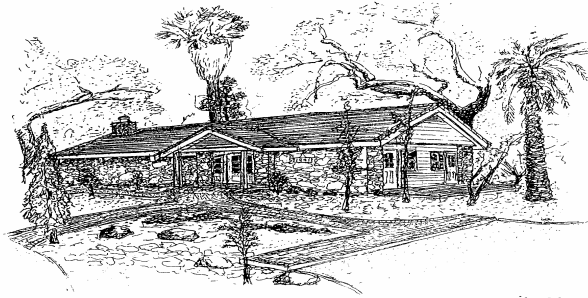


Visalia Friends Meeting

17208 Ave 296
Visalia, CA 93291

Newsletter

May 14, 2006



Visalia Friends Meetinghouse

Personal Relationships

In daily relationships with others, both inside and outside the home, our lives as Friends speak immediately and lastingly. In these relationships, our faith may also be severely tested. We are called to respond to that of God in everyone: we are all children of God. Friends celebrate any union that is dedicated to mutual love and respect, regardless of the unique make-up of the family. We strive to create homes where the Spirit of the Divine resides at the center and where the individual genius of each member is respected and nurtured.

Human sexuality is a divine gift, forming part of the complex union of body, mind and spirit that is our humanity. In a loving adult relationship in a context of mutual responsibility, sexuality brings delight, fulfillment and celebration.

The presence of children carries a special blessing as well as responsibility. Children bring unique spiritual gifts — wonder, resiliency, playfulness and more. Recognize and honor the Divine Light within children and treat them with the dignity and respect that is due to all people. Listen to and learn from children; share with them those values and practices that are central to our own lives. Special care must be given to resolving problems between adults and children in a manner that gives equal weight to the feelings and needs of both children and adults. Tender parenting is one of the critically important peace vocations in our society. Make every effort to offer all parents the personal and institutional support that this challenging work requires.

Take a strong stand against any form of abuse, whether that abuse is minor or severe, and whether it is emotional, physical or sexual in nature. The terrible impact of abuse on the most vulnerable members of our families creates lifelong suffering for its victims and is a major source of violence in our society. Perpetrators are themselves usually victims of similar violence and should be approached with compassion as well as firmness.

- *Do I make my home a place of friendliness, joy, and peace, where residents and visitors feel God's presence?*
- *Are my sexual practices consistent with my spiritual beliefs and free of manipulation and exploitation?*
- *What barriers keep me from responding openly and lovingly to each person?*
- *Do we open our thoughts, beliefs, and deep understandings to our children and others who share our lives and our hospitality?*
- *Do we provide our children and young adults with a framework for active, ongoing participation in the Meeting?*

Meeting for Business

Present: David & Klara East, David & Billie Chandler, Bill & Beth Lovett, Bob & Joy Marshall, Patti Howard, Mark Koenig, Dick Hannigan,

Meeting began in silent worship

Mail & News: Fresno Meeting will be sending newsletter via email, please contact them if you'd like to receive a copy, PYM registration now available on-line.

Agenda Items: Bill – M&O, Bob- Treasurer, Outreach – David C., Mark K. – Children's program, AVP, Adult Education,

Miscellaneous:

Ginger Curtis will be unable to attend Quarterly Meeting. Anyone wanting to attend should contact David Chandler.

M&O:

1. Health and welfare of meeting – all are good. Please notify M&O committee if there are any needs within the Meeting.
2. Mark Koenig will be traveling to the East coast to research Friends historical activism against slavery. He has asked for a "traveler's minute" giving him a letter of introduction on behalf of Mark and his activities.
3. M&O is still reviewing requirements to obtain liability insurance for sexual misconduct occurring under the auspices of the meeting. This has not been an issue for the Meeting, but Quarterly Meeting urged Monthly Meetings to investigate obtaining such insurance in order to protect meeting assets. The item is still under committee discussion. There are several aspects of concern of "clearance investigations" and its impact on relationships within the Meeting. There was much discussion on this issue. There was suggestion that we do local training for members. There was also suggestion that the Meeting work outside of insurance company requirements and work towards other means of protecting the Meeting against liability. Our primary concern is for the safety and welfare of Friends of the Meeting. The issue will return to M&O for further refinement and investigation of insurance requirements. M&O will coordinate with the Children's committee regarding this issue.
4. There are members of the meeting that have not participated in several years. Member Bob Goings, has been recommended for release from the Visalia Meeting membership. Lorena Bruff has asked that her membership be transferred. We are still waiting for details and completion of forms to complete her request. The meeting is in accord of these changes.
5. Patti has requested that an address update be produced for members and attendees. David C. will submit a list for members.

Quarterly Meeting Representative: Ginger Curtis will be unable to attend Quarterly Meeting. Anyone wanting to attend should contact David Chandler.

Children's Committee: Children began working on the Bolivia Green House project and fundraising with a taweek with other contributions. A green house costs \$600. The Meeting has suggested that we send a balance of funds to contribute a \$600 total donation from the meeting. The amount raised by children will be sent as a separate contribution.

AVP (Alternatives to Violence Program): Mark reported that two people of signed up for the training. He must contact trainers but feels that this will not be a sufficient number of people to bring them out for training. Mark asked the meeting for advice on this issue. Unitarians, South Valley Peace Center and other organizations have been contacted, but not commitments have been made. Klara suggested that Mark set a due date for registration.

Adult Education: Mark spoke of the retreat theme on peak oil and suggested that an adult education series be presented prior to the retreat. Mark has some videos and other information. He's suggesting two to three seminars be held. DVD titles included "The End of Suburbia" and a film about Cuba. Perhaps a movie night might be considered. Mark will make the films for loan as well. Unitarians may be interested in the films. The Meeting encouraged Mark to proceed with organizing the events.

Treasurer's Report: Bob Marshall presented the sixth month report through March. He reviewed details on the budget with the Meeting. (Please see attached)

Building & Grounds: The work day (5/13) was successful. Seven attended and got a lot of work done. Thanks to those that helped.

Outreach Committee: Sign has been completed. Bill suggested that the Meeting sponsorship and website be added to the sign. There has been a request by another group connected to the Migrant Photography project to use sign. David C. asked that they submit a formal request.

Meeting ended in silence

Respectfully submitted,

David East
Recording Clerk