

Friendly Notes

Santa Monica Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

February, 2016



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Upcoming Events:

- ◆ Feb. 21, 8:30 am: Adult Reading Group; *A Quaker Prayer Life* by David Johnson
- ◆ March 4-6; PYM Representative Committee Meeting at the Meetinghouse
- ◆ March 6, Noon: Steve Smith reading from his new book, *Eastern Light: Awakening to the Presence in Zen*
- ◆ March 19, 2016 (Saturday, 9:00-4:00): Adult Education: Diego Navarro, incoming PYM Clerk, leads workshop "Living Our Lives in Worship"

Advices and Queries — Unity

Unity: A common understanding of the will of the Spirit, dependent on the willingness of all to seek the truth in each other's utterances, to be open to persuasion, and to recognize and accept the sense of the meeting. *Intermountain Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice*

Queries

In what ways do I prepare my heart and mind to receive the power of God's presence and love? *Baltimore Yearly Meeting*

Are we prepared to let go of our individual desires and let the Holy Spirit lead us to unity? Do we accept with grace a decision of the meeting with which we are not entirely in agreement? *Intermountain Yearly Meeting*

Advices

As Friends we commit ourselves to a way of worship which allows God to teach and transform us. We have found corporately that the Spirit, if rightly followed, will lead us into truth, unity and love. *Britain Yearly Meeting 1.01*

In all our meetings for church affairs we need to listen together to the Holy Spirit. We are not seeking a consensus; we are seeking the will of God. The unity of the meeting lies more in the unity of the search than in the decision which is reached. *London Yearly Meeting 1984*

Individuals' submitting themselves to the corporate revelation of Truth forms the basis of Friends' approach to unity... The commitment to search for unity depends upon mutual trust, implies a willingness to labor and to submit to the leadings of the Spirit, and grows as members become better acquainted with one another. *Intermountain Yearly Meeting*

Adult Education Reading Group
February 21, 2016; 8:30 a.m.
Readings from David Johnson's
A Quaker Prayer Life
Clerked by Kim O'Brien

Contributions to Friendly Notes

Friendly Notes welcomes submissions by Friends. A quotation, poem or short essay that speaks to you in your spiritual journey, or something that you have written yourself, can enrich others seeking the Light. Please give a copy to the Editor, Friendly Notes, by email (rebeccatillberg@yahoo.com) or in written form at Meeting.



Minutes - January 1, 2016

Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business

Attending: Rachel Fretz, Cristine Reynaert, Tim Vreeland, Judith Searle, Donna Cooper, Richard Shaw, Henry Yang, Jan Bartholomew, Grayson Schick, Shayne Lightner, Sarah Rose House-Lightner, Cynthia Cuza, Curtis Raynor, Stan Searl, Kim O'Brien, Rebecca Searl, Debbie, Brian Johnston, Bob Tajima, Grant Ramey, Gail Thomas, Kathy Forsman, Simon Simonian, Cindy Waite, Wendy Christensen, Ann Fuller, Kate Watkins-Shaw

Meeting began in silent worship on the queries: "What living truths do I hold? How does the way I live my life reflect these truths?" The Clerk noted that these queries were chosen following ministry at worship, and in reflection on the life of Mary Dyer, who was committed enough to her faith to die for it. The story of Abraham asks us to consider what we are willing to sacrifice. In an environment of religious intolerance, what does this mean for us? Coming to the point of willingness is the test for our own hearts. A Friend recalled that Martin Luther King, Jr. said that everyone needs something to die for. A Friend said that living by the Golden Rule, and believing and meeting the essential goodness that resides in every person, connects their spiritual life with what they do. A Friend recalled the words of St. Terese of Lisieux: "How you do anything is how you do everything." One Friend spoke of meeting for worship as the wellspring as they meet the challenge of making their personal and professional life speak our truth. Another Friend spoke to the initial scariness of committing to membership, although their

heart and head were already given, and learning in the process that we have an amazing community to help us give our whole selves, and another Friend said that listening deeply to their students is supported by the way our community works.

RepComm – Sarah Rose House-Lightner reminded meeting of our commitment to host Pacific Yearly Meeting's annual meeting of representatives, clerks, Junior Yearly Meeting reps and other Friends on March 4 to 6. Sarah Rose described some of the responsibilities of hosting – providing housing, transportation, set up and clean up, lists of local restaurants and the like. An arrangements committee will meet in two weeks. After silent worship, Ann Fuller and Gail Thomas volunteered to join Sarah Rose and Karston Santander on the committee. Friends can call Sarah Rose, the co-ordinator, with specific offers of help and housing. We may reach out to Orange Grove for additional housing, or make arrangements with a local motel.

