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Vital Friends

A Newsletter by FGC

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Begin the Journey

Dear Friend,

The 2015 Gathering Committee is thrilled to announce that acclaimed Quaker author and activist [Parker J. Palmer](#) will speak to attendees at an evening plenary session at The Gathering next year. Founder of the Center for Courage and Renewal, former Dean of Studies for Pendle Hill, and author of nine books including *Let Your Life Speak* and his most recent *Healing the Heart of Democracy*, FGC is extremely pleased to have Parker share his insights and perspectives.

Joining Parker on the roster of plenary presenters is award-winning singer/songwriter [Carrie Newcomer](#), who will perform a concert for audiences on Wednesday evening at the Gathering. Carrie has produced 15 albums as a solo artist and worked with FGC's own Brent Bill for the 2006 PBS special *Festival of Friends: An Offering of Four Quaker Voices*. Proudly Quaker, she attends Bloomington Friends Meeting (OVYM).

The Gathering 2015 will also welcome North Carolina-based attorneys [Daryl Atkinson and Scott Holmes](#). During Monday night's plenary session, Daryl and Scott will discuss creating sustainable wholeness in communities broken by state-sanctioned injustice. As a trial lawyer focused on civil rights and criminal defense cases, Scott has represented Moral Monday protesters, panhandlers, Dream Team activists, and Occupy Protesters. Daryl recently used his passion for criminal justice reform to lead the nation's first successful Ban the Box campaign, which compelled the City of Durham to remove a question about past criminal convictions from the city's employment application.

Rounding out a week of invigorating plenary events will be [Dr. Tieraona Low Dog](#). On Friday, July 10th, Dr. Low Dog will present a message of transformation and hope drawing from her years as a physician, midwife, researcher, and National Geographic author.

We hope you'll join us at Gathering 2015 at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC! Follow FGC on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to get fresh updates about next year's festivities as they break.



Have you felt called to seed a new Quaker meeting? The **New Meetings Project** provides resources for Friends that wish to establish and nurture vibrant, diverse Quaker communities.
[Click here to get started.](#)

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Exploring a Path Toward Spiritual Deepening



At the heart of FGC's work is listening and learning. For years, we've been working directly with meetings and individual Friends, and in that time we've noticed a pattern, a common need and desire among many Friends. We've heard from Friends who have been worshipping with Quakers for years, but are uncertain how to step deeper into Quaker faith and practice; we've heard from seekers who feel a close kinship with Quaker beliefs, but can't find a pathway in.

It's from those experiences that FGC is exploring a pilot project, how we might offer Friends and seekers [a clearer opportunity for spiritual deepening](#).

How does this resonate with you? What topics should we be sure to cover? We want to hear from you!
[Click here to share your feedback.](#)

Would your meeting be interested in participating in a pilot program? Let us know.
[Click here to become a pilot participant.](#)

Highlights from Central Committee



Photo Credit: Marta Rusek

Between October 16th and 19th, Friends gathered in at the Pearlstone Center in Maryland for FGC's annual Central Committee meeting. Decisions were reached on major points of discussion, and we marked a very special occasion.

[Click here to read more on the FGC website.](#)

Development News



Photo Credit: Rich Regen

We are so grateful. Our fiscal year ended on September 30, and thanks to the support of many generous donors, we exceeded our Annual Fund goal by *more than \$7,000!* Your gifts help us touch meetings, seekers, and Friends. With your support, we have partnered with Friends and seekers to [start new meetings and worship groups](#), challenged Friends to [transform our meetings](#) into communities that are welcoming to all, and [spread the Quaker message](#) across the US and Canada.

Your support of FGC in each fiscal year is extremely important. Our Annual Fund goal for 2015 is \$749,400, and we're going to need your help to get there. Please consider [making a donation](#) to help us further the Religious Society of Friends.

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