

# Friendly Notes

Santa Monica Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

May 2017



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## Upcoming Events:

- ◆ May 20 all day: SCQM at Orange Grove - see page 3 for info
- ◆ May 21 at 8:30 a.m.: Adult Education Reading Group: Thomas Kelly, *A Testament of Devotion*
- ◆ May 17 - 27: Tim Vreeland's Art Show. Contact Tim for info.
- ◆ May 12 & 26: Quaker Women's Group. Call: 310-985-3400.
- ◆ June 4 at noon: Adult Ed. Reads Together: Everyday Prophets
- ◆ July 14 to 19: Pacific Yearly Meeting at Walker Creek Ranch.

## Advices and Queries: Meeting for Business

### Queries

*Do I regularly attend meeting for business and in a spirit of love and unity? If unable to attend, how do I attend to my responsibility? (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting)*

*Am I familiar enough with our church government to contribute to its disciplined processes? Do I consider difficult questions with an informed mind as well as a generous and loving spirit? If I cannot attend, do I uphold the meeting prayerfully? (Canadian Yearly Meeting)*

*Are our meetings for worship with a concern for business held in the spirit of worship, seeking the guidance of God? (Baltimore Yearly Meeting)*

*How do we respond if we notice the meeting has lost an understanding of the presence of God? (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting)*

### Advices

The purpose of our Meetings for Worship for Business is precisely this: we meet not to make decisions, but to build a community of witness: what have we found corporately? Jan Hoffman, 1988

Among Friends, the decisions made by a group are enriched when all members commit themselves to regular attendance ... Remember that to everyone is given a share of responsibility, whether through silence or through the spoken word. Be diligent in attendance and in inward

preparation. Be ready to speak under the leadings of the Light.

Sense of the meeting is not synonymous with consensus. **Consensus** is...a secular method, involving a rational process and producing general agreement. The authority is the group. **Sense of the Meeting** is a religious method involving a spiritual process and producing a spirit-led decision. The authority is God as discerned by the group in worship. *Baltimore Y.M.*

The goal of Friends' decision-making is a Spirit-led sense of the meeting, a crystallization of the search for clarity on the topic under consideration. Even in the face of strong difference of opinion, that goal is achievable when there is spiritual unity. Our search is for unity, not unanimity. We consider ourselves to be in unity when our search for Truth is shared; when our listening for God is faithful; when our wills are caught up in the presence of Christ; and when our love for one another is constant. A united meeting is not necessarily all of one mind, but it is all of one heart. *Philadelphia Y.M.*

Spiritual discernment lies at the heart of Quaker spirituality and practice. It is grounded in the central Quaker conviction of the availability to every person of the experience and guidance of God, immediate as well as mediated. Discernment is the faculty we use to ... sense the right course for the meeting to take in complex or difficult circumstances. *Baltimore Y.M.*

## Contributions to Friendly Notes

Friendly Notes welcomes submissions.

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.

Send to Joanna, the Editor of Friendly Notes, joannaclinton@gmail.com or leave in the Toddler Room at Meeting.



## Minutes - April 9, 2017

### Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business

Attending: Rachel Fretz, Gail Thomas, Cristine Reynaert, Dahlia van Gelder, Jan Bartholomew, Andrew Hoyer, Bob Tajima, Gretchen Woelfle, Wendy Christensen, Cindy Waite, Brian Johnston, Cynthia Cuza, Henry Wang, Ann Fuller

Meeting began in silent worship on these Queries: "How do I actively support the meeting community?" "How am I maturing into the fullness of membership in this spiritual community?" and "How does the Meeting nurture my spiritual growth and transformation?"

Friends spoke to the distinction between "obligation" and "responsibility", the latter reflecting that Friends are called, not required, to become an integral part of a faith community; to care for the Meeting and each other, with joy, although not always with ease. A Friend spoke to the need for Meeting to check in with Friends who stop coming to Meeting because of illness or difficult times, as part of nourishing the community. One Friend said that the queries apply to "regular" life, not only when there is drama or a specific need. A Friend noted that Nominating Committee recognizes different gifts depending on personal history and fit for the needs of the meeting community.

The agenda was read and accepted.