Worship and Ministry – Rachel Fretz read and distributed a report on Stan Searl's traveling ministry on Quaker poetry (attached). She reviewed the process leading to this ministry – a clearness committee to test the leading, an oversight committee (Rachel, Cynthia Cuza, and Don McCormick), approval of a traveling minute in meeting for business, and reporting to business meeting. Stan plans to take the ministry to other Southern California meetings, Santa Fe, and Buffalo. A Friend referred to the importance of a seasoned Friend ministering through poetry, in the light of historical mistrust of the arts among Quakers. In response to a Friend's question, Stan said that although poetry is so personal, it has not been an ego trip – he has experienced this ministry as a spontaneous,

centered, worshipful experience. Cynthia Cuza, who has eldred Stan at some of these presentations, spoke to Stan being a channel for whatever emerges, so that every poem read becomes owned by everyone present. Simon Simonian reported that a publication he is producing on building peace will include some of Stan's poems and background information. Friends asked for a revisiting at Santa Monica meeting, and Stan will take this up with Worship and Ministry.

01-15-01 Meeting expresses our appreciation of Stan's ministry and for the impact it has had on our meeting and the wider community.

Pastoral Care – Kathy Forsman brought forward Cristine Reynaert for final approval of her membership. Cristine was accompanied out of the room, and Friends spoke to the deep spiritual experience of her clearness committee.

01-15-02 Meeting approves the membership of Cristine Reynaert in the Santa Monica Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

The clerk called for silent worship.

Nominating Committee – Stan Searl brought

Gretchen Woelfle forward for a second two year term on Nominating. Business meeting, acting as a whole, acted as the naming committee, and approved this nomination.

Gail Thomas was brought forward for the first time as a member of the Library and Adult Education committees. Gail shared her wide-ranging history in many monthly meetings and Quaker organizations, including Friends General Conference, workshops on white privilege, and leadership of spiritual directions programs.

Finance Committee – Wendy Christensen gave a summary of our financial position. For 2015, Santa Monica meeting is on or slightly above budget, primarily due to committees lowering their expenses, member contributions, and Grant Ramey's diligence in facilitating rentals.

Minutes from the December 13, 2015 meeting on the occasion of business were read and approved.

Meeting closed in silent worship.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Watkins-Shaw, Clerk
Ann Fuller, Recording Clerk

Clerk's Call to
2016 PACIFIC YEARLY MEETING REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE:
Santa Monica Meeting House
Friday, March 4 – Sunday, March 6 2016

Santa Monica Meeting has been asked to provide hospitality, some transportation and food for Rep Com. Sarah Rose House Lightner is coordinating the support Meeting is providing.

Sarah Rose writes: Please let me know if you can help us with fulfilling our hosting commitments in one or more of the following ways:

- 1) Do you have a spare bed or beds for traveling Friends March 4-6th?
- 2) Do you have a car and can you help with airport runs and/or getting people between their hosts homes and the meetinghouse?

3) Can you commit to helping with meal prep or kitchen cleanup for at least one of the meals?

4) Are you available to help out with other coordinating tasks in between now and the meeting?

5) Do you have any recommendations for good local restaurants?

The earlier you can sign up for these commitments, the better. Registration closes Feb 12th, so it will be good to have your responses by then too so we can match people accordingly.

Thanks & Peace,
Sarah Rose SarahRoseHouse@gmail.com

A Short Summary of the Early History of the Santa Monica Meeting - Part 1

By Curtis Raynor

On December 2, 2001, during the Adult Education hour, we had the opportunity to tell the story of our Meeting's beginnings and of the years of love and work that culminated in the creation of a physical spiritual home, our Meeting House.

We learned the names of some of our forebears, and caught glimpses of their stories and personalities, thanks to the remembrances of our panel of storytellers—Esther Schou, Lee Storey, Margaret Zumwinkle and Betty Smith. It was a wonderful hour, learning about our past and having a chance to say thank you in person, to our panelists—all of whom have contributed so much to our meeting; and to say thank you, in spirit, to those not present, many no longer alive, to whom we owe so much. - Curtis Raynor

A Short Summary of the Early History of the Santa Monica Meeting

At the prompting of Edith Sperry and Nina Heaton, who had been members of Orange Grove Meeting in Pasadena, the first meeting for worship of the Santa Monica Friends Group was held Sunday afternoon Oct. 6, 1946 at 5:30 P.M. in a classroom in the Trinity Baptist Church at 10th and California Streets. It was attended by 26 persons.

On November 17th of that same year, the group held its first business meeting at the home of Edith Sperry. The following officers were installed: Edith Sperry, Clerk; Katherine Franz, Secretary; Charlotte Braunsteiner, Treasurer; and Nina Heaton, Hospitality and Publicity. There was \$1.00 in the treasury.

For the next several years the group met for worship in various churches, the YM and YWCAs (it was too noisy) and in the homes of the members. Meetings for business followed pot luck dinners in members homes. By 1950 attendance had dwindled and an experiment was tried for a while of having a half hour social time followed by a half hour meeting for worship.

