



SPARK

New York Yearly Meeting
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Volume 49, Number 1

15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003

January 2019

Learning from Quaker History

Summer Sessions registration is OPEN! See page 6!

PAY AS YOU LEARN

George Fox and His Journal

Wilbur Edwin Henry
Chatham Summit Meeting

The Journal of George Fox reveals George to be a Christian Puritan, a biblical literalist whose beliefs easily align with modern Fundamentalist literalism. He believes in witchcraft and faith healing and he was a conduit for that healing. He expelled “witches” from meetings. He is skeptical of science and bloodletting medicine. He describes visions. He writes frequently of divine retribution exacted here on earth.

From the Midlands of England, he had no university training. A weaver’s son and apprentice of tradesmen, as a youth and later in life he reports deriving income from cattle and sheep trading.

Young George (he preferred George) was a prodigy of scripture. He became disenchanted with the worldliness of the “priests,” as he calls paid clergy and “professors,”

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Recent NYYM History: Atheists, Agnostics, and Non-theists

Tim Connolly
Attender, Purchase Meeting

Are there lessons from the past that may help us move into the future? Based on my observation of the NYYM brand of Quakerism over the past ten years: **Yes**, with respect to business practices and social witness. **No**, for a minority of members with respect to Spirit and the Divine. A minority of what I will refer to as Spirit and Divine deniers have been accepted into membership by numerous monthly meetings over the past 20-30 years, and this may be at odds with our *Faith and Practice* as currently written.

Before continuing, a personal statement. I am a fan of the Divine and Spirit. Whether these are real or fictitious makes no difference to me. My bias is that they are necessary and need to remain as deep and central parts of our faith. And I am open to other points of view and for their incorporation into our *Faith and Practice* following discernment by our corporate body.

Should the relatively recent evolving presence of Spirit and Divine deniers as members of the Religious Society of Friends be

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Detail from a mural in the Pennsylvania State Capitol House, Violet Oakley, 1906. The text on the painting reads “PENN’S VISION — ‘BEHOLD MY SERVANT WHOM I UPHOLD TO OPEN THE BLIND EYES — TO BRING OUT THE PRISONERS FROM THE PRISON AND THEM THAT SIT IN DARKNESS OUT OF THE PRISON HOUSE — SING UNTO THE LORD A NEW SONG — YE THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA’” (image found at marybakerreddylibrary.org/research/women-of-history-violet-oakley/)

Lessons from the Past

Linda Clarke
Brooklyn Meeting

“We believe that the Spirit calls us to answer that of God in every person; as we do so, it unites us in a community of God.”

As you approach the entrance to our meetinghouse, you will see these words just beneath those that identify us and state that “All Are Welcome.” When I first began to attend meeting, I was awed by these words and I remain awed by them twenty years later. So when a newcomer to Quaker meeting asked me about the meaning of this quote, I felt overwhelmed at the prospect of sharing my view. So much is conveyed by these few words which refer back to our very beginning with George Fox.

Historians generally agree that the beginning of our community was with George Fox and other Seekers. It was so long ago, yet these

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What Light Doth Thee Shine?

Roy Allen
Rochester Meeting

History is an interesting space in which to learn how to live our lives today. A life without historical reflection is full of chance, gamble, and experimentation. Of course, all three are prone to failure, despair, and lost dreams. Charles Dickens wrote in 1859, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us.”

America, in 2019, is no different than Europe in Dickens’ time—full of challenges and opportunity, depending on which light is cast and from whom. Many people believe there are two Americas, one for the

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Notices

New Members

Mira Ellen Haines—Mohawk Valley
Elisabeth Ellen Prenot — Mohawk Valley
Derek Schleef — Buffalo

MEETING NEWS

Faith and Practice Now Available as a Talking Book!

The Committee to Revise *Faith and Practice* announces the release of the 2018 edition of *Faith and Practice* in two new formats through the Talking Books program of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. For participants in the Talking Books program, there is both a downloadable version and a cartridge version that's played on a machine. The Talking Books program is a free service for people with low vision, blindness, or a physical disability that prevents them from reading or holding a book. Certification by a physician, healthcare professional, or librarian is required.

Applications can be obtained through local libraries or online at: www.loc.gov/programs/national-library-service-for-the-blind-and-physically-handicapped/

Quaker Classics Translated into Spanish

Friends United Press is pleased to announce the publication of two new Spanish-language versions of Quaker classics: *The Diary of John Woolman* and Wilmer Cooper's *A Living Faith*. You can purchase *El Diario de John Woolman* and *Una Fe Viviente* through the FUM Bookstore at friends-united-meeting.myshopify.com. We offer these with gratitude to Raices Cuaqueras for the work of translation into Spanish, and encourage Friends to check out their full list of translated texts.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Attend the 2019 White Privilege Conference with FGC!