**Alice Herman Committee** – G. Woelfle distributed copies of the AHC 2017-18 budget and gave background. The Fund's original bequest of \$145,000 is now worth \$251,764, adjusted for inflation. Policy is to spend only the amount over the original bequest, leaving \$11,447 available this year. She noted that numbers are somewhat fluid as long as the total is not exceeded. The Quaker Center annual Pass has not been used often in the past two years, perhaps because of the expense of travel to Ben

Lomond; Quaker Center has agreed to allow more than one Friend to attend a workshop, and several Friends have already applied. Meeting Enrichment covers expenses and two-thirds of honoraria for speakers, with the requesting committee covering the remaining one-third in their budget. Emergency grants are used for financial emergencies; applications can be made to the Clerk, C. Tantau. AHC is no longer giving loans; outstanding loans are being slowly repaid.

AHC asks committees to pay attention to budgets, rather than depend upon donations made at events sponsored by the committee. They suggest sharing expenses with other committees whose charge also applies to a particular invited speaker.

Meeting went into silent worship.

**Worship and Ministry** – C. Cuza brought the proposed State of the Meeting for discernment and approval. The report was read aloud and copies were distributed. In response to a Friend's question, it was stated that the timeframe extends to the spring 2017. Editing changes were suggested, especially given that the report will be both read aloud and published. Quarterly is experimenting with reading all responses to each query, rather than each meeting reading their entire report. Friends spoke to their awe of the process W&M used to prepare the report, notably that Stan distributed a form at meeting, reached out to Friends, and worked with W&M to prepare the draft.

**17-03-01:** Meeting approves the State of the Meeting Report, with edits to be made by Worship and Ministry.

**House Committee** – J. Bartholomew introduced Andy Hoyer of Mid-City Neighbors. He attended our neighbors' meeting after discovering our interest in MFP, and informed neighbors by flyer cars. He is concerned with the viability of our community. He will share his list of neighborhood connections, and we will add him to our list of actively concerned neighbors.

Jan gave a history of our search for renters via Westside Rentals and Craigslist. The committee has met with Aurelia Foundation and Aurelia's director, Lisa, came to meeting. She would like another walk-through. C. Reynaert is reviewing insurance considerations of renting to Aurelia. There do not seem to be additional ADA requirements or CUP needed for this organization, but if we make any changes to comply with ADA on our own, Aurelia would like us to pay for them unless they are made only because of their tenancy. A startup healing arts consortium of practitioners is also interested, and walked through. Jan noted that both organizations are in tune with Quaker testimonies. Jan answered several questions about Aurelia; other questions can be taken to the Jan, C. Raynor, or G. Ramey, our Friend in Residence. Contact with some of the most concerned neighbors has been positive. Andy thanked the meeting before leaving.

Silent worship took place.

**Peace and Social Action** – B. Johnston reported that the committee meetings have been well attended and the committee active.

George Lakey will present a workshop in June on his Viking Economics, relating to our Minute on Income Inequality, and will be at Orange Grove Meeting on the following Sunday. Friends can see a lecture on YouTube.

Our Minute will be presented at Southern California Quarterly Meeting. The committee is monitoring the positions of AFSC, FCNL, and FCL-CA, and is making information available to Santa Monica Friends. Locally, we are involved with CLUE and KIND.

A basket in the patio at Fellowship is available for Friends to share projects they are actively involved with, maintained by J. Bartholomew and A. Fuller.

The committee is organizing a working visit to LA Kitchen in June (at the earliest) to help prepare food and learn about their work. LA Kitchen collects unused but quality food from restaurants, trains people in food preparation jobs who are recently released from prison or are graduating from foster care, and distributes the meals to elders in need. The committee hopes for participation by Friends' families. A Friend noted a monthly event called Poems for Peace on Fairfax in Los Angeles.

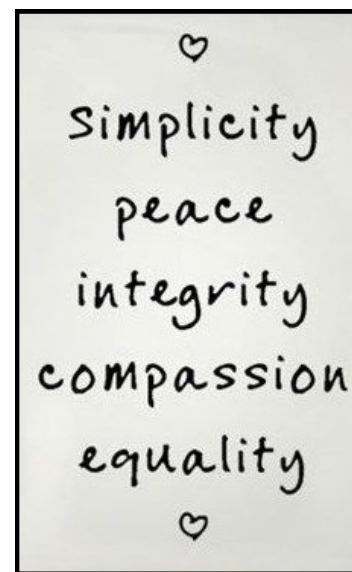
Minutes from the March 12 Meeting for Business were read and approved. Meeting closed in silent worship.

Respectfully submitted  
Cynthia Cuza, Acting Clerk  
Ann Fuller, Recording Clerk

Southern California Quarterly Meeting  
Orange Grove Monthly Meeting in Pasadena  
Saturday, May 20

**DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF IMMIGRANTS**

Free workshop with Pedro Rios.  
Contact Shayne Lightner for details.