By 1952, when meeting for worship was held at Edith Sperry's new and larger home at 1907 12th Street

(near Pico), the group felt more settled and they applied for membership in Pacific Yearly Meeting. On Dec. 13th of that year we were accepted as a full-fledged meeting with 15 adult members and 3 children.

In mid-1953, a newly formed Children's Meeting was held at Art and Ethel Rose's home in Mar Vista. It was Ethel who also proposed that we issue a monthly newsletter—*Friendly Notes*—and she became our first editor. In 1955 a long relationship was started with the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which was and is a black congregation at 20th and Delaware.

During our discussion I asked Betty Smith if it had been considered somewhat controversial—this being back in the mid 50's—having a white congregation utilizing a black church. It was unusual, she said, there wasn't a lot of interaction between blacks and whites at the time, and then went on to share the anecdote of her husband, Myron Smith and another prominent member of our meeting, Gordon Goodhart, helping the Seventh Day Adventist congregation paint their church and getting a bit of a cultural education in the process. Myron and Gordon, both possessing well developed scientific/engineering minds and habits, learned that it was possible to work at a slower pace, have fun in the process and still get the job done.

Since the Seventh Day Adventists worship on Saturday, our meeting was able to rent rooms for both Worship and children's classes on Sunday morning. Family meetings were started at this time, held before the Meeting for Worship.

Betty remembered these as times for the meeting's children and their parents to spend some worshipful quality time together and perhaps to sing a song or tell a story.

In 1958 we had 33 children enrolled in the Sunday School. There were 18 adult members and a similar number of attenders.

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“LIVING OUR LIVES IN WORSHIP”

DIEGO NAVARRO’S ONE-DAY WORKSHOP

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2016

9:00am to 4:00 pm

Please RSVP to Judith Searle

According to Diego, Quakerism is a visceral religion, distinctively prophetic and one that relies upon being open to the Inner Teacher. Hence, the workshop will be all about listening and becoming open to a deeper mystery of underlying group unity – creating this together at the workshop as we rely upon our own experience through queries and conversations.

Diego’s critique of Quakerism will allow us to go more deeply into the realities of the Spirit together, listening more acutely as he illustrates how as Friends our tendency often is to be too reliant on our cognitive apparatus—worshiping too much in our head and glorifying the *forms* of worship. Instead, he asserts, we should live our whole lives in worship!

In the keynote presentation Diego gave to the Intermountain Yearly Meeting last summer, he wrote: “Discernment requires waking up from the trance of the dominant culture, lifting the veil from our eyes. In our tradition, we put ourselves at odds with the taken-for-granted assumptions of the dominant culture, as early Friends did. At times, our own assumptions become our toughest challenges. Early Friends spent a lot of time working on waking up. It was that trance that they were concerned about, and they developed processes for helping to lift that veil.”

Sponsored by the Adult Education Committee of SMFM, this free workshop will discuss techniques related to various somatic practices that can enrich our worship experience. This will be an experiential and embodied workshop: in the morning session, Diego will describe four distinct levels of listening and offer experiential exercises designed to help deepen the connection with our “Inner Teacher.” In the afternoon, we will explore the prophetic and communal aspects of our Quaker faith and practice.

The morning portion of the workshop will run from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm with a break in the middle. We will have a potluck lunch from 1:00 to 2:00. The afternoon segment will build on the morning’s experiences to explore how communal discernment can facilitate the evolution of consciousness; we will end at 4:00 p.m.

Diego Navarro grew up in Claremont Friends Meeting and is currently a member of Santa Cruz Friends Meeting (PYM). He teaches at Cabrillo College and for twelve years has been following a leading to develop a transformative program for community college students, which is being replicated nationwide. Diego is the Presiding Clerk of Pacific Yearly Meeting.

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There was not enough room at the Seventh Day Adventist Church for all of the kids’ classes, so the nursery and kindergarten groups met at Tom and Pat Sciotto’s home. In Oct 1959 the Meeting for Worship again was held in Edith Sperry’s home, while the children’s classes continued at the church. The desire to

have a meeting house of our own, so kids and parents could meet at the same location at the same time, had grown quite strong. It was time to have a home of our own.

Santa Monica Monthly Meeting

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<https://www.quakercloud.org/cloud/santa-monica-friends-meeting>



**WALK CHEERFULLY OVER THE EARTH ANSWERING THAT OF
GOD IN EVERYONE. -George Fox**

Contributions to the Meeting

While the Meeting values everyone's contributions of time and energy, it also depends on financial contributions to support its many activities. Please give what you can.

Please make sure your name and street address are on your check, and mark it as 'Donation.'

You may also drop checks in the contributions box in the library area. If you wish to contribute by automatic deposit, please contact the Clerk of Finance Committee.

Mail to:
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