



Thank You for Your Feedback! OVYM Planning Committee Looks Back and Moves Forward

The work of the Planning Committee begins each fall with evaluation review from the summer gathering. Comments help with practical details and stimulate our consideration of themes, speakers, workshops and more. An outsider may wonder why our choice seems to bear no relationship to recommendations. Here's what happens. The words you write get us started, and then Quaker process takes over as we discern, with the promptings of Spirit, our new theme. Our 2014 theme is "Living Up To Our Light". We are contacting our first choices for plenary speakers. Throughout the year, we look back at comments as we plan

workshops and communicate with the host campus.

Some comments help us plan improvements, such as limiting noise outside business meeting. Others concerns we try to address; such as assisting those with limited mobility. We arrange with the college for a golf cart and have at least one wheelchair. We can do nothing about the distances between buildings, the steps constructed before ADA requirements, or other barriers. Keep in mind that our registrar, Eric Wolff, works directly with the Planning Committee and welcomes opportunities to use his highly visible post to assist everyone.

If you have a mobility concern during Yearly Meeting, please ask Eric!

Other issues are out of our control. Several Friends are deeply concerned about composting and recycling. We have spoken with our host campuses and learned that students play an important role in these functions; students' absence from campus in the summer (continued on p. 3)



Lexington Friends share a skit at the OVYM Variety Show



Dear Friends: Greetings from the Clerk

In the busy seasons of our lives, remember to set aside time for spiritual refreshment, or what our Friendly forebears called "retirement." In their case, this was not a stage of life, but rather time alone

between each one of us and God that we all need throughout our lives.

Along these lines, William Penn's words come to mind: "Love silence, even in the mind. . . . Much speaking, as much

thinking, spends; and in many thoughts, as well as words, there is sin. True silence is the rest of the mind; and is to spirit, what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment." In the Light, Steve Angell

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Deborah Jordan is interim editor.

News from the October Executive Committee

- The Young Adult Friends Committee was established as a standing committee of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting.
- Middle Youth Staff draft job description was presented. The details are charged to the personnel committee to bring back to the Executive Committee in

February with the hopes that this position will be filled by July 1st 2014.

- Religious Nurture and Education is planning a retreat April 25 – 27, 2014. Contact Diann Herzog with suggestions for topics.

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Officers

Stephen Angell, Presiding Clerk
Rex Sprouse, Assistant Presiding Clerk
Terre Holada, Recording Clerk
Deb Kociszewski, Ass't Recording Clerk
Wilson Palmer, Treasurer

Friends Services for the Aging: Local Inspirations and National Innovations

By Eugenia Mills

Let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and in truth. 1 John 3:18

In mid-September, I attended the annual meeting of Friends Services for the Aging (FSA) in Philadelphia. FSA is an association of Quaker-affiliated organizations using Quaker values while caring for the elderly. For me, it was exciting to be among so many F(f)riends whose Quaker values were manifested in the way they are caring for those in later life. We heard reports from various aspects of FSA work. Of special interest was their new leadership program that teaches leadership skills based on Quaker values. One of the graduates of this inaugural class was Amanda Yauger, Administrator at Quaker Heights Care Community (QHCC), who was invited to give one of the two graduation speeches. FSA facilities are encouraged to grow their own staff by supporting their participation in this program.

Another FSA project this past year was carried out by a private research firm that was hired to identify --*What is the value-added of a Quaker elder care facility?* Even though this research is in process, the firm shared what is most important to the resident and family is integrity and honesty. Also a strong desire was for the facility to show respect for the elder as well as caring and concern. Many families spoke highly of their experiences with a Quaker facility, and one of the most glowing responses came from a son whose parent is a resident at Quaker Heights.

I think that Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Friends should be very proud that the Clerk of FSA is our own Wendy Waters-Connell, CEO at Quaker Heights Care Community, Waynesville, Ohio. Wendy has had much input into what FSA is accomplishing. This includes the new leadership program, and the Peace Church Compliance Program (PCCP). The PCCP program was started when liability insurance became so expensive that many facilities were not sure they could continue to afford it. FSA (with Quakers, Mennonites and Brethren) put together a program for insurance and risk management that has been very successful. Risk management has provided education that has helped employees provide a safe environment and reduce litigation for injury. PCCP, unlike traditional insurance programs, is not seeking to make a profit, so when skillful safe care is provided, and there is limited need for financial settlements, cost is contained. As a result, each year,



(The photo L to R: Wendy Waters-Connell, CEO Quaker Heights, Amanda Yauger, Administrator, QHCC, Sharon Jewell, board member and Clerk of QHCC Foundation Board, Eugenia Mills, Clerk QHCC Operations Board.