Special thanks to our Friends near and far for the work you do to make our communities whole, to heal our ailing, and to bring peace and joy to one another.

*Thee lift me  
and I'll lift thee,  
and we'll ascend together.  
(Quaker Proverb)*

Adult Education Reading Group: Thomas R. Kelly, *A Testament of Devotion*  
May 21, 2017 at 8:30 a.m.; clerked by Kim O'Brien

The quotations are from *A Testament of Devotion* by Thomas R. Kelly (Harper & Row Publishers: New York: 1941). We will approach these passages in a modified worship sharing approach, praying to be open to the Spirit's guidance and direction in our reflections about these passages. We encourage Friends to speak from their own experience, open to heart-directed responses, integrating head, heart and spirit together.

### 1. *The Light Within*

"Meister Eckhart wrote, 'As thou art in church or cell, that same frame of mind carry out into the world, into its turmoil and its fitfulness.' Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center, a speaking Voice, to which we may continuously return. Eternity is at our hearts, pressing upon our time-torn lives, warming us with intimations of an astounding destiny, calling us home onto itself. Yielding to these persuasions, gladly committing ourselves in body and soul, utterly and completely, to the Light Within, is the beginning of true life. It is a dynamic center, a creative Life that presses to birth within us. It is a Light Within which illumines the face of God and casts new shadows and new glories upon the face of men. It is a seed stirring to life if we do not choke it. It is the Shekinah of the soul, the Presence in the midst. Here is the Slumbering Christ, stirring to be awakened, to become the soul we clothe in earthly form and action. And He is within us all" (Kelly, p. 29).

2. The basic response of the soul to the Light is internal adoration and joy, thanksgiving and worship, self-surrender and listening. The secret places of the heart cease to be our noisy workshop. They become a holy sanctuary of adoration and of self-oblation, where we are kept in perfect peace, if our minds be stayed on Him who has found us in the inward springs of our life. And in brief intervals of overpowering visitation we are able to carry the sanctuary frame of mind out into the world, into its turmoil and its fitfulness, and in a hyper-aesthesia of the soul, we see all mankind tinged with deeper shadows, and touched with Galilean glories. Powerfully are the springs of our will moved to an abandon of singing love towards God; powerfully are we moved to a new and overcoming love toward time-blinded men and all creation. In this Center of Creation all things are ours, and we are Christ's and Christ is God's. We are owned men, ready to run and not be weary and to walk and not faint" (Kelly, p. 30).

3. "The Society of Friends arose as a rediscovery of the over-open inward springs of immediacy and revelation. George Fox and the Quakers found a Principle within men, a Shekinah of the soul, a Light Within that lights every man coming into the world. Dedicating themselves utterly and completely to attendance upon this Inward Living Christ, they were quickened into a new and bold tenderness toward the blindness of the leaders of Christian living. Aflame with the Light of the inner sanctuary, they went out into the world, into its turmoil and fitfulness, and called men to listen above all to that of God speaking within them, to order all life by the Light of the Sanctuary. 'Dear Friends,' writes Fox to his groups, 'keep close to that which is pure within you, which leads you up to God.' John Woolman, the Quaker tailor of Mt. Holly, New Jersey, resolved so to order his outward affairs, so to adjust his business burdens, that nothing, absolutely nothing would crowd out his prime attendance upon the Inward Principle. And in this sensitizing before the inward altar of his soul, he was quickened to see and attack effectively the evils of slave-holding, of money-loaning, of wars upon the Indians" (Kelly, pp. 33-34).

- Stan Searl, Co-Clerk, Adult Education



**Everyday Prophets: The 2016 James Backhouse Lecture  
Clerked by Stanford J. Searl, Jr. at the Adult Education Session  
June 4, 2017 at noon, Santa Monica Meeting  
Reading Together as Everyday Prophets**

The quotations are from Margery Post Abbott's *Everyday Prophets*, the 2016 James Backhouse Lecture, published by the Australia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. We will approach these passages in a modified worship sharing approach, praying to be open to the Spirit's guidance and direction in our reflections about these passages. We encourage Friends to speak from their own experience, open to heart-directed responses, integrating head, heart and spirit together.

#### Excerpts

Everyday prophets are "... people who listen to the voice of all that is Holy and follow its guidance" (Abbott, p. 3).