March 20th-23rd, 2019 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
The White Privilege Conference (WPC20) strives to equip individuals to work for justice through self and social transformation. The annual WPC is an opportunity to examine and explore difficult issues related

Around Our Yearly Meeting

to white privilege, white supremacy, and oppression. FGC will be providing discounts and sponsoring a Quaker hospitality room for both conferences. We are also working on ways to support Friends with less expensive overnight housing.

For more information on the conference, visit whiteprivilege-conference.com. Registration opens Jan. 21. To learn more about attending with FGC, visit www.fgcquaker.org/deepen/enrichment/help-your-meeting-challenge-racism/fgc-white-privilege-conference

Winter Meetings for Discernment Feb. 23, 2019 (snow date: March 2) Poughkeepsie Meeting

This is NYYM's ongoing experiment with extended, waiting worship designed to discern leadings and strengthen connections in our yearly meeting. Registration is at 8:30am, and meetings will take place 9am-12pm and 1pm-4pm with lunch in between. Simple meal on Fri., 6-8pm, available for elders & those interested. Please register in advance at office@nyym.org or 212-673-5750.

Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series: What is Discernment? Quaker Decision-Making in the 21st Century

A one-day mini retreat for young adults on Sunday, February 24, 2019 (following Meeting for Discernment on Saturday) at 10:00am at Poughkeepsie Monthly Meeting. For info and registration please visit youngadultfriends.weebly.com

Powell House is for you!

Everyone is invited to visit Powell House for an upcoming conference. Powell House is the conference and retreat center for NYYM and holds adult, youth, and intergenerational events. For a schedule and more information visit powellhouse.org or call 518-794-8811.

FCNL Spring Lobby Weekend 2019

Sat., March 23–Tues., March 26 in Washington, DC
Join young leaders (ages 18-30) at the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)'s Spring Lobby Weekend. Hundreds of students, recent grads, Quakers, and young adults will come to Washington, DC, to lobby their representatives. We will lobby for laws that protect the rights and safety of immigrants, migrants, refugees, and their families. We have real opportunities

to advance our legislative priorities for the 116th Congress and move closer to the world we seek this year. Join us this March and make your voice heard. Registration is open now and financial aid is available. Visit www.fcnl.org/updates/spring-lobby-weekend-2019-739

OPPORTUNITIES

Quaker Student Voices in Friends Journal

Friends Journal invites Quaker middle and high school students to share their voices through writing. This year's theme is "Friendly Competition?" Students are invited to write about the role of competition in their life and how Quaker values influence their approach to it. The deadline to participate is Feb. 11, 2019. Find more information, including a list of six queries to get students started on writing, at friendsjournal.org/studentvoices.

QUNO Job Opening in Geneva

The Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in Geneva is seeking a Representative for Sustainable and Just Economic Systems policy work. Applications due Feb. 7. See more at quno.org/opportunities.

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SPARK
15 Rutherford Place
New York, NY 10003
Sarah Way
communications@nyym.org
Chad Gilmartin
web@nyym.org
Walter Naegle
walter@nyym.org
Steve Mohlke
gensec@nyym.org
Helen Garay Toppins
office@nyym.org

Editor's Note

Welcome to the January *Spark*. This issue is overflowing with articles on and inspired by Quaker history. And although it's winter, please take a moment to imagine the lush green leaves and long bright days of July, because Summer Sessions registration is now open! All the information you need starts on page 6. Summer Sessions is "Pay as Led" for the first time this year, which means Friends can choose the level of payment most appropriate to them. We hope this will make Summer Sessions accessible to more people. As the NYYM office will now be handling all aspects of registration and payment, and as Friends will need time to discern how much they can spend, we will need the extra time gained by starting the registration process extra early.

Are you Friend-ly? Do you have thoughts about things? Then you are invited to write an article for *Spark*. Articles are a form of ministry. Please limit yourself to 400-600 words.

Upcoming Spark themes:

March: Resolving Conflict.
Quakers tend to shy away from conflict. How can we deal with it better? Guest edited by the Committee on Conflict Transformation! Submissions due February 6.

May: Quaker Commonality.
What binds Quakers together in a common faith? What threatens to keep us apart? What makes us a religious society of Friends?

Please send article submissions and meeting news to communications@nyym.org by the 1st week of the month prior to the month of publication.

In between issues of *Spark* we distribute InfoShare, NYYM's e-newsletter. Please, **share your meeting's news and events** by sending them to:

communications@nyym.org.

