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Friendly Notes

Santa Monica Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

February, 2017



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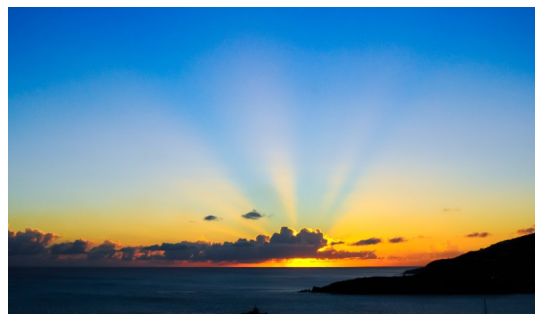
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Upcoming Events

- Meeting for Business – Sunday, February 11

- Adult Education Reading Group – Sunday, February 18
- RepCom – March 3-4th

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

- 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*
- 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*



Draft Minutes – January 14, 2018

Draft Notes on the Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business

Attending: Dahlia Van Gelder, Cristine Reynaert, Henry Yang, Jean Fiumara, Judith Searle, Simon Simonian, Jo Ann Taylor, Curtis Raynor, Jan Bartholomew, Brian Johnston, Rachel T. Fretz, Cindy Waite, Gail Thomas, Bob Tajima, Wendy Christensen, Celia Carroll, Richard Shaw, Grant Ramey, Stan Searl, Ann Fuller

Meeting began in silent worship on the queries which are being distributed by Worship and Ministry to aid them in drafting the State of the Meeting Report [see addenda]:

- A Friend spoke to their joy in how solutions are found when diverse and even conflicting ideas are brought to the beautiful process of committee work. This Friend came seeking an inviting spiritual home, not a belief-based religion but a “community of faith”, and referred to Meeting being like T.S.Eliot's “still point” around which everything turns, renewing their perspective.
- A Friend spoke to the deep listening to each other and to the Spirit in Worship and Ministry, and to the support and encouragement in joy and sorrow they felt over the years. A challenge is naming and working through conflict rather than avoiding it; this Friend wants to touch the truth through hearing different narratives in a trusting container.
- A Friend spoke to coming for the simplicity of “meeting that of God” in ourselves and others, grateful for the support in carrying that out in their life.
- A Friend likened Meeting to growing out of child-like dependence, and teen-age independence, to adult interdependence guided by the Spirit. A Friend said they simply “kind of like hanging out”.

The clerk invited more responses to challenges and changes:

- Friends spoke to the building's physical aspects, to Peace and Social Action Committee's struggles to take our concerns and interests into action, and the current attack on our deepest beliefs in equality and respect at the level of government; that the Quaker voice is relevant and needed and would be welcomed by others of good will.
- A Friend spoke to the need to bring more young people into Meeting, and for better communication with the Southern California community, perhaps through working collectively with other meetings.
- A Friend missed the one-day retreats, and desires more feedback about experiences at Pacific Yearly Meeting.
- A Friend noted the loss of meeting membership and suggested proselytizing as early Christians did.
- Another Friend said that sometimes we are too hard on ourselves and should acknowledge the profound effect each individual has – a common world-shaking cause need not be our only goal; our challenge is to be faithful, and out of that comes the fruit by which we are known.

The Clerk announced that Cynthia Cuza would be attending today as an elder and Clerk of Worship and Ministry.

Nominating Committee – Judith Searle brought one Friend forward for final approval. Emmy Mathis on Communications Committee, specifically to edit the Directory, was approved.

Finance Committee – Wendy Christensen distributed copies of the 2017 review and the 2018 proposed budget.

2017 report: Wendy called attention to the contributions, which were over budget at \$3,971; the rental income, which was budgetted at zero but now includes

Aurelia and evening rentals, for a total of \$60,888; Grant Ramey, Friend in Residence noted that no income was brought in in 2017 when we were considering My First Place. Wendy noted that committees had scaled back their requests by \$1500 when our income was uncertain. The Troth gift had been allocated to cover operating expenses, but was not needed. Under expenses, she noted that dues to PYM and SCQM are based on membership, and that Peace and Social Action's recommended contributions contain one error, which was corrected. In response to questions, she stated that capital reserves are accounted separately and would be reported on at the next business meeting. She also reported that the meeting is purchasing a copier.

2018 proposed budget: Wendy noted that the amount of contributions expected was based on 2017, that rental income includes the leased daytime tenant at \$3,000/month, plus evening and hourly rentals based on 2017. All committees requests were accepted, and AVP's budget went back up to \$4,000. A Friend expressed appreciation to our Friend in Residence for his diligence in seeking rentals. Amounts on the expenses page reflect the sense of the meeting at the threshing session that we increase the use of our space by the local community, and continue to support FCL-CA, Western Friends journal and the Burundi Clinic. She noted that FCNL was doing well financially. Peace and Social Action asked for and received an increase in support for local interfaith organizations, and a \$1,000 pilot grant to discern a process to identify and support local, effective groups.

- In answer to a Friend's question, it was noted that as long as it is not our primary function, our tax status is not affected by voting suggestions in Friends' legislative group's literature. Individuals can contribute to FCL CA and FCNL for lobbying, which is not tax exempt, or for education, which is. As a meeting, we contribute to the organizations as a whole.
- A concern was brought about capital reserves vs. House expenses, which will be addressed next month. Final approval of the budget will be brought to the February Meeting for Business.
- Concerns can be brought to committee members Gail Thomas (as Treasurer), Wendy Christensen, Jan Bartholomew, Emmy Mathis and Elizabeth Ralston.
- Appreciation was expressed by many Friends for the vigor and health of the Finance Committee and the opportunity to follow through on a long-standing sense that we want to give more in support and contributions.