PCCP has been able to return these unspent funds to member institutions.

While Wendy Waters-Connell has been the CEO at Quaker Heights, she has guided QHCC to benefit from other Quaker providers. We now offer employee health insurance from Friends Mutual, and the Quaker Heights Foundation funds are managed by Friends Fiduciary where funds are placed in socially responsible investments.

I came home from FSA very proud of what we Quakers are doing to care for our elders, and I am especially proud of what Wendy Waters-Connell has assisted QHCC/OVYM to accomplish in the excellent care given to our residents and care for our employees. Oh, did I mention that years ago Wendy was a nursing student of mine?

Planning Committee (continued from p. 1)

means that composting does not happen at all and recycling is spotty. We will add recycling information to our list of questions for campus coordinators. The Planning Committee has a full roster of tasks and many members who do double service for our Yearly Meeting. While we can take some initiative on the recycling front, composting is more than we can manage. **Those of you with a passion for reducing waste are being called to serve!** The Cope Environmental Center located just a few miles from Earlham, actively composts and may be willing to accept our dining room scraps if someone is willing to collect and transport them.

Find information about the Cope Center online and make inquiries. Let the Planning Committee know to avoid duplication of efforts.



T. Canby Jones at OVYM

Contact Paul Kriese at pkriese@iue.edu.

Yearly Meeting is made stronger by each person's commitment to show up and contribute. Your comments on evaluations are an important contribution. The Planning Committee feels blessed to serve you!

Paul Kriese, Clerk for the OVYM Planning Committee

The Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting will reconvene in Seventh Month 30 through Eighth Month 3, 2014 at Earlham College for the 194th annual session. The theme will be: "Living Up to the Light"

OVYM Statement on Abolishing Nuclear Weapons

from Peace and Social Concerns

Members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), who are part of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting, which consists of 19 Monthly Meetings in Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky, follow early Quaker George Fox in that we seek to live in that "life and power that took away the occasion of all wars." With Fox we seek to "come into the covenant of peace which was before wars and strifes were."

As a consequence of the preceding, Friends have worked for 350 years for an end to war. We have sought practical ways to achieve this end. Consequently we have long worked for disarmament through reduction of all kinds of weaponry and, in particular, for the elimination of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

In this statement, we speak to an issue that at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st Century has become particularly urgent. Herein, we beseech our leaders to work for the abolition of nuclear weapons on an accelerated timetable.

The case for abolition in law and morality is widely recognized. For example, in 1996 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion that governments "must never use weapons that are incapable of distinguishing between civilian and military targets." The Court held the threat or use of nuclear weapons to be generally illegal under humanitarian and other law. As such our nation's production and accumulations of nuclear weapons and repeated threats to use these weapons are violations of international law.

During the past few years, leaders who had formerly supported nuclear weapons have reconsidered. In 2008, a set of retired U.S. officials who in the past supported nuclear weapons (George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger, and Sam Nunn) wrote that the U.S. needs to work for a nuclear-free world for the practical reason that they have become convinced that the very

existence of these weapons is a danger to our country. These leaders and others offer detailed rationales, but the essence of their argument is that the very existence of these weapons: 1) encourages proliferation of weapons to previously non-nuclear states thereby increasing the risk of nuclear war between states and 2) increases the opportunity for terrorists to acquire nuclear weapons.

These arguments are convincing to all those who, like Quakers, seek an end to war. We believe they should also be convincing to those who simply want our nation to be safe and secure.

We urge our President, the Secretary of State, the ambassador to the United Nations, and our congresspersons to work vigorously for a rapid abolition of nuclear weapons. Although we applaud the U.S. Senate's 2010 ratification of the New START disarmament (continued on p. 4)

Each of us and our Meetings are encouraged to contact our leaders about the urgent need to abolish nuclear weapons.

Are We Led to Join the Divestment Movement?

By Bill Cahalan, Clerk of OVYM Earthcare Committee

By now I think most of us--- especially since Hurricane Sandy, the recent destructive flooding in Colorado, the melting of summer Arctic ice, and many other events--- believe that global climate change is real and is mostly caused by burning fossil fuels. Some of us have been discouraged that our country, as the world's biggest consumer and second to China in CO2 emissions, continues to drag its feet in limiting emissions. Meanwhile President Obama, since helping create a weak, non-binding agreement at Copenhagen in 2009, has said conflicting things. Taking an "all of the above" approach, he supports fracking for natural gas, but is for limiting coal, while speaking and acting rather weakly in support of renewable energy sources.

