

Worship and Action Update September 6, 2002

Dear Friends,

In the week ahead many will break from our daily routines to remember, to share in caring about the lives lost and the terrible changes wrought last September 11 and since, and to affirm that life is precious. Among the ways Friends plan to pay attention:

- Vigil in Washington Square Park in New York City, beginning Tuesday evening, September 10, with activities 7:00-10:00 P.M., a candlelight vigil through the night, and resumed activities 7:00-10:00 A.M. on Wednesday, September 11; sponsored by Families for Peaceful Tomorrows and endorsed by groups including AFSC and FOR (for more information go to www.nycvigilforpeace.org)
- Other Peaceful Tomorrows services in the New York and Connecticut areas (see www.peacefultomorrows.org)
- Vigil participation by Butternuts Monthly Meeting in West Lawrence, NY, at a church that originally was a meetinghouse, Tuesday evening, September 10, by invitation of the current users
- Annual interfaith service of commitment to the work of the United Nations, September 11 at St. Bartholomew's in NYC (by invitation; NYYM clerk Linda Chidsey plans to attend)
- Meeting for worship Scarsdale Meetinghouse, 7 - 8:30 P.M., September 11
- Friends in Albany will participate in a two-day Teach-in Memoriam at SUNY Albany, sponsored by Peace Action
- FCNL meeting for worship and day of lobbying in Washington, DC, September 11 from 8:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. (for details go to www.fcnl.org)
- Information on over 200 peace events on and around September 11 in the United States (including activities throughout New York State, New Jersey, and Connecticut) and 6 other countries is available at www.unitedforpeace.org

We also know that we are in the middle of a long, long struggle. So we encourage one another to notice our awakening and others' awakening, and we pay attention to our experiences of success. For example, Purchase Monthly Meeting placed a call for peaceful alternatives to war on Iraq (available on the NYYM Peace Action Web page) three times over a week on the op/ed page of the Westchester County daily newspapers. In response, it has received to date at least twelve positive responses (and no negative reactions) from persons and peace groups, including offers to get

involved and a request for permission by Connecticut Peace Action to use the piece.

Karen Reixach of Rochester Monthly Meeting has reflected on how action for peace can be undergirded by worship:

The spirit of war threatens to capture our nation. Friends, as individuals and as corporate bodies, can be tempted by this bellicose spirit. The first temptation is described by Thomas Merton as the frenzy of activism. The second temptation is to succumb to the spirit of war by denigrating those who see "no alternative" to war. We will know we have succumbed if Friends describe President Bush and others in his administration using the same absolutist, hopeless terms that the administration uses to describe Saddam Hussein. The third temptation is simply to oppose the war. Our testimony is not only that war is wrong, but more importantly, that there is power available that takes away the occasion of war. Our Yearly Meeting minute is entitled the Gospel of Peace. To preach that Gospel, we must study it in all its fullness, not just with our heads but with our hearts. To live in that Light and Power that takes away the occasion of war means taking time to open ourselves so that we can then do the rigorous work of loving and truth-telling as individuals and as meetings.

(More information on Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting's plans for a program of Upholding Action for Peace in Worship – Spiritual Nurturance as a Context for Witness will be available soon at the NYYM Peace Action Web page.)

We are learning how to accompany one another in sustained practice of shared worship and action for peace. Would you be willing to share reflections on these queries:

- How have you experienced the spirit undergirding worship and action for peace?
- When have you experienced fresh guidance and great inward power to act?

Peaceable greetings,

Linda Chidsey, Vicki Cooley, Fred Dettmer
NYYM Worship & Action working group