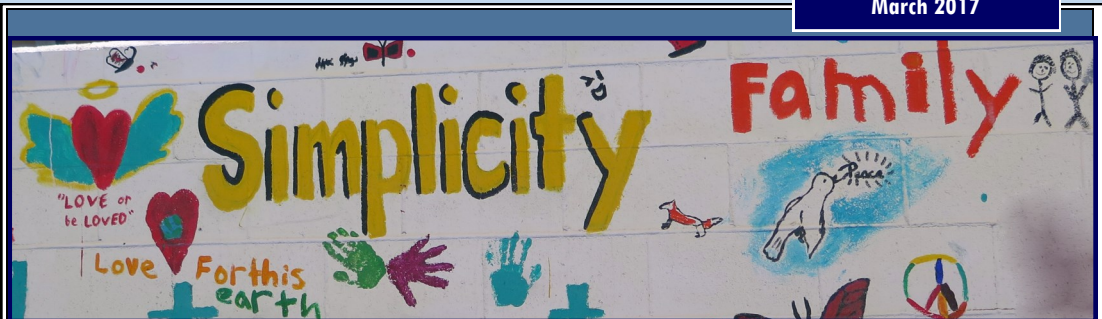


Friendly Notes

Santa Monica Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

March 2017



Inside this issue:

Advices & Queries: The State of the Meeting	1
Minutes 2/12/2017	2
Adult Ed Reading Group: Don Badgley, <i>Experiential Faith</i>	7
Calendar of Events	1

Advices & Queries: The State of the Meeting

Advices

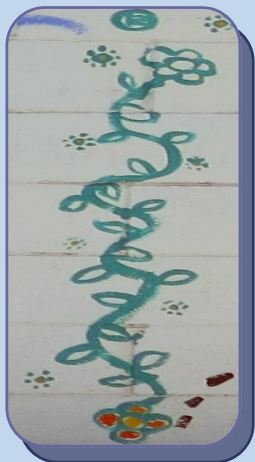
Faith and Practice advises:

"...the State of the Meeting Report should be a self-examination by the Meeting and its members of their spiritual strengths and weaknesses and of the efforts to foster growth in the spiritual life. Reports may cover the full range of interests and concerns but should emphasize those indicative of the spiritual health of the Meeting."

As Meetings engage in a process of self-reflection and frank discussion, they may consider the following queries:

Queries

- What are your greatest joys as a meeting?
- What leadings does your meeting feel most strongly?
- What troubles or challenges are you facing?
- Are there any changes you seek in the meeting?
- How do you put your faith into action?



Calendar of Events

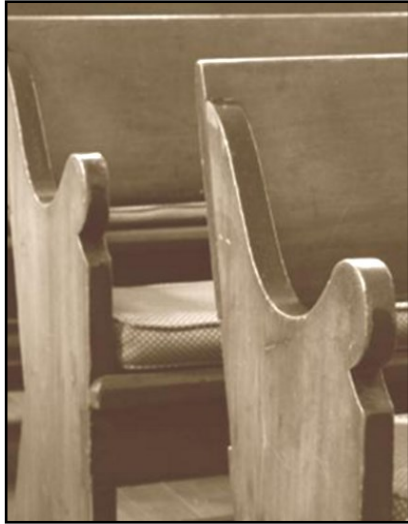
Alternating Fridays - 7 to 9 p.m. Quaker Women's Support Group, hosted by Cathleen Loeser. Contact 310-985-3400 for details.

April 29 - Spring Gathering of SCQM at Santa Barbara Friends Meeting. Contact Sarah Rose House-Lightner for details. sarahrosehouse@hotmail.com

June 15 - PYM Unity with Nature Mini Grant Due! See Sarah Rose for details!

July 23 to Aug. 2 - El Salvador Service Learning Trip. Call Nate Secrest at 707 703-4903.

Minutes - February 12, 2017



Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business

Attending: Bob Tajima, Rachel Fretz, Tim Vreeland, Judith Searle, Cristine Reynaert, Debbie, Gail Thomas, Brian Johnston, Leslie Klinger, Grant Ramey, Jan Bartholomew, Cynthia Cuza, Stan Searl, John Ovretveit, Michael Harvest, Henry Yang, Curtis Raynor, Wendy Christensen, Cathleen Loeser, JoAnn Taylor, Richard Shaw, Richard Chamberlain, Kate Watkins-Shaw, Rebeca Searl, Ann Fuller

Meeting began in silent worship on queries on Social and Civic Responsibility.