350.org is a world-wide climate change network founded by journalist and Sunday school teacher Bill McKibben. They have worked for several years to convince politicians and the federal government to significantly limit CO2 emissions and shift subsidies from fossil fuel corporations to energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. They have at least been able to mobilize thousands of citizens to influence the president to delay permitting the Keystone XL pipeline. But with little success otherwise, and as energy corporations now turn to more extreme, destructive extraction methods for dwindling, harder to access deposits of coal, oil and gas, they have in their desperation proposed a new strategy (without stopping other efforts). They know success is not guaranteed, but see no other option except to try.

They propose that individuals, colleges, governments and churches withdraw their investments in corporations focused on fossil fuel extraction. Some of these corporations are the most profitable companies in history. They are counting on extracting and selling FIVE Times the amount of fuels that

can be burned without heating the planet catastrophically. So far 17 city governments have committed to divest, and over 300 colleges have groups calling on their administrations to divest. The United Church of Christ national governing body voted to divest this past July. In May, Dover (New Hampshire) Monthly Meeting chose to divest.

Divestment is not just a financial pressure strategy, but an attempt to make this a public conversation about a moral issue and to pressure our government toward real change in

"We will strive for sustainable lives in order that all living beings, as well as those yet to be born, might flourish."

OVYM Sustainability Minute 2002

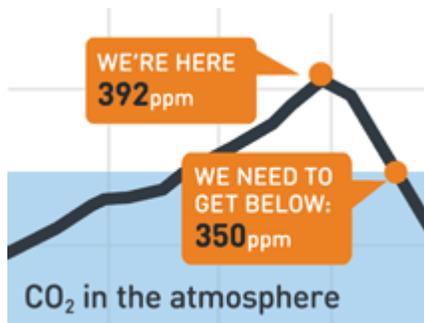
their policies and regulations. Are we, at least at the monthly meeting level, called to become informed about this divestment movement and to worshipfully listen for how we are meant to respond? I suggest you see the relevant section on the 350.org site, and read

especially their answers to "frequently asked questions" (FAQ). Also, apply to them for a link allowing you to show their inspiring film "Do the Math". We have shown it twice at Community Friends Meeting, and are engaged in reflection and discussion.

As our yearly meeting's 2002 Sustainability Minute states, "The disparity in right sharing continues to grow. We know that the poor of the world bear the greater hurt. Toxins find their way far more often into the lives of the poor. As increasing production and consumption amplify the impact of continuing population growth, the rich are getting richer and the poor, poorer. This is not in accord with our testimony of equality. . . . We will strive for sustainable lives in order that all living beings, as well as those yet to be born, might flourish."

"Divestment isn't primarily an economic strategy, but a moral and political one. Just like in the struggle for Civil Rights here in America or the fight to end Apartheid in South Africa, the more we can make climate change a deeply moral issue, the more we will push society towards action."

350.org



Abolish Nuclear Weapons (continued from p. 3)

treaty between the U.S. and Russia, we urge deeper cuts in the number of weapons in future treaties. As essential steps to a safer world, we ask our U.S. Senators to finally ratify the Nuclear Nonproliferation and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaties. We ask our Senators to prayerfully consider the danger to peoples of our own country and the World of failing to ratify these treaties.

News from Monthly Meetings

Bloomington

Under the leadership of our Long-Range Planning committee, we continue the discernment process about the renovation of our meeting house. The latest step in the process was reviewing the four innovative master plans that the architects had drawn up for the meeting house based on earlier discussions with Friends. This ended the period of ideas on the table. We still have a long way to go but we will continue the process of attempting to discern a sense of our meeting.

This summer we welcomed two new members. We also joyfully welcomed a new baby girl and boy into the family of Friends, as well as many new college student attenders at the beginning of the fall semester. Several of the younger people and others have signed up for the Quaker 101 class.

The Committee on Ministry and Counsel invited Lloyd Lee Wilson to lead a one-day workshop on June 22 addressing Discernment of Leadings and Vocal Ministry. This inspiring workshop was very well attended and gratefully received.

We continue making improvements on the meeting grounds. Some severe storms and lots of rain left some devastation of uprooted trees, broken limbs and washed away mulch from the paths. We rented a wood chipper, and on a beautiful sunny Saturday morning several volunteer Friends had a joyful but arduous work day, cutting large limbs, hauling the wood and gathering limbs and twigs to the chipper. This was followed by gathering the wood chips and spreading them on the path to the cemetery grounds. The First Day School classes have enjoyed exploring the beauty and diversity of plants and insects this summer.