You can also keep up with NYYM through social media:

- [Facebook.com/NewYorkYearlyMeeting/](https://www.facebook.com/NewYorkYearlyMeeting/)
- [Twitter.com/NYYMTweets](https://twitter.com/NYYMTweets)
- [Instagram.com/newyorkyearlymeeting](https://www.instagram.com/newyorkyearlymeeting)

Manage your NYYM email lists at www.tinyurl.com/nyymconnect

Warmth to all! —Sarah Way

Learning from Quaker History



Quaker History in Farmington Informs How We Can “Let Our Lives Speak!” Today

Lyle Jenks

Old Chatham Meeting
Clerk, 1816 Board of Trustees

In recent weeks, the characteristically quiet Quaker Crossroads Historic District has been an intersection of vision and activity as the post and beam frame of the 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse is restored to its original dimensions. Guided by John G. Waite Architects of Albany, and carefully following the research compiled in our Historic Structure Report by both professional historians and local enthusiasts, crews are carrying out a 21st century version of an old-fashioned “barn raising.”

Why all this attention to and expense for what still looks like an old barn? For decades in our Quaker past, Farmington Friends welcomed, witnessed, and often led important reform movements that helped shape American democracy. The 1816 Meetinghouse served as the gathering place for annual sessions of Genesee Yearly Meeting, which drew Friends from our current Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting area as well as Quakers from Ontario Province and eastern Michigan. Farmington served as the crossroads for those working for equal rights for all people, most especially women, African-Americans, and Native Americans. Lucretia Mott, Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, and Susan B. Anthony are among those documented to have spoken in Farmington on the issues of their time—and our time.

The 1816 Board of Trustees, which includes community members as well as Friends from four meetings in NYYM, is working under a provisional charter as a museum from the New York State Education Department. With grants from Humanities New York, we have provided speakers and programs for the last several years, lifting up the issues and challenges of equal rights. One highlight in 2018 was hosting the North Star Players in “No Struggle, No Progress” which included riveting renditions of the speeches of Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth. Historian Ann Gordon spoke on Susan B. Anthony and the role of African-American women in the fight for women’s suffrage, and, at Fall Sessions, Michelle Schenandoah (Wolf Clan, Oneida Nation) and Mattie Schmitt and Mike Farrell of Rochester Meeting shared perspectives on how Quakers might be allies of Native peoples in ongoing witness for respect and justice.

Full restoration of the building will require additional historic preservation grants and contributions from many individuals who share the vision of the 1816 Meetinghouse as a center of history and interpretation of the Quaker values which point to a society of equality, peace, and justice. After having been moved twice in its first two centuries, the building now sits (almost!) squarely on a new foundation on land donated by Farmington Friends Church across the road, and is poised to stand as an active and interactive witness that will challenge visitors from around the world to consider how best to let their lives speak for justice. More information on our programs and restoration efforts is on our web site: www.farmingtonmeetinghouse.org.



The renovation of the 1816 Farmington Meetinghouse, 2018.
Photos by Ann Morton



Spiritual Comfort Food, Spiritual Nourishment

Jeffrey Aaron

New Brunswick Meeting
Clerk of NYYM

Guidance from the past is comforting. It lets us feel at ease about ourselves in a world that includes other very different ways. Spiritual “comfort food” includes buying into “group think,” including rules and assumptions. Once we make our commitment, we feel the need to cling to it, even when we may sense that we may need to change. Changing ways can be wrenching. Most denominations have rules, which make changes even more difficult. But even in a denomination that only has guidelines and testimonies, change is still difficult, because our ways reflect our culture.

How does this relate to Friends learning from our history? We must acknowledge that this comfort with current ways is our issue as much as is an issue for others. But we believe in continuing revelation and of discerning by sense of the gathered body. Those are radical ideas that make changes easier for Quakers than for others, yet we are still subject to the same *don’t change!* mindset from the world at large, where most of us spend most of our lives.

Why is change critical for us now? Because we have to face change or our yearly and local meetings will keep getting smaller and older. We face problems of declining and aging membership, of structural complexity, of financial stress, of reduced volunteerism, of dramatically changing culture. Will Friends be able to change yet remain intact and vital? I believe we will, although some bodies and meetings may not survive.

What we see when we look to the wisdom of past Friends is more encouraging for us than it is for most groups because the great lessons include those two radical Quaker ideas: continuing revelation and change by sense of the meeting.