A Friend reflected on the Quarterly State of the Meeting report queries asking how we can be God's hands (the only ones He has), especially in acknowledging, then putting aside, fears, and not thinking of meetings as for personal growth only. A Friend heard the message "Be still and know that I am" as a call to oneself to be more, do more, to step up. Light under a bushel is hiding the Light. A Friend said that if we are bold, mighty forces will come to our aid. A Friend urged persistence, being faithful without attention to outcomes.

The agenda was read, amended, and approved.

Finance Committee – W. Christensen distributed a two page report [paper copy archived], including the proposed 2017 budget, and final 2016 report. The open finance meeting was helpful. Without including the Diane Troth \$10,000 gift, 2016 resulted in a \$4,078 surplus over budget. The proposed 2017 budget assumes no daytime rental income, and allocates one half of the gift to operating costs. Carrying over the surplus from 2016 results in a year end \$1,355 surplus. Some Friends are increasing Vanco contributions; cash and check contributions have not changed. Most committees have downsized their requested budgets. Donations to Quaker Bolivia Link has been dropped, in response to the sense of the open finance meeting, and Peace and Social Action Committee budget has been increased by \$100 to cover donations approved by business meeting.

17-02-01 Meeting approves the 2017 budget [copy in archives].

Appreciation expressed to committee for wonderful, clear work.

Ad Hoc Committee on the Lease– C. Reynaert reported that My First Place appreciates our commitment to give them notice if we have another serious possibility for a daytime renter, and accepts that we cannot offer them the right of first refusal. The Planning Board appeal is set for the end of February, but could be postponed or cancelled if we are not in unity with proceeding with MFP, in order to preserve the goodwill of the city toward them. Cristine asked meeting to discern if we are in unity with presenting a "united front" with MFP at the Planning Commission appeal, as a renter.

Meeting went into worship.

Friends asked whether Ad Hoc Committee was in unity, and Cristine clarified that they follow meeting discernment. Several Friends expressed opposition to continuing with MFP; several were in favor. Our duty to listen to others and to ourselves, the possibility of working with neighbors' concerns since we have a good working relationship with Sean and Maria, the benefit of MFP's financial contribution to the meeting, experiences with noisy preschools, our duty to "stay the course" were voiced. Friends had varying experiences with Sean. A Friend stated that we have dealt honorably with them. The question is: "Is this the right project for us to undertake now? Is it in the right place?" A Friend noted that we have adjusted our budget to allow for the reduction in income. This can be an opportunity to discern who we are in the neighboring community.

The sense of the meeting was that we are not in unity on proceeding to provide a "united front" with MFP at the Planning Commission Appeal, and do not believe we will be by the end of February. If we cannot find another renter, at a later date we may come to a different sense of the meeting with regard to MFP, but we aren't there now. This will be communicated to Sean and Maria. Questions of funds returned to MFP was referred to Finance Committee for seasoning. A Friend said that they had changed their initial view that we were not behaving with integrity, and called for more open meetings.

Rental Committee – G. Ramey and J. Bartholomew reported that following up on neighbors' suggestions has not revealed any interest, but that calls are ongoing. They have met with an organization that serves developmentally chal-

Contributions to
Friendly Notes
are welcome.

joannaclinton@gmail.com



Minutes - February 12, 2017 (cont'd.)

lenged young adults, which has contacted meeting several times during the past two years. Their hours would be 8:30 am to 3:00 pm, with clients spending most of the time out in the community with their counselors, though one or two clients might stay in the building for the day. The maximum enrollment would be 25 clients and 25 coaches. They are funded by the West Regional Center. They would need office space for three administrators, cubbies, and modifications to the bathrooms to accommodate disabilities. Next Friday the committee will meet with Liz, the director, at the meetinghouse. They have been in business at 17th St., near Crossroads School, for 4.5 years. Meeting went into worship.

Nominating Committee – Stan Searl brought Celia Carroll forward for final approval.

17-02-02: Meeting approves Celia Carroll on the Childrens Education Committees

Kristi Kreiter is brought forward for the first time, on Children's Education Committee.