Ria Collee

Community

Community Friends have been busy on several fronts this year. Among other things, we have devoted considerable time to three major issues: how to care for the physical property entrusted to us, the meeting's structure, and how to get to know one another better.

Early in 2013, we realized that the amounts we have spent on maintaining our meetinghouse over the last several years have been considerably greater than what we have been planning in our budgets. This was not because we had extraordinary expenses, but because we have been consistently overoptimistic when drawing up the budget. Looking ahead, it seemed reasonable to anticipate we may spend \$50,000 over the next five years – quite possibly more. We were faced with the choice to either save up for these anticipated expenses or to wait until they are upon us and rush around as if it was an unforeseeable emergency.

We realized that there are two models for holding property. The first is to treat it as a resource that we can deplete over time by minimizing the amount we invest in it. This would allow us to spend our money on other things or to give it away. The other choice is to see the meetinghouse as a precious gift that has been entrusted to us as stewards, not as our possession. It belongs ultimately to God, but in a more immediate sense, we needed to look on it as belonging to future generations. If we failed to maintain it, our spiritual heirs would be left homeless. In the meantime, as it slowly deteriorated, visitors would be greeted by a less and less appealing building and might decide to go elsewhere.

The need to be faithful stewards was clear. To better maintain the meetinghouse, we have committed ourselves to putting aside \$5000 every year in a reserve fund. Even with this commitment, when major projects come up, we expect to raise more money. Putting aside this much money “to spend on ourselves” was not an easy decision to make and it may not be easy to find the money, but it feels like we are being more honest with ourselves to do it.

Our second big project has been to prayerfully and carefully evaluate the meeting's committees and offices. This started out in a haphazard manner as the Nominating Committee brought several issues for our consideration over several months. But over time, we have been led to look deeper at how we accomplish the work of the meeting and at how we can be accountable to each other. As a result, we have a revitalized Peace & Social Concerns Committee and a Community Committee with a broader charge for fostering the life of the meeting as a religious community.

Finally, we are starting up a second round of “Inreach” Groups. The first batch of these grew out of our consideration of the FGC Quaker Quest program. This consists of a series of workshops to help Friends share their spiritual stories, deepen the meeting community, welcome new life, and engage in outreach to the wider community. We didn't feel ready to take on that program, but were inspired to create a set of opportunities for small groups within the meeting to help us get to know each other better both in the things that are eternal and in those things that are not.

(continued on p. 6)

(Community-continued from p. 5) In our first series, we had five small groups. One used Rex Ambler's "Experiment with Light," while a second was a theological book study group. The others were "Moving with the Spirit," "The Spiritual Healing Practice Group," and "Work as a Spiritual Practice."

These were such a success, that we decided to schedule another round, starting in October 2013. In some sense, the topics of these groups may just be excuses for meeting members and attenders to gather in a supportive environment. The planned groups will focus on dream work, indigenous healing, personal discernment, living the last third of our lives, "The Joy of Business Meeting," and "The Message," a new interpretation of the Bible by Eugene Peterson.

These are only the highlights of our recent life together. CFM is very much alive and vibrant in the spirit.

Paul Buckley

Englewood

All is well at Englewood Friends Meeting. Our meetinghouse has a new chimney and roof and we should be receiving full title to our property from Indiana Yearly Meeting by years end. Englewood also is a member meeting of the New Association of Friends, Inc. which is an association of Monthly Meetings that were splintered from Indiana Yearly Meeting. The group has no problem with Englewood being affiliated with OVYM.

We still have our core group of members and attenders who worship together each First Day. Our adult early morning group is focusing on the book **The Prodigal God** by Timothy Keller with Rick Miller providing the leadership. Our worship continues to be semi-programmed meaning that sometimes there is a prepared message and sometimes not but our worship continues to be rich in the spirit.

Guests from Journey of Hope for Nonviolence will be with us on October 13th. The group is composed of families of victims of murder. The focus of the group is that of reconciliation with the perpetrators and forgiveness. This will likely be a moving and meaningful discussion for us.

Continue to hold Friends at Englewood in the Light as we hold all of OVYM.

Russ Wheeler, Clerk of Ministry & Oversight

Fall Creek

One man with a relationship to Fall Creek Friends has never seen our beautiful Spirit-filled meetinghouse and grounds, but hopefully will one day be able to. Some years ago, Christopher Matson contacted our meeting and received a very delayed response - after trying to reach several other meetings. Chris learned about Quakerism while incarcerated at the Pendleton Correctional Facility (where he still resides), a state prison just a few miles from Fall Creek. Chris is serving a life sentence, but expects some sentence reductions and even has hopes of a retrial due to improper handling of the original trial.