Many of us would not have been considered acceptable Quakers a hundred years ago. Why? Because we do not wear the right clothing or speak the way we were expected to speak: thee speaks wrong. Because

we married “outside the faith”. Because we are gay or otherwise different from previously acceptable standards. Because of non-standard theology. Because we sing and dance in ways that were considered scandalous. You smile? Friends can smile, because Quakers, unlike many others, are flexible enough to make big changes and yet remain Quakers. That fact provides many of us with a love for, and a commitment to our Quakerism.

But our smiles should not mean disdain of ways which may have been appropriate to the times; they should be smiles of appreciation that our faith includes the ability to change. That Friends could say, no, we will no longer require go-to-meeting clothes and strange speech. The fact that most American Friends can proclaim that gay Friends are as worthy of love, respect, and acceptance as anyone else is a blessing. That we struggle to rid ourselves of racism and implicit bias is vital. But what does this mean about our current beliefs and understandings and what new ways we may be facing? Are we still flexible, or do we need the “comfort food” of commitment to current ways? Will we be able to make necessary changes? This year we have a lot on our plate which we cannot ignore: a proposed new concept of membership, the need to create a new yearly meeting structure, a difficult financial situation that requires creative discernment. We must discern carefully together how to proceed if we are to fulfill our hopes and needs.

What we need to overcome these trials is the same commitment that past generations made: to labor together lovingly and openly, being ready to lay aside assumptions in the face of new ways of thinking. If any group can do it, we can. Our wise Friends of the past provided us the ability to succeed by relying on the Spirit that we find alive in each other when we sit quietly with trust and love. Is there a better way? I know of none.

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NYYM Connect! www.tinyurl.com/nyymconnect



Learning from Quaker History

George Fox and His Journal

Wilbur Edwin Henry
Chatham Summit Meeting

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i.e. lay ministers. He finds many money-obsessed and subject to vice.

His epiphany was that each and every person is infused with the living Jesus Christ equally. Scriptures reinforce his conviction and he wields them with uncommon familiarity. He believes the Truth was always known in him and so is known in every person, Christian or not, man or woman. The Holy Spirit makes us all equals in the eyes of God. All must be truly loved. He rejects his contemporaries' hierarchical and exclusionary religions. In this, we recognize the faith we Friends strive to practice today.

It is important to understand the world of George's ministry. Christians and Muslims were still in ferocious, crusading wars on the European continent. Muslim domination of Western Europe was not a remote prospect. The Ottoman siege of Vienna was broken only as late as 1683, one year after the founding of Philadelphia by our Friend, William Penn. Muslim pirates from North Africa were a powerful maritime menace. George reports being chased unsuccessfully by a Muslim pirate when he journeyed to North America in 1672. Slave trading and the African Diaspora were accelerating. War and atrocity were widespread, and precious few enjoyed freedom from them.

Bitter and bloody civil war divided England. George's "professors" were usually loyal to militant Puritan leader Oliver Cromwell. "Common prayer men" were devoted to the Church of England. There were a smaller but significant number of Roman Catholics, reviled by Puritans and the Church of England alike. These wars were horrific, genocidal affairs, and perceived enemies were easily convicted and executed by gruesome hangings, burnings, and quarterings. Though charged and facing death many times, George's resolve to remain non-political

saved him from execution and the movement grew and spread worldwide under both Parliamentary and Royalist regimes when life was very cheap.

George ministered against paid clergy. George cites Matthew 10:8, "...freely ye have received, freely give." Churches he calls "steeple houses," and he does not accept the sanctity of buildings. He entered "steeple houses" at first day services, waited for the priests to finish their sermons, then rose to deliver his epiphanies to the congregations and priests. He explained the Truth: that the true Teacher comes from within, not from the pulpit. He was beaten frequently and savagely, arrested and imprisoned.

Through this dangerous time George managed to earn the respect of both soldiers and constables. Hostile magistrates issued warrants for his arrest with intentions of killing him, but when the constables had conveyed him to the issuing authorities, sometimes after days of walking, they, the constables, often compellingly advocated for George's safety. Jailers, initially cruel, often turned loving. On one occasion, Cromwellian authorities sought to press his fellow prisoners into military service. The prisoners, surely some veterans, agreed to serve as soldiers if George was made their commander. He refused. That refusal later served as evidence in his favor when he was accused by officials of the returned King. Perhaps no example of his appeal to men of arms is more impressive than his meeting with the militarily talented Oliver Cromwell. George, incarcerated, was accused of declaring against Cromwell when "Oliver Protector" agreed to meet him. After a long conversation, Cromwell released him, pronounced him a true Christian, and cleared him of all charges.