The author talked with a number of Quakers about the meanings of prophetic ministry and cites some of these conversations at times in the lecture. In this context, she cites Paul Buckley, an unprogrammed Friend from Ohio: "Within our tradition, I believe true prophetic ministry is an attitude toward life that produces a renewed state of being. It is the belief we can act at all times under divine guidance. When we are in this condition, every aspect of our lives has the potential to be ministry and each act, however small, can be prophetic" (Abbott, p.4).

"It takes practice to develop the skill of listening with an inward ear and coming to recognize the taste and colour of all that is holy" (Abbott, p. 5).

Abbott presents three aspects of the everyday prophet:

1. "Above all, such a person is one who listens inwardly and has learned to distinguish the voice of the Spirit, the presence of Christ, from their own desires or self-will, the pressures of the surrounding culture and the need to win approval from those around them.
2. Secondly, prophetic ministry requires obedience to that Inward Guide. Prophets are those who recognize what they are called of God to do and who act on this, living as closely as they can to the call expressed in Micah 6:8 to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.
3. Next, a person conscious of the Inward Teacher can see the world around them with eyes that penetrate beyond the surface meanings and cut through the distortions which too often govern life. This person might be able to see unarticulated personal need and a simple, quiet action which makes life better for someone. Or they recognize the consequences of events or words and issue warnings, urging timely change" (Abbott, pp. 5-6).

#### Excerpts

"The idea of 'taking up the cross' is sometimes used to claim a need for us to suffer as Christ did in order to become more like him. The early Quakers did not use suffering as their measure, but rather obedience. To take up the cross is to listen to the divine call, not our personal, immediate desires. When it means we have to give up whatever is most appealing to us at the mo-

ment, or let go of our personal comforts, there may be times of suffering. But that is not the point. As so many have attested, this place of obedience has not only meant greater freedom, compassion and equity, but also surprising joy and a sense of rightness deep within" (Abbott, pp. 12-13).

"Part of our challenge is to feel the presence of God and the movement of Truth and Love. This not 'feeling' as in the modern usage, but a deep inward knowing that is more than intellect and emotion. It allows no space for manipulation of others or falsity. When we feel the *inward motion* that comes from God rise up in us, then we are rightly led to speak, be it in worship or in daily life" (Abbott, p. 27).

#### Excerpts

"Being a band of everyday prophets. Is this possible for Friends? Can our communities better be schools for listening and for encouraging faithfulness to the Spirit? I believe so, but it is not an easy task to take up. I believe this is at the core of what we are all about: a faithfulness to the divine Guide that breaks open hearts and remakes them with compassion. People who know the touch of the Light and are willing to follow where it leads, knit together our communities. As the same time, they help make visible when we, and when the world around us, fall short of what we might be even as they demonstrate a different way of living in the world than what the consumer culture values.

Everyday prophets are already part of our communities. We all might be such people. Everyday prophets are at once ordinary and radical, both humble and bold. They act out of a weave of mercy and justice, valuing each being on this earth. Might we cherish those among us who are faithful" (Abbott, p. 42).

#### Illustrations from Santa Monica Meeting:

- ◆ Tim Vreeland's leading blog about Economic Inequality
- ◆ Patrick Finn's work about Economic Inequality and Schooling
- ◆ Stan Searl's research/writing about the meanings of Quaker silent worship and his Poetry as Ministry in this Meeting
- ◆ Our Adult Education's Reading Series and the creation of everyday prophecy

## 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**

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### Clerk's Call to

#### 2017 Pacific Yearly Meeting Annual Session (excerpted)

"The Society of Friends arose as a rediscovery of the ever-open inward springs of immediacy and revelation [...] Dedicating themselves utterly and completely to attendance upon this Inward Living Christ [...] Afame with the Light of the inner sanctuary, they went out into the world, into its turmoil and its fitfulness, and called [people] to listen above all to that of God speaking within them, to order all life by the Light of the Sanctuary." ~ Thomas Kelly, "A Testament of Devotion" ...

Please join us as we open ourselves to Spirit's Presence during our week together in community and contemplation. Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends 71st Annual Session will be July 14th to July 19th at Walker Creek Ranch in Petaluma, California. We are opened, strengthened, and comforted when we join one another in this centuries-old Friends practice of gathering as a Yearly Meeting body....



**Annual Session 2017  
Pacific Yearly Meeting**

**Walker Creek Ranch  
Friday, July 14 to Wednesday, July 19, 2017**

**AWAKENING TO THE PRESENCE**