While others have maintained contact with Chris in the past, currently two of us at Fall Creek regularly correspond with him by mail and in-person visits. Through this relationship, I've learned a lot about the prison system and various struggles that inmates can face in this very challenging environment. Its been a gift to get to know Chris, an appreciation that seems mutual.

Prison life can be very discouraging and lonely. Chris would like more pen pals, especially Quakers. He's an intelligent guy and writes well. If this is something you would like to try, please write Chris at:

Christopher Matson # 985600 (number is optional)
Pendleton Correctional Facility or just PCF 13-1E J (his location number)
4490 W Reformatory Rd
Pendleton, IN 46064

Thanks,
Josh Medlin

Lafayette



Friendly Collaboration Farmers' Institute Friends Church in Shadeland, IN, founded in 1851, was the first institute of higher learning in Tippecanoe County. In 2010 the meeting house was placed on Indiana Landmark's "10 Most Endangered Structures" list and there was serious discussion of laying down the meeting, which is part of Western Yearly Meeting. In 2013, the Meeting is thriving, holding unprogrammed worship on the first First Day of each month, hosting a Quaker Family Day in June, and reviving their annual Quaker Fair in September.

Members of Lafayette Friends Meeting have been assisting and cheering on the Shadeland group. Several Lafayette Friends worship with the Farmers Institute Friends, and we have moved our monthly Meeting for Business from the first to the third first Day of the month to make it easier for us to worship together. Members have also helped with the Quaker Family Day and Quaker Fair.

Upcoming shared events hosted by Farmers Institute include a Quaker Movie night with a showing of "Friendly Persuasion" in early October and a Christmas sing-a-long on Dec. 22.

We are all looking forward to continuing collaboration and enrichment between our two meetings.

Ann Pellegrino

Miami

Our weekend has been really wonderful in Warren County! Today's highlight was a talk given by Tom Hamm about the Quaker migration from Bush River to Miami Meeting here in Warren County, Ohio. Tom has offered to send a copy of his talk to this mail list so that everyone can read his great information! I think that you might not have quite the effect that we had as Tom talked to us in the White Brick Meeting House and also added information to the talk about the split between the orthodox and Hicksite Quakers....it was very special.

We spent time in the Museum in the Friends Home today as well. WOW! That is a treat not to be missed if you get anywhere near Waynesville. And Milton Cook's slideshow presentation on the Underground Railroad in Waynesville was pretty wonderful as well.

I am trying to get some information on my blog....but I don't have the time to get it all done....prod me to post moreI'll work on it as I have time:

<http://quakerhomecomingwarrencountyohio.blogspot.com>

Marsha Moses



North Meadow Circle of Friends

We took a break from some of our regular activities over the summer and instead had a cookout at the meeting house. As fall has come, we have resumed our usual schedule. On the first First Day of the month, we have a pitch-in followed by sharing of a Spiritual Journey, where an attender or member shares their spiritual life's path with the group. Pat Zarowin has continued to lead monthly discussions about aspects of Quakerism, including most recently death and dying. And every month we gather at a Friend's house for an evening of Worship Sharing.

We have welcomed Jimmie Ilachild as a new member in our meeting. Jimmie has been an attender and part of our meeting for many years, and we are delighted he is now a member. Our meeting has continued to speak out about social issues important to us as Quakers. Most recently, Dinah Duvall drafted and the meeting reached unity on a letter to our Senators and Representatives about the situation in Syria.

Alexia Torke

Oxford

Once again, we assembled health kits and school bags for Church World Service distribution programs. These kits and bags go to needy families and school children in the US and around the world. We're fortunate to have a skilled seamstress in the Oxford community who crafts rugged and beautiful school bags, no two alike, and Oxford Meeting stocks them.

We are welcoming new member Anne Hutchinson to our meeting! Also we welcome visiting member Carol Dana from Baltimore Yearly Meeting, who is working with the Opening Minds Through Art (OMA) program at Miami University.

(continued on next page)

We are struggling with the ongoing crisis of US military involvement in Syria, using the AFSC/FCNL materials on "Shared Security" brought forward by our committee on Peace and Justice. We have agreed to ongoing discussion, we hope leading to a sense of engagement with the local roots and implications of US force-based foreign policy.

We are looking forward to hosting traveling presenters of the "Journey of Hope," speakers and singers opposing capital punishment...and of course we're looking forward to Joint Quarterly Meeting.