Communications Committee – Bob Tajima reported. 1) The Committee requested that Pastoral Care attempt to contact the many people listed on the “Friends Near and Far” part of the Directory. 2) The charge of the website is to provide outreach to the general public by attracting and facilitating newcomers to attend meeting, and to serve as a resource for Santa Monica Friends, although only ten Friends have signed up for access to the site so far. The committee asks whether the website is redundant with the listserv and Friendly Notes. 3) Guidelines for posting to the website are that submissions be ready for publication, e.g., photographs have captions and explanatory text. Bob can edit but not create these. People in the front ground of photographs should be checked against a permission list. The committee is developing a form to be distributed. For now, submissions can be emailed to Bob. 4) Bob distributed copies of a website photo policy for approval.

17-02-03 Meeting approves the following policy:

Santa Monica Friends Meeting Website Photo Policy

Santa Monica Friends Meeting endeavors to present a warm, friendly, human face to the world via its website. One of the best ways to do this is to show photos of members and attendees at events. On the other hand, we recognize that privacy concerns are very important.

It is presumed that any person from outside our immediate community (i.e., a featured guest) who makes a formal (scheduled, announced, etc.) presentation at a meeting sponsored event has provided implied consent for the publication of their picture in the newsletter or the website.

No pictures of non-featured guests will be foregrounded in any pictures published on the website unless they have signed the consent list.

Any foregrounded person who is a member/attender of our community must sign their name on a list of persons giving consent to publishing their picture on the website. Signing the list grants inherent permission in perpetuity until they ask to have their name removed from the list. Minors under 18 must have a signature from a parent or legal guardian. Said list will be posted on the website to be viewed by members only.

The Communications Committee will not seek to obtain consent from persons in the background of photographs, even if identifiable. Pictures with children in the background will not be published unless permission has been granted by a parent or legal guardian.

Committees submitting photos for website publication must ensure that all foregrounded persons in photos have provided proper written consent.

A Friend asked about the legal issues in publishing people's photographs, which was referred to C. Reynaert, and it was suggested that presenters be asked whether they wish to be identified on the website. A Friend felt strongly that names not be attached to photographs.

Pastoral Care – The Clerk told Friends that they only need to fill out as much information as they can at this time, before turning in the Health Care and Final Affairs form to be added to their files at the meetinghouse.

Adult Education – S. Searl reported that the committee has attended to the request from Children's Education by sponsoring a successful family and Friends' Christmas party and cookie decorating. An Easter celebration is possible. The Welcome Table in the patio at Fellowship has been established, and the committee is working on literature and information to be provided there. Programs on Quaker parenting (and grandparenting) are also being considered.

Minutes from the January 8, 2017 meeting for business were read and approved with one correction. Under Finance Committee, the monthly income from ECPC increased from \$1400 to \$2400/month.

Meeting ended in silent worship.

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

Attachments: **Additional queries for February:** We value our part in shaping the laws of our country. Our task is to see that laws serve God's purposes and build a just social order. Our first allegiance should be to God, and if this conflicts with any compulsion of the state, we serve our country best by remaining true to our higher loyalty. Poverty within a wealthy society is unjust, cruel and often linked to skin color, gender, and language. We must examine our own privilege and role in the economic order that deepens this disparity. Friends should be alert to oppression and injustice, and persistent in working against them.

Adult Education Reading Group:
Don Bagley's "Experiential Faith"
 March 19, 2017 at 8:30 a.m.
 Clerked by Kim O'Brien

All the quotations are from Don Badgley's "Experiential Faith," from SPARK, New York Yearly Meeting's newsletter, vol. 46, no. 1, Jan. 2017. We will approach these passages in a modified worship sharing approach, praying to be open to Spirit's guidance and direction in reflections about these passages. We encourage Friends to speak from their own experience, open to heart-directed responses, integrating head, heart, and spirit.

1. "For centuries, we Friends have been known as a faith community that carries its ministries into the world as acts of witness. Often, those community actions begin with individual leadings that subsequently gain collective strength of the meeting or wider body of Friends. Then, more often than not, we detach our witnesses from the Divine Source that led us to the ministry. In addition, 'liberal' and non-pastoral Friends rarely share ministries in the world that simply proclaim the Divine Presence that empower our worship and works.

