

## **Worship and Action for Peace Update, 12/12/03 including Worship and Action for Peace Report**

Dear Friends in New York Yearly Meeting:

In God we live and move and have our being.

God is tender, gentle, strong, reliable.

In these times, let us rest in God.

Let us act for peace or wait in readiness, as we are guided.

Let us sing. Let us invite singing.

A brief Worship and Action for Peace report appears at the close of this Worship and Action Update.

Recent news of NYYM Friends' witness and work for peace:

\* Friends participate in regular vigils in many places across the Yearly Meeting, including Albany, Alfred, Ithaca, Manhattan, NY, and Plainfield, NJ. Please send additions to this list!

\* At "Light Behind the Walls," a weekend at Powell House on prisons experience and work, Friends spoke to their experience that work in prisons is peace work. We were invited by Eddie Ellis to practice "integrity of language," for instance referring to humans as people, with descriptors, "a person in prison," rather than humans reduced by naming to a limited version of their condition, "a prisoner."

\* *CounterPunch* published a second commentary on changes in the situation in Bolivia by Newton Garver (Buffalo MM) (<http://www.counterpunch.org/garver12082003.html>). Both pieces appeared originally in the *Buffalo Report* and are available at [www.buffaloreport.com](http://www.buffaloreport.com).

\* Shirley Way (Central Finger Lakes MM) "crossed the line" in an act of civil disobedience at the School of the Americas Watch [WHISC] vigil, was arrested (photo at [http://images.indymedia.org/imc/atlanta/led\\_away\\_4.jpg](http://images.indymedia.org/imc/atlanta/led_away_4.jpg)), jailed, charged, and released on bond to appear for trial on January 26. She will be speaking about her experiences in Corning, NY, the evening of January 15.

\* "Diversity with an Emphasis on Race," a Powell House weekend sponsored by the NYYM Black Concerns Committee, drew more than 50 Friends who wanted to face hard questions and nevertheless found that difficult. Again: "Work on difference is peace work."

\* Kathleen Gayle (Elmira MM) has returned from a journey to Israel/Palestine with Christian Peacemaker Teams. She spoke to an attentive gathering at the Elmira meetinghouse on December 11.

\* Linda Chidsey (Croton Valley MM) is, as clerk of the Yearly Meeting, a member of the NY State Community of Churches Collegium (governing body). She met with them in retreat December 9th and 10th and reported on a week-long course with Dan Snyder on nonviolence in personal and political life which she attended in October at Pendle Hill. In discussion and reflection Collegium members engaged the topic of nonviolence. Each member was given a copy of Michael Nagler's book *Is There No Other Way?*

These Friends and the NYYM committees involved (Prisons, Black Concerns) welcome inquiries and invitations.

Many Friends express gratitude for their sense of company along the way, often shared in writing. Other Friends have written recently of missing worshipful company in difficult times. Quakers long for shared worship with attention to peace, "at home."

This is our time, with its long hours of darkness and its candles, to ready ourselves, to welcome and uphold new Life.

Peaceable greetings,

Linda Chidsey, Vicki Cooley, Fred Dettmer  
Worship and Action working group

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My life flows on in endless song  
Above earth's lamentation.  
I hear the real though far off song  
That hails a new creation.  
Through all the tumult and the strife  
I hear that music ringing;  
It sounds an echo in my soul,  
How can I keep from singing?

What though the tempest loudly roars,  
I hear the truth, it liveth;  
What though the darkness round me close,  
Songs in the night it giveth.  
No storm can shake my inmost calm  
While to that rock I'm clinging,  
Since love is Lord of heaven and earth,  
How can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble when they hear

The bells of freedom ringing  
When friends rejoice both far and near  
How can I keep from singing?  
In prison cell and dungeon vile  
Our thoughts to them are winging  
When friends by shame are undefiled,  
How can I keep from singing?

*"How Can I Keep From Singing?" in Songs of the Spirit, p. 2*

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## **Worship and Action for Peace Report December 3 [and 12], 2002**

From updates to letters. Friends' life together has shifted, as have the times, since New York Yearly Meeting Worship and Action Updates began appearing weekly, in August of 2002. There seems now to be a need more for exploration of deeply challenging questions, for reflection on our grounding in truth and love, and less need for weekly "news." The Worship and Action working group sees a continuing need for Friends' communication related to worship, resting in God, and action for peace; we hope this can be served by publishing Worship & Action letters, less often than every week, about twice a month. Lu Harper (Rochester Monthly Meeting) has joined our editorial team for this work. We ask for contributions in writing, suggestions, or ideas for other forms of Friends' communication.

Gatherings. Three retreat gatherings for extended worship with attention to action for peace have been held in October - November. Brief written reports appeared in Updates (more extended notes are being sent to participants), and brief oral reports [were] planned for Representative Meeting. Friends have valued opportunities for extended worship and occasions for connecting with others beyond their local meetings. It is hoped that young people may connect with such opportunities, through Powell House and through local meetings. Further gatherings can be supported as Friends bring forward concerns for attention in worship.

Input, inquiries, insights are welcome!

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God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change, though the  
mountains shake in the heart of the sea;  
though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.  
[Selah] There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy  
habitation of the Most High.  
God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God will help her right early.  
The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.  
The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. [Selah]  
Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has wrought desolations in the  
earth.  
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters  
the spear, he burns the chariots with fire!  
"Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted  
in the earth!"  
The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. [Selah]

*Psalm 46 (Revised Standard Version)*