Andrew Garrison

Yellow Springs

Our annual retreat centered on the theme of *Meeting Vitality: Spiritual Gifts and Callings*. We spent our time together exploring our understanding of the ways that the Spirit moves us as individuals and as a Meeting to act in the world. Wright State University professor **Gary Farlow**, Clerk of Friends Association of Higher Education and member of the Xenia Friends Church shared his own experiences with callings, followed by small group discussion.

On September 9th The End of Life Community Forum (which is the continuation the Meeting's action on our deceased member Paul Wagner's concern) hosted a speaker from the Indianapolis chapter of Compassion and Choices. Compassion and Choices is the organization that was so helpful to Paul and others in the meeting.

Our ADULT MEETING FOR LEARNING chose a focus for this fall's first day school of exploring various aspects of our peace testimony using material from "Practicing Peace, a Devotional Walk through Quaker Tradition" by Catherine Whitmire. Each week we ask two individuals to worship share for 5 minutes on an aspect of the peace testimony and then all participants are invited to worship share on the topic.

In our recent Meeting for Business we approved a Minute on Syria

At a Meeting for Business of the of the Religious Society of Friends of Yellow Springs held in Yellow Springs, Ohio on September 8, 2013, those gathered united in urging that the United States not respond to recent civilian deaths in Syria with military action against Syria. We are deeply saddened by the human loss in Syria and we are convinced that a military strike in retaliation will not be helpful or healing to the Syrian people or the world. Cheryl Keen

Dayton

Beginning Sept 1, 2013, we will be meeting in a room at the Oak Street Church in the South Park neighborhood of Dayton.

New time: 10:30 am worship, 10:15 singing

New Place: 433 Oak Street, Dayton. (Corner of Jay and Oak).

We are hopeful that the new location will better for outreach and more convenient for those traveling from the south. There is easy access off of US 35. Please join us in the new space. In the long term, we still hope to buy a building in the area.



Lexington

Lexington Friends are going for the gold, or maybe the silver as they renovate their Meetinghouse into a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified building with Ben Griffith as project manager.

In the meantime, the temporary Meeting Place is:
Lexington Christian Academy
450 West Reynolds Road
Lexington, Kentucky

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Epistle

Eighth Month 4, 2013

Greetings to Friends Everywhere:

On the 31st day of 7th month 2013, unprogrammed Friends from Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio convened the 193rd annual sessions of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting. We gathered on the campus of Wilmington College, a Quaker College in Wilmington, Ohio. The theme of our sessions was “Living as Friends: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.” A statue on the Wilmington College campus served as a starting point for our reflections. It commemorates an 1862 trip to Washington by vision-inspired Quaker farmers Isaac and Sarah Harvey. Upon arrival in Washington, they shared their witness against slavery with Abraham Lincoln. The Harveys are but one example of how faithful Quakers of the past lived out their leadings.

In worship sharing during each of the next four mornings, we considered ways in which earlier Friends inspire us and how their witness affects what we want to carry forward into the future. Leadings of the Spirit are central to us. We recognize our obligation to test leadings that arise among us, but we also asked ourselves how we can better support and nourish those who have leadings.

At our Living Witness session Christine and Gene Snyder shared fascinating and inspiring stories and reflections from their lives and life together. Their life journey is a rich example of following one’s leadings. Christine pointed out how many times she took a new direction in her life, not knowing where it would lead, only to find each time that she was being prepared or positioned for a new endeavor and challenge.

Our plenary speakers helped us to explore ways to become more sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit. Stephen Potthoff in his presentation, “Dreaming, the Natural World, and Lives of Early Friends,” provided examples of early Friends who experienced dreams and visions as a call to radical faithfulness.

Plenary speaker Maurine Pyle urged us “to listen deeply to what is hidden.” In her presentation “Opening and Hearing Our Stories,” she shared parts of her research into the vocabulary Friends use when telling their stories. Through interviews with Quakers who identified themselves as liberal Christian, neo-pagan, non-theist, Conservative, Orthodox, and Evangelical, she discovered common themes that suggest these Friends share significant common ground that can be the basis for reconciliation. Maurine urged us to open our minds and hearts when we face language that might initially seem off-putting. She invited us to ask the question “I wonder what you mean by that,” and to listen deeply to the answer.

This spirit carried into our business sessions as we received reports of the work of Friends and Friends’ organizations. We were repeatedly urged to support these labors not only with our budgets and time, but also to take their work into our hearts as Friends work to heal this broken, suffering world. During our sessions we approved our budget, threshed a section on peace for our revised *Book of Faith & Practice*, and approved a statement that urges the abolition of nuclear weapons. It is a joy to report that a sense of loving unity prevailed – we were able to hear the loving concern that lay behind our varying opinions and ideas.