I travel among Friends under the weight of a Minute of Travel, endorsed by my Monthly Meeting (Poughkeepsie Meeting) and by New York Yearly Meeting. The phrase 'under the weight' is not just Quaker-ese. This call to share what has been given me in the Light is weighty and my occasional doubts only add to the weight. The message I offer has been challenging for some Friends and I must be ever vigilant that I not get ahead of the Leader as I strive not to cause offense. My ministry is anchored by other Friends and evolves with each meeting I visit. It is also a profound blessing and I am grateful it has been given to me to carry.

These few words summarize what I carry: *While informed by doctrine, tradition and scripture our religion is founded in the direct and immediate experience of the Divine Light, encounters with God. We trust to this Living Presence as the only True Authority. The time has come to share experiential faith with the world through vocal ministry.*"

2. "Sadly, many Friends have become quite adept at keeping the simple Truth of the living Presence well hidden. In our good outreach to the world we seem content to credit our status as Quakers for our worldly political notions and witness works. Whether it's our local meeting, our yearly meeting or FGC, FCNL, FWCC or AFSC – the *Source* of our ministry is *almost never mentioned*. Absent a constant orientation to the Divine Source, absent acknowledgement of that Light ordering our ministry, our so-called 'testimonies' are reduced to notions and our witnesses to the world are weakened if not ineffectual.

For me, the Religious Society of Friends exists for a single fundamental purpose. Even as we do wonderful work to make the world a better place, we might remind ourselves

that we do not exist to heal racism, raise awareness of white privilege, to bring about equality or world peace. We don't exist to fight for gender equality, to feed the hungry, visit the prisoners, struggle for the rights of indigenous peoples or any of the other leadings and works that define us in the world, no matter how blessed and well led these labors may be.

We exist to bring about a world that is led by Divine Love. We can only be effective in that call by leading others to the Experience of the Divine, by ever pointing to the Divine Source. All else naturally follows that prime motivation as we then order our lives in that Light. Our Peace Testimony as stated by George Fox to Charles II was entirely framed and built upon the phrase, 'the Spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable.' This foundation stone gave the statement its power and that power arose in Fox's direct Experience of the Divine Light. His ministry was not directed at the powers and principalities of his day. It was directed at individual seekers and at the church communities that Fox felt had strayed from the Experiential Faith taught by Jesus, strayed into notions that diverted 'believers' from the Experience."

3. "Today, in the 21st century, we Friends are loath to challenge other faith communities. Many of us struggle with outreach ministry because we come to Friends fearing, even detesting 'proselytizing.' We are content to sit quietly in our meetings and hope our lives speak through our works in the world. If a seeker comes to worship with us we are likely to share our history, works and testimonies and perhaps that will resonate and the visitor will return to worship again. Most do not. Had Fox taken that passive approach, Quakerism would not have traveled past his village.

When Fox experienced that Light he named it the Spirit of Christ. That was his context in his time and place. I call my Experience of that Spirit the Divine Light and know that it is the same Power that Jesus also experienced and shared: and I say so.

Jesus' response to the Light was not to start a religion about himself as a God. Others did that later. His response to the Light was to announce the good news that the Kingdom was at hand. He never preached what to believe. That was also added later, with a dash of fear thrown in. He taught what to do and how to behave by living in the Light. He taught love. We would do well to imitate and share that ministry. That connection was the essence of Fox's ministry. It is also worth noting that connecting our ministry to *his* ministry carries great power and weight, even for non-believers and non-Christians.

(cont'd pg. 5)

Santa Monica Monthly Meeting

1440 Harvard Street
Santa Monica, CA 90404-3105

Phone: (310) 828-4069

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



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

Page 5

“Experiential Faith,” cont’d.

Our Quaker testimonies are nothing but the product, the fruit if you prefer. They are the result of the Experience that leads us into Love and from there to peace. Pointing only to the product might occasionally reveal the Source but that approach has been mostly ineffective.

We need to point first to the Light, the Source that may be experienced by all who seek it. That Experience is sufficient unto itself; eternal, infinite, unchangeable and the hope of the world. There are countless people who are craving that simple yet life-altering Truth. Are Friends still willing to publish that essential message?”

Warm Regards,

Stan Searl, Co-Clerk, Adult Education



Ben Lomond Quaker Center Monthly Retreats

<http://www.quakercenter.org>

Santa Monica Monthly Meeting, with the help of the Alice Herman Committee, holds an annual pass through April 2017. Future renewal is based upon current attendance.

Contact Maggie Hutchinson at 310-415-6522.