Ad Hoc Committee on Archives – Celia Carroll and Rick Shaw reported that files on members have been re-organized and additional file cabinets provided. The committee asks what committees need and what records need to be stored as a meeting, e.g. newsletters. She brought a concern for clarity on confidentiality and security; e.g., keeping personal files in a lockable cabinet.

- A Friend asked about paper files vs. digital records, which might be projected during business meeting, saving paper.
- Friends noted the fragility of digital records due to platform changes and urged keeping both formats; off site storage, either online or not, is also possible. Minimally we want to have an archive of all approved Minutes.
- The issues of Minutes vs. notes was raised, and privacy, for example, in the notes from Worship and Ministry.
- The sense of the meeting was to request the Ad Hoc committee to bring a minute to the next meeting for business addressing these issues. Each committee is directed to discern what is appropriate to archive, and the

Clerk and Recording Clerk will consider business meeting notes. If any Friend is available to scan paper documents, please speak to Rick.

Peace and Social Action – Curtis announced a threshing session to be held on January 28, clerked by Shan Cretin, in response to concerns brought to the committee about our vision for a better society and how to carry that forward, and communicate it to others.

- A Friend requested that queries be posted on the listserv in advance. Adult Education and the PS&A committees also plan more presentations, and the Reading Groups are also mindful of the concern for corporate witness.

The Clerk announced a meeting retreat on April 6 to 8.

Minutes from the December 10, 2017 meeting for business were read and approved with corrections to the AVP report, noting that now many facilitators are released inmates and that although no Santa Monica Friends are active facilitators, their influence is strong. There was some discussion about providing corrected, final versions of business meeting notes in the archive.

The clerk suggested a called meeting for business to clarify the roles of Santa Monica Meeting, and of Kate Shaw and Shayne Lightner as point people for PYM RepComm in March, when both can be present. This was referred to Worship and Ministry.

Meeting closed in silent worship.

Respectfully submitted,

Stanford Searl, Clerk

Ann Fuller, Recording Clerk

Addenda:

Individual Questions: 1) What brought you to this Meeting? And what keeps you coming back to Meeting? 2) Have you ever thought of leaving this Meeting? If so, why? 3) What are your greatest joys being part of this Meeting? 4) Do you have any personal concerns and problems in connection with this Meeting?

Community Questions: 5) What challenges do you think we are facing as a Meeting? 5) Are there any changes you seek for the Meeting? 7) How to we as a Meeting put our faith into action?



Non-Binary 101

In our threshing session about the House, a participant spoke to how our bathrooms are not welcoming/ inclusive of nonbinary individuals, because they presume a binary gender and because the accessible stall is in the men's room. Because many people may not be aware of the language surrounding nonbinary genders, we are reprinting the following from Seattle Nonbinary Collective. Your clerk and parent of a nonbinary teen, Kate Watkins-Shaw

What is nonbinary gender? Nonbinary people are those that do not identify exclusively as "man" or "woman," "male" or "female." Some consider themselves both, neither, partially one or the other, a combination, or a fluid and changing mix. Language is always changing, but as of 2016, "nonbinary" is widely considered an umbrella term for many other identities, including genderqueer, agender, and genderfluid. Some nonbinary people refer to themselves with binary pronouns (he or she), but many use singular they or others (such as ze/hir or xe/xem).

Gender, Sex, & Sexuality **GENDER IDENTITY:** situation within social identifiers (i.e., man/woman, girl/boy); innate sense of belonging within gender categories **GENDER EXPRESSION:** external expressions associated with masculinity and femininity. (Includes: clothing style/color, grooming and hair style, gait, posture, vocal inflection, etc.) **SEX:** physical traits, their functions, and their social conceptualization. (Including: genitals, hair growth, fat distribution, breast tissue, etc.) Sex is not binary (some are born intersex) and can change over time (due to transition or hormonal shifts). Many nonbinary people have, desire, or conceptualize their bodies outside of binary sex. **ORIENTATION:** romantic or sexual attractions, often (but not always) dependent on gender **CISGENDER:** a descriptor for those whose with gender identity is the same identity (male/man, female/woman) assigned to them at birth.

Nonbinary Identities **GENDER QUEER:** having queer (nonconforming or subversive) gender expression and/or identity **GENDERFLUID:** gender that shifts between multiple identities or presentations over time **AGENDER:** lack of identification with gender **NEUTROIS:** neutral or neuter gender identity **DEMIGENDER:** partial identity with gender(s). Often expressed as demiboy, demigirl **BI-/TRIGENDER:** possessing two or three gender identities which may be distinct or intertwined **TRANSGENDER:** identity with a gender other than assigned gender. Due to connotations with transition, binary identity, and dysphoria, some nonbinary folks do not identify as transgender **CROSSDRESSER:** distinct from drag; presenting or dressing in clothes "opposite" of assigned and/or identified and/or socially recognized gender.

A full pamphlet with even more information is available by [clicking here](#).

This introduction to Nonbinary was prepared by the Nonbinary Collective, you can find out more by [clicking here](#).



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Highlight of the Community - Quakerism 101

Friends gathered to learn on Sunday, February 4th, to learn about the Silence of Quaker Worship. This is an excerpt from the handout provided during the meeting:

“Perhaps the most important factor fostering a gathered meeting is love, because it connects people so powerfully and we all understand it and possess it. However spiritually seasoned the worshipers – or not, however deep or shallow the vocal ministry, all that the members of a meeting really need in order to be gathered is love for each other. If enough Friends focus on that love, if enough Friends channel that love, silently in their hearts or vocally in their ministry, the meeting can hardly help but fall into the Heart.”



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