In general, we are optimistic about the prospects for our communities and for the Religious Society of Friends. As we look to our future, there is also apprehension. On the large scale, many of us are concerned about impending global climate change, increased economic inequality in our nation and worldwide, and about the roles our nation and the “American empire” play in both of the preceding. Nearer to home, we live in states where too many workers, particularly minorities and the young, are unemployed or under employed and where budget cuts are unraveling the social safety net for the poor.

Although our Yearly Meeting is graying, we have begun to attract and involve younger members. Our Young Adult Friends Working Group has submitted a proposal to become a committee of our Yearly Meeting. The challenge for older adult Friends is to be ready to mentor and to assist, but first need to step back so that younger Friends have more frequent opportunities to lead.

Our overwhelming impression of the 2013 Sessions of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting is that of joy. Many older Friends sense and the youth themselves report that the love they share for one another has grown and blossomed. In spite to the state of the world in which they are about to enter our teens (in particular) are optimistic and committed. These are good reasons to be optimistic about the future of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

In the Light,

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

Close Relationships (Part II)
The Book of Faith and Practice of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting
Approved 8th Month 1, 2013

Supporting marriages and other steadfast commitments

Meetings have a responsibility to lift up the importance of love, trust, and mutual respect in marriage and other steadfast relationships. As time passes and individuals change, relationships will also change. These changes offer opportunities for spiritual growth and for the deepening of the relationship. Meetings can nurture this process in a variety of ways. This support might range from home visitations, to celebrations of anniversaries, to holding workshops and retreats, to referring couples to resources offered by wider Quaker bodies.

If particular needs or difficulties arise, Friends are advised to hold the couple in prayer and to offer gentle encouragement. It is our experience that a confidential clearness committee offered by the meeting can assist a couple (or an individual) in seeking God's guidance in the relationship. Meetings should be aware of their limitations and be prepared to refer couples to specialized resources beyond the meeting.

Sharing a home

Friends recognize that shared homes include a variety of possible relationships, such as single-parent, two-parent, blended, and multi-generational households, as well as adults living without children. We rejoice and are nourished in homes full of friendliness, refreshment, and peace, where the Light can be felt by those who live there and by all who visit. Such homes reflect caring, trust, and commitment in an atmosphere of good humor and play. The efforts of making a home should be shared with tender regard for the needs and abilities of all members and with appreciation for their unique contributions, recognizing that needs and abilities grow and diminish over the course of each person's life. In the home our beliefs and practices are tested on a daily basis, and conflicts within families are inevitable. Learning ways to resolve them through openness, honesty, and mutual respect helps strengthen our relationships. Friends are reminded that the guidance of the Light Within is at all times available to lead us into greater love.

Special needs and long-term illness

Special needs and long-term illnesses can arise at any time in a person's life and may entail physical, cognitive, social, or psychological challenges. Caring for a child, adult, or aging family member with special needs or a long-term illness can bring unanticipated blessings, but it can also exhaust and isolate the caregiver and can put strain on relationships within the household. Realizing that families may be reluctant to ask for help, Friends should reach out with sensitivity to offer support and nurture to each family in a way appropriate to its unique needs.

Addiction in a home

Addiction to alcohol and other substances poses unique challenges that can seriously undermine the health of a household. Friends are encouraged to inform themselves about addictive behavior in order to provide appropriate types of support to addicts and their loved ones. Addiction requires treatment, and support of an addict requires support for treatment. Even with the best of intentions, providing shelter and sustenance can merely perpetuate the addiction. Meetings should support members who are undertaking the difficult actions required to make recovery possible for members of their households.

Divorce

Friends are cautioned against divorce or separation except under extreme circumstances. Escape from domestic unhappiness through the all too common practice of divorce repudiates an agreement entered into for life, and gives countenance and support to a usage demoralizing to home life. Friends should rather strive, through frequent communication on a deep and honest level, to reconcile differences when they arise. Even when anger and resentment arise, these feelings may be dealt with in constructive ways which contribute to self-knowledge and improved interpersonal relationships.

Although Friends may make every effort to reconcile differences, there are times when close relationships end. Meetings can play a constructive role in these transitions by extending compassionate care to all those involved and responding to that of God in each person. Friends should recognize that children in these situations may be especially in need of the meeting's love and care.

Abuse in a home

The exercise of inappropriate power in close relationships can result in physical, psychological, or sexual abuse. In the face of the social isolation often associated with an abusive home, those victimized may feel alone and desperate. Meetings are advised to educate themselves about domestic abuse and to become particularly sensitive to signs of such situations and to be bold in offering assistance. Meetings are encouraged to create communities of trust in which those who are being abused can seek the support of the meeting.