Our early Friends were not passive in spreading the egalitarian ideal. They did so with evangelical zeal. The Quaker insistence on equal treatment for all went so far as to use the informal "thou" rather than the formal "you" when addressing those who perceived themselves as superiors. This became a very serious matter in hierarchical mid-17th Century England. It was intensely disrespectful to refer to one's betters as "thou" (subjective)



Lucretia Mott, by William Henry Furness, 1858. Friend Lucretia (1793-1880) was a powerful speaker against slavery and a leader of the women's rights movement. Said she, "... my convictions led me to adhere to the sufficiency of the light within us, resting on truth as authority, rather than 'taking authority for truth.'" —from *Eminent Women of the Age* by James Parton, p. 375, 1868. (image found at swarthmore.edu/library/friends/Mott/timeline/)

or "thee" (objective). It may be the reason "thou" is no longer part of the English language. It was simply too appalling to be addressed informally by those considered lesser beings but was marginally tolerable to address underlings with the formal and respectful "you." Nor would Friends doff their hats, nor engage in obsequious banter, e.g. "your servant..." etc., all considered extraordinarily rude by English society at that time.

Philadelphia is the birthplace of our nation. After many hard fought arguments, some ongoing, and a ferocious civil war, the equality of all souls is a basic tenet of today's United States Constitution. The self-evident rights of all people are in direct accordance with George Fox's ministry. The freedom from religious oppression, codified in the First Amendment, that no person be forced to celebrate a faith opposed to one's conscience, was drawn directly from Charter of Privileges, written by Our Friend, and George's devoted follower, William Penn. The Liberty Bell was cast in commemoration of the Charter's fiftieth anniversary and bears the inscription from Leviticus 25:10: "...proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." Our primary Law, today's Constitution, mandates equality for each person. That makes all Americans who abide by our law and believe in this equality, Quakers.

Please read *The Journal of George Fox*.

What Light Doth Thee Shine?

Roy Allen
Rochester Meeting

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rich and another for the poor— one rule of law for politicians and another for the average citizen. Our own Civil War clearly illustrates what happens when radical polarization divides us. Yes, we need to act upon our faith, but how do we discern right action? How might we embrace Dicken's sense of a "season of Light" as Quaker outreach, an important goal of the Society of Friends?

Recently, I heard Denzel Washington speak to a group of students that the reason few people realize their dreams is because they don't correlate dreams with goal making, action, and hard work. He said, "You pray for rain, you gotta deal with the mud too. That's a part of it." How often, in our Quaker space, do we wish, pray or listen for change, but shy away from the rain and the mud?

I became a "registered" Quaker just a year ago. Like many, I've probably been a Quaker all my life, I just didn't know it. My father's family has roots to George Allen who sailed from Weymouth, England in 1635 and settled in Sandwich, Massachusetts. George was an Anabaptist, but his daughter Rose married John Holloway, creating one of the strongest Quaker families in Massachusetts.

So, the seed was planted for my Quaker experience by George, Rose, and John, yet left for me to harvest these 383 years later. What might I learn from George? To begin with, he must have been very brave to cross the Atlantic and join his sons in a new land at the ripe old age of 67. I will be 65 in March and have recently relocated to be part of my grandchildren's life, so I can empathize. George also had a strong sense of civic duty, becoming a Jurymen, elected to solve community problems. I, too, work within the community introducing school children to the wonders of nature. Serving others is a good way to learn how to best serve self.

I believe that America, today,

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Learning from Quaker History



mine and yours, our children and grandchildren's, remains the same one George experienced in 1635, a place of hope and freedom, a place to live, breathe, and act with Christian love, and yes, a place of significant challenges and opportunity, all dependent on which light we shine.

Margaret Fell wrote, "Let us beware of separating or looking upon ourselves to be more holy, than in deed and in truth we are." Lucretia Mott reminds us that being a pacifist is not the same as living a passive life. Quaker and American history have taught me to create and be the man I seek. What light doth thee shine on these? 

Recent NYM History: Atheists, Agnostics, and Non-theists

Tim Connolly
Attender, Purchase Meeting

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addressed? If yes, how? To know where we need to go, we probably ought to consider where we are. What exactly is our current theological status in 100 words or less?

Some say it's inexact or too hard to explain or too divisive so don't even try. Others say that in a world of many constraints there are more important things to focus on. Ignore it and move on. To others, theology is irrelevant. They say experience and how lives are lived, doing good, is our "Spirit." For some, words just can't capture it so hush up, look

within silently, and wait expectantly for the truth.

The foregoing are valid points. There may indeed be a sense in which the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life, as the Elders of Balby suggested in 1656. But please! Don't we need to throw around a few letters to at least address, not necessarily incorporate in our *Faith and Practice*, the views of those in our membership who deny the existence of the Divine? These people are **members**. They are not accidental tourists. We have invited them into our midst. Some have held leadership positions within our yearly meeting. Isn't it time to leave a way open for them to come out of the theological closet?

