

Musical Prelude (10:00)
Greeting/ Good Morning

In the words of George Fox

The Lord showed me, so that I did see clearly, that he did not dwell in these temples which men had commanded and set up, but in people's hearts ... his people were his temple, and he dwelt in them.

- Be **patterns**, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the **world**, answering that of **God** in everyone; whereby in them you may be a **blessing**, and make the witness of God in them to bless you.

1st Hymn (10:05) P 243 Love will guide us verses 1, 4 & 5

Readings

Matthew 5:14-16

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Deuteronomy 19

Cities of Refuge

...I command you today—to love the Lord your God and to walk always in obedience to him—then you are to set aside three more cities. **10** Do this so that innocent blood will not be shed in your land, which the Lord your God is giving you as your inheritance, and so that you will not be guilty of bloodshed.

Luke 10

words from The Parable of the Good Samaritan

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.”

2nd Hymn (10:12) p. 266 This little light of mine

Joys and Concerns

Musical Interlude

Prayer (10:17)

Thank You Prayer

Thank you for for all who teach us of love, of goodness
For those who shine with light when we flounder in a sea of darkness
Thank you for all those whose lives speak truth, who teach love by example

Thank you for our faithful, trusting pets who know how to live in the now
Thank you for all those who do no harm to mankind or to our Earth.
Thank you for the many members, of this Meeting, both current and past,
who live or lived their lives in quiet and humble service.

3rd Hymn (10:22) P. 333 Walk cheerfully

Little Ones Leave

Message (10:25)

As a child, growing up in Ithaca, I struggled to make sense of the world around me. In social settings, I was confused by what I observed: cruelty among my peers, lack of loyalty in both friends and families. Gossip, betrayal, and violence were accepted. I did not participate in this behavior that surrounded me, and therefore felt very alone.

When I was sixteen, my father had a sabbatical from Cornell,

and my family spent the year in Europe. My parents chose for me the only coeducational, Protestant school in France. They drove me up a plateau to an isolated village deep in the Cevennes Mountains to deliver me to College Cevenol. In September 1957, I arrived in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon and my life would be changed forever.

I lived in a dormitory with girls from France as well as many other countries. I hiked with my housemates to the nearby school for classes and our mid-day meal. Since I did not speak French, my first class every day was special French taught by Monsieur Theis. He was a tall, gentle, patient, imposing man. The class was composed of twenty students from all over the world, none of whom knew French. Monsieur Theis taught us all to speak, read, and write over the course of the year. My other classes were in French, except English, which was taught by a proper Englishwoman named Miss Maber.

The French Protestants in Le Chambon were Huguenots. Religion was central to their lives. At school we had worship every Wednesday and Monsieur Theis taught religion class every Saturday morning. Each Sunday we hiked into the village to attend services at the 16th century Protestant temple. “Love one another” was carved in the stone over the entrance. Monsieur Theis was a pastor who frequently led worship.

At College Cevenol, I witnessed the most amazing phenomenon. The students did not fight with each other, they did not gossip or humiliate one another. Most of us had only one or two sets of clothing so little attention was paid to dress. The teachers and the dorm mothers were kind and supportive. We, as students, were allowed self-regulation and freedom. There were very clear guidelines of acceptable behavior, but infractions were not treated harshly.

As the year passed, I became happy and grounded. By the end of the school year, I felt that I had found a guiding principle. I had come to believe in God. I was a believer in non-violence and in the value of all people. Since my French was very basic, I learned most of this through observation.

As I had never been so happy, my parents offered for me to stay at College Cevenol for my senior year, but I wanted to return to Ithaca to test if what I had learned was real and could be brought back into my former life. Upon returning, I found that I did own what I had learned and it would always be part of who I was.

Nearly thirty years later, a friend who knew I had lived in Le Chambon gave me the book Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed. Upon reading this book, I was amazed to learn what had happened in the quiet village where I had spent such a wonderful year. I read that during World War II, Le Chambon had been a city of refuge and a major center of resistance. I was astounded to learn that my humble, patient teachers, Monsieur Theis and Miss Maber had been instrumental in the rescue of hundreds of refugees of Nazi oppression. I learned that they each had been arrested by the Gestapo, sent to internment camps and nearly deported for extermination. In spite of great personal risk, they continued to house Jewish children and were part of an underground railroad helping refugees escape to Switzerland, often walking with them much of the distance through the mountains.

I learned that the Huguenots were intimately familiar with persecution. During the 16th and 17th century, there was a mass exodus of Protestants from France. Those who stayed relocated to the Cevennes Mountains in remote, isolated villages

like Le Chambon.

Before World War II Monsieur Theis came to Le Chambon to be the assistant pastor and to create a new school with the full time pastor, his friend and former classmate in seminary,. Their vision was to create an international, pacifist, Protestant secondary school. As a private school there was no need to pledge allegiance to or have accreditation from the French government. This school was the College Cevenol where I had the fortune to spend the most influential year of my young life.

From what I learned in this book, the Gestapo was aware of the huge numbers of hidden refugees in Le Chambon. M. Theis and the full time pastor were leaders of this resistance. The other inhabitants of this village all knew and most participated in the saving of hundreds of Jewish children and other refugees. They did not talk about what they were doing even with each other. Silence and discretion had been their survival mechanism for nearly three hundred years. When asked by the Gestapo where the Jews were hidden, the pastors responded, “We do not know Jews, only men.” Orders were given to arrest the leaders of the resistance in Le Chambon.

When the Gestapo came to arrest the pastors, word did spread quickly throughout the village. As M.Theis and the other pastor were being driven out of town as prisoners, the villagers lined the streets and sang, “A mighty fortress is our God.”

A couple of months ago, after a weekend in New York City, Jeffrey and I were waiting for the bus to Ithaca. Jeffrey picked up the New York Times Book Review. He noticed a review of another book about Le Chambon. It was called A Village of Secrets. I downloaded the book and began to read it immediately.

Now, so many decades later, I have finally found words for what I had experienced with these extraordinary people in this village in France. Through exposure to Quaker ideas, I now know about putting faith into action, about letting one's life speak. I now recognize many people who live in humble service. What I never recognized until recently was the enormous message given to me and to the world by the leaders and the people of Le Chambon.

Last month the mathematician Alexander Grothendieck (GROAT-en-deek) died in France. In his obituary, I read that he was a refugee saved and educated in Le Chambon. I was not surprised to read that he was a dedicated pacifist and an environmentalist.

The ideas of Monsieur Theis, Miss Maber, and the other Huguenots in Le Chambon were transmitted to me through their manner of living. I saw and embraced a truth that I had only imagined, a way of living in love and peace. I had been witness to people involved in an extraordinary historical event. I learned the power of letting your life speak, of leading by example.

When I entered this Meeting a few years ago I felt that I was surrounded by many whose lives speak, whose example I wished to follow. Something here felt familiar to what I had experienced in Le Chambon. I felt like I was coming home.

The Lord showed me, so that I did see clearly, that he did not dwell in these temples which men had commanded and set up, but in people's hearts ... his people were his temple, and he dwelt in them.

Meditation/Silent Worship (10:40)

4th Hymn (10:58) p. 239 A Mighty Fortress is our God

Final prayer (11:00)

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Be **patterns**, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the **world**, answering that of **God** in everyone; whereby in them you may be a **blessing**, and make the witness of God in them to bless you.

Afterthoughts/ Introductions/Announcements/ Remembrances

Postlude