Nurturing children

To watch the spirit of children, to nurture them in Gospel Love, and labour to help them against that which would mar the beauty of their minds, is a debt we owe them; and a faithful performance of our duty not only tends to their lasting benefit and our own peace, but also to render their company agreeable to us.

(John Woolman, 1758)

Our children are given to us for a time to cherish, to protect, to nurture, and then to salute as they go their separate ways. They too have the light of God within, and a family should be a learning community in which children not only learn skills and values from parents, but in which adults learn new ways of experiencing things and seeing things through young eyes. From their birth on, let us cultivate the habit of dialogue and receptive listening. We should respect their right to grow into their own wholeness, not just the wholeness we may wish for them.

(Elizabeth Watson, 1980)

Every child deserves physical, intellectual, and spiritual nurture. To this end, parents and other adult caregivers must establish themselves as loving and reliable sources of guidance. Caring for children is a life-transforming responsibility, bringing joys, challenges, and experiences of personal and spiritual growth for adult and child. Through good example and consistent teaching, we can counteract many of the negative influences children inevitably encounter. Children are greatly influenced by parents who lead faithful lives, discerning and following the Light Within. Our inward faith is made manifest through practicing simplicity, honesty, nonviolence, service, and love.

To guide our youth toward a life of fulfillment and service, it is essential that Quakers teach their children about creative responses to conflict, the consequences of violent behavior, discernment in sexual activity, the dangers of addiction, and the importance of living in harmony with creation. At the same time, parents and other caregivers should not impose on their children their full range of expectations but rather should have a deep appreciation of who their children are in their own right and support the unfolding of each child's unique gifts. We believe that by nurturing the development of self-worth, self-confidence, and self-discipline, we help children to grow into responsible and compassionate adults. Parents and other caregivers should teach their children about the faith and practice of the Religious Society of Friends, and meetings should support children's participation in Quaker youth events and activities. The habit of quiet waiting upon God, both in meeting for worship and in regular family devotion, tends to strengthen and develop the spiritual life of a child.

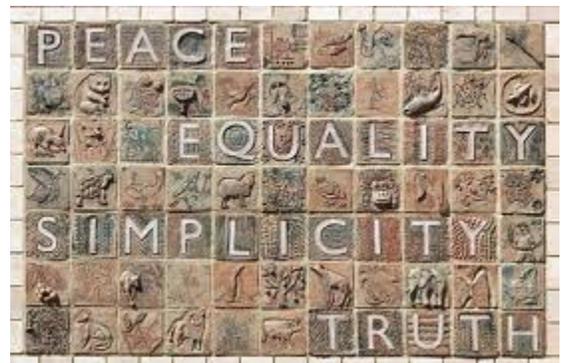
Preparation for Death

An awareness of our mortality may help us to find life richer in the present, to cope better with the deaths of those we love, and to accept death with dignity for ourselves. Friends are encouraged to talk openly about death and its meaning for our spiritual lives. Many find that as they face impending death, they are drawn to invite their loved ones into exceptionally frank and open conversations, often leading to emotional healing and forgiveness.

Meetings are encouraged to provide practical education about preparations for death. We can ease the impact of our death on those we love by making certain preparations. Each adult Friend is encouraged to consider making advanced directives, to make a will, and to express preferences regarding organ donations, the disposal of the body, and a memorial meeting. Meetings may wish to keep copies of these documents on file and be prepared to contact relatives in the case of a member's death or other emergency.

Bereavement

Not even the most careful preparation can alleviate the natural sorrow and grief felt by surviving loved ones. Grieving family and friends will welcome the strength provided by the spiritual, emotional, and practical support of the wider family of Friends. Meetings are advised to recognize that not everyone grieves the death of a loved one in the same way, and Friends are advised to be sensitive to the unique feelings and needs of each grieving person. Friends may be called upon to be compassionate listeners and to help those grieving appreciate how much the gifts of their loved one enriched the lives of others. Friends are advised to be sensitive to grieving survivors during potentially tender times of the year or on particularly tender occasions. All can find support and joy in continuing to celebrate the life of the deceased person while acknowledging his or her death.



Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

3960 Winding Way

Cincinnati, OH 45229

We're on the web:
ovym.quaker.org



What is happening

at the Quaker Heritage Center

at Wilmington College?

***A Show of Respect: A Body of Work Painted for
the Children of War***

On display now through December 13

(at Left) One Drawing on Articles from the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, these ten large oil paintings by artist Helen Broadfoot underscore the violation of children's basic human rights in times of war.