviction. The new evidence showed that in 1942, the Government’s analysis of the threat posed by Japanese Americans concluded it to be minimal. Hirabayashi is one of our Quaker ancestors whose name we should know and whose contribution to ensuring our right to be conscientious objectors should be celebrated. Gordon Hirabayashi died in 2012 and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Freedom by President Obama posthumously.

*Submitted by Peter Hardy*



## FROM THE INDIANA YM COMMUNICATOR

A few years ago I saw something in my garage that was really disturbing – a rat! ... Recently, while enjoying one of our favorite trails in South Florida my wife and I ... found ourselves just yards away from a very playful and curious otter. The other walkers had been enjoying quite a show and were gushing about the cuteness that exuded from the delightful creature that had been entertaining them.

And then I began to wonder, “Why are folks so attracted to otters yet repulsed by rats?” They aren’t identical by a long shot, but they do have several similarities. Their personalities, though, couldn’t be more different. And then I began to wonder why folks are right at home at some churches, but wouldn’t touch others with a ten-foot pole. Have you ever considered your church’s “personality?” People are drawn to fellowships that are warm and inviting. Do neighbors sense that kind of fellowship at your church, or do they smell a rat?

-Doug Shoemaker

**Indiana Yearly Meeting Sessions** will be held at Quaker Haven Camp, July 27-30. “Show Me Your Glory” from Exodus 33:18 will be our theme.

## Quaker Heritage Center Wilmington College

Who doesn't love toys and games?! *Knick Knacks & Knowledge* is an interactive student-produced exhibit featuring a wide range of toys from the Quaker Heritage Center's collection. Roll the dice, test your knowledge, and have some fun!

**Tuesday, March 7, 7:30 p.m.: Caring for Your Heirloom Toys**

**April 4, 11, 18, and 25, 7:30 p.m.: Toy Film Festival**  
**Regular Gallery Hours**

9 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Mon-Fri

**Saturday Gallery Hours**

12 noon to 5 p.m. - January 28, February 25, March 25, April 22

**Closed** January 16, April 14



## WE ARE FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE



As a collaborative of yearly and monthly meetings, FGC is serving a faith that deepens spiritually, welcomes newcomers, builds supportive and inclusive community, and provides loving service and witness in the world.

**Together, we:**

Explore, share, and practice our faith through [Spiritual Deepening](#)

Learn from historical and contemporary Friends at [QuakerBooks](#)

Connect online through the [Quaker Cloud](#)

Create a more inclusive and diverse Quakerism through the [Ministry on Racism](#)

Gather in community at the [FGC Gathering](#)

The work we accomplish together nurtures a vital and growing Religious Society of Friends.

From Barry Crosno email

## RIGHT SHARING OF WORLD RESOURCES

We were able to positively impact the lives of 621 women in India, 243 in Kenya, and 437 in Sierra Leone. [A Kenyan example:] **Damaria Ayisi** is the mother of five children. Her husband works in Nairobi as a casual laborer; whatever money he gets is sent back home for their children’s education, but it is never enough. She joined the Musasa Friends Women Group when it was formed. From the group’s small funds, she borrowed Ksh.500 (\$5) and later increased it to Ksh.1000 (\$10). This small amount of money enabled her to start a small business of her own. Since she was doing well, she dreamed of expanding her business but didn’t have the capital to do so. To her delight, her group received a grant from RSWR in 2015. With the grant money, she was able to borrow to expand her green grocery. She is now assisting with the payment of school fees for her children, and has her own bank account.

From [www.rswr.org](http://www.rswr.org)

# Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

3960 Winding Way

Cincinnati, OH 45229

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

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Contact: [quakerquill@gmail.com](mailto:quakerquill@gmail.com)  
Cecilia Shore, editor.

Final edits by Susan Lee Barton.

Printed on 100% recycled paper

## Quaker Quotation

The peace testimony is about deeds not creeds; not a form of words but a way of living. It is the cumulative lived witness of generations of Quakers... The peace testimony is not about being nice to people and living so that everyone likes us. It will remain a stumbling block and will itself cause conflict and disagreement. The peace testimony is a tough demand that we should not automatically accept the categories, definitions and priorities of the world. We look to the Spirit, rather than to prescriptive hypothetical statements. The peace testimony, today, is seen in what we do, severally and together, with our lives. We pray for the involvement of the Spirit with us, that we may work for a more just world. We need to train to wage peace.

London Yearly Meeting, 1993, from the Peace Testimony (24.11)

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## Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Officers

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Rex Sprouse, Assistant Presiding Clerk

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Paul Buckley, Ass't Recording Clerk

Wilson Palmer, Treasurer