Here's a stab at our status: We are seekers coming from many traditions. We vary in our understanding of the Divine and in our related confidence of that understanding. Some of us doubt or deny the existence of Spirit or the Divine or theistic constructs. Some redefine our language to redefine Spirit so as not to offend divergent positions. Whatever our insight, we share a desire to seek truth together based on our experiences. And we share our insights and revelations with our community.

So far so good? The statement may facilitate unity and acceptance of many points of view. But it falls short and contradicts when compared to the language of our current *Faith and Practice*. And there are many examples of this contradiction. (To name a few: queries 1-3; advices 1 & 4; the expectations outlined in General Business Practices: "In the trans-

action of business the same reverent waiting upon the Lord should prevail as in meetings for worship.")

The contradiction of the non-theist, agnostic, and atheist positions of some members with the theistic historical language of our *Faith and Practice* creates confusion for newcomers and conflict among members. Many members choose not to engage on the matter, to look the other way and keep it all friendly.

Is the silent treatment the friendly thing to do? Should an absence of confusion and creation of false or disguised unity among members be a goal of the NYM?

One lesson I have learned from our distant Quaker history is that our discipline as set forth in our *Faith and Practice*, particularly as it relates to committee worship, structures, and process, is a great way to engage with and seek truth. Provided there is diversity present throughout the process, it works well.

For a number of reasons, NYM has elected not to address as a body the faith of a minority of its members and incorporate that into its *Faith and Practice*. Personally, this has been most discouraging.

All is not lost. There are Quakers who care about this and stand ready to engage as a body. Britain Yearly Meeting has elected to pursue the matter as a body. Check out *God, Words, and Us*, edited by Helen Rowlands and published in 2018 by Britain Yearly Meeting. This is a compilation of 'threshings' having to do with whether and how to incorporate into their *Faith and Practice* the views of members of British monthly meetings who do not admit of the possibility of the Divine or Spirit in their lives, or in meeting for worship, or in meeting for worship with a concern for business.

And so in Great Britain the lessons of the distant past, particularly with respect to Quaker process and integrity, appear to be helping them move into the future. 

Lessons from the Past

Linda Clarke
Brooklyn Meeting

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ancestors had much in common with us today. We are not in the midst of outright civil war as they were, but our times often seem just as tumultuous, just as uncertain. Fox's *Journal* is filled with anguish over, and a passion to relieve, human suffering. His quest begins with a search for relief of his own "condition," and once he finds it, he is certain that it will help others. Early teachings about "inward

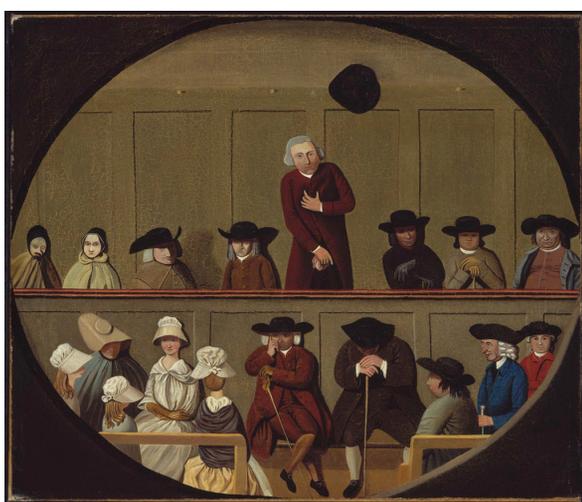
light" made it possible for all to experience Spirit individually and independently, and to discover ourselves as equals. In claiming equality for ourselves we must necessarily grant it to all. This is at the very core of the call to "answer that of God in every person."

In Fox's life (1624-1691), social equality was clearly connected to a Spiritual equality. Some examples of social equality were seen in the acceptance of all classes of people, in Quaker preachers who were uneducated, and in women preaching. Early Quakers were notorious for asserting their own equality by exercising their consciences against authority, even though it so frequently brought great sufferings.

When Fox speaks of his "condition" most of us today can identify at least with that part that relates to politically and socially produced angst. Our lives are much more complicated but maybe we still have some things in common.

Our testimony, which contains the essence of our spiritual conviction (or faith), is often taught or described through a mnemonic device which lists some components: SPICES (Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, Stewardship). I believe our greatest challenges today in living up to our Spiritual conviction are around integrity and equality. The most common use for the word "integrity" refers to being honest and having strong moral principles. The secondary usage, referring to the state of being whole and undivided, is the definition that I have in mind in this discussion. While this sense of integrity is always important, it often can be keenly felt when we venture into the concept of "equality." How can we feel whole if we are so divided among and within ourselves over the meaning and position of equality in our lives and in our very beings? How can we answer to "that of God in every person" if we cannot really see them as equals?

Early Quakers discovered a new and radical way of being in the world while remaining connected to Spirit, leaving us with a rich heritage to draw upon in our own turbulent time. 



Quaker Meeting, Unidentified artist, British, 18th or first quarter 19th century, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. I discovered this painting online but found no information on its subject or meaning. It seems to depict a man having just thrown his hat in the air during a meeting for worship. (Perhaps he has "quaked" it off?) What message he is giving that led him to this action? —SW (image found at mfa.org/collections/object/quaker-meeting-33823)



Welcome! You are invited to join New York Yearly Meeting Friends at Summer Sessions!

When is the last time you spent a whole week in a beautiful place among hundreds of people who all share your Quaker values? A place with beautiful lakeside beaches, smiling faces of all ages who meet to share stories about their Quaker leadings and good works—and the opportunity to do business, using best Quaker practices, that supports your spiritual community?

George Fox envisioned “a great people waiting to be gathered.” With Pay as Led, we need wait no longer! At Silver Bay, on beautiful Lake George, even our YMCA campus hosts share the best of Christian values. The feeling of the Light shining forth from a great people is everywhere and is a great uplift for the Spirit. Come to learn or to share or just for the respite from the muck of angry political discourse. Meet wonderful Friends and hear about the remarkable good works they do. Sit in deep

worship sharing every morning after breakfast with a small group, if that is your inclination. Take part in Bible study. Join or listen to singing in the wooden rocking chairs on the long front porch of the Inn. Take part in interest groups that speak to you. Come to business meetings that provide our way forward for our community for the next year. Play frisbee with happy children on the front lawn. Participate in intergenerational events. Or just bask in the fullness of Spirit all around you.

This year’s theme is **Friends Come in All Ages, Sizes and Colors: Our Path toward Being Inclusive**. We will be celebrating the joys of our diversity and learning how to become even more expansive. For many Friends—especially for children and young adults—the week at Silver Bay is a needed re-charge for the rest of the year. Come celebrate what it means to be a Friend in a challenging time. Welcome all Friends!

STEPS TO SUMMER SESSIONS

- Decide on your arrival and departure dates. The full week is July 21–27. You can also attend for a half week or single day(s).
- Determine who you will be rooming with, if possible.
- Choose your housing preferences. See the **Room Information** section below. Please note that children under 18 must room with a parent or in an adjoining room.
- *Parents of children ages 3-18:* Read the **Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM)** section on page 8.
- *Parents of children ages 0-2:* Read **For children under 3 years old** within the JYM section on page 8.
- Read the Participant Expectations and Agreements on the nnyym.org/sessions-committee page, as registering indicates that you have agreed to follow them.
- Register online at www.nnyym.org/summer-sessions-registration. If you cannot register online, or need assistance, please email office@nnyym.org and provide your phone number and times that we can call you. If you don’t have email, please mail in the form on page 8.
- You will receive a confirmation email after you’ve registered.
- A few days later, once you’ve been assigned to a room, you will receive an email with the **Pay As Led** rate options. If you plan on receiving financial aid from your local meeting, regional meeting, or committee, you should request that now, and factor in that amount when determining which rate you will pay.
- Parents will receive a follow-up email that will include any additional forms they may have to fill out for their children. Parents and children will also receive information from their JYM group.

NYYM Summer Sessions is a week-long gathering at Silver Bay YMCA, a conference and family retreat center on the shores of Lake George within New York State’s Adirondack Park. Silver Bay has a variety of buildings for meetings and accommodations scattered across a beautiful campus. Staying at Silver Bay includes access to swimming, boating, a craft shop, a gymnasium, archery, and shuffleboard, among other amenities. Friends often take advantage of these activities during their free time. Visit silverbay.org for more information.

On Sunday July 21, arrival day, check-in starts at 4:00 p.m. Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) registration is also at that time. After dinner, there is Opening Worship with a roll call and introductions, including JYM groups and leaders.

Every day at Summer Sessions, Monday through Friday, follows roughly the same schedule:

- 7:30-8:30 a.m.: Breakfast
- 8:45-9:15 a.m.: Community Worship
- 9:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.: JYM Programming
- 9:30-10:30 a.m.: Worship Sharing
- 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.: Meeting for Business (Tuesday: Discernment)
- 12:15-1:30 p.m.: Lunch
- 1:30-5:30 p.m.: Committee Meetings, Free Time, Special Events...
- 5:30-6:30 p.m.: Dinner
- 6:45-7:30 p.m.: Bible Study (Mon-Thurs)
- 7:30-10:00 p.m.: Plenary, Interest Groups, Contra Dance, Café Night...



Plenary Speakers

Chris DeRoller and Mike Clark
Co-directors of the
Powell House Youth Program

“For almost two decades we have had the joy of being with young people and older folks as we co-create an inclusive, accepting, yet challenging space where Friends’ testimonies and experiential spirituality come alive. When we started, the kids had piles of CDs for their music. Homework was done on paper.

Cell phones, if you had one, would not work in the Powell House area. Those things have changed, but the moving of Spirit has not. We’ll share insights we’ve gained, mistakes we’ve made, and the vision and practical steps we have for keeping Friends relevant.”—Mike and Chris



Worship at Summer Sessions

NYYM Summer Sessions provides many opportunities to worship and share with the Peaceable Community. Everyone is invited to attend **Opening Worship** on Sunday evening, **Community Worship** each morning, **Meeting for Discernment** on Tuesday, and **Closing Worship** on Saturday. **Worship Sharing Groups** will meet every morning after Community Worship. Need time for quiet reflection during the course of your day? **Waiting Worship** is available all day, all week, (in a location to be announced in July.) In addition, your worship and your discernment are needed at **Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business**. Join us!

Interest Groups

Interest Groups are a good way to introduce yourself to a topic or dive deeper, to learn and to share, and can consist of a presentation, slide show, film, discussion group, or other activity. For an example of interest groups offered last year, visit www.nnyym.org/InterestGroups. Volunteers are needed to lead interest groups.



Interest groups should relate to our theme and/or the NYYM Leadings and Priorities in general. If you feel led to run an interest group, contact Martha Gurvich (margurvl@aol.com) or Helen Garay Toppins (office@nyym.org).

Special Events

On Wednesday afternoon, the Junior Yearly Meeting presents the **Fun(d) Fair**, a fundraising fair that includes games, crafts, and refreshments. At the same time, there is the **Tagless Tag Sale**, at which you can “pay what you wish” for items donated by Friends. Please consider bringing used items in good condition to Summer Sessions so they may be sold at the Tag Sale. On Thursday evening, the senior high group produces **Café Night**, an all-ages talent show during which hats are passed to collect donations. Bring your instruments and props and join the fun! All of these events raise money for the NYYM Sharing Fund and Powell House.

Room Information

Silver Bay YMCA is a campus of buildings with different levels of accommodations, with a range of prices to match. All rooms lack air conditioning, phones, and television. Note that room fees include NYYM’s program, all meals, and access to Silver Bay’s facilities, including swimming areas, boathouse, gym, and craft center.

When you register, you will choose your room preference. Room rates vary. If you are a single person sharing a double room in a dormitory-type building (the most common room type), the **Pay as Led standard** rate, which is the actual amount NYYM owes to Silver Bay, is around \$650 per person. The most affordable building, Overlook, is around \$400 per person in a double, but the building is small and fills up quickly. If you’d like your first choice of room, register as early as possible. Rooms that are larger, more central, or have a private bath cost around \$850-950 per person in a double.

Rates are discounted for children and for more than one roommate. Children ages 0-5 are free, and there are reduced rates for older children. Rates per person go down if more than two people are sharing a room. For example, the standard rate for a spot in a double room with a shared bath in the Inn would be around \$830, but a spot in a triple (with two roommates) would be \$700, and in a quad (with three roommates) would be \$650. A half-week stay costs around half the weekly rate, and a single night costs around 1/6. Remember, room rates include meals!



All photos on pages 6-8 by Sarah Way



On-Campus Resources

Food Service

Meals are included in your room fee if you stay on campus. Off-campus and campers can buy meals separately. You will be asked if you are vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free, or gluten-free when you register. If you have other questions about Silver Bay’s food service and accommodation of special diets, ask Martha Gurvich, margurvl@aol.com.

12-Step Meetings

12-Step Meetings will be held every day during Summer Sessions. 12-Step Meetings are under the care of Sessions Committee, which has named Roseann Press as coordinator. Roseann needs people who would be willing to facilitate one or more of the meetings. To volunteer, please contact Roseann at rpress123@gmail.com or Susan Bingham at smbjoyous@earthlink.net.

Healing Work

Friends create and maintain a Healing Center during the week. Modalities offered may include energy work (healing touch, Reiki, therapeutic touch), massage, craniosacral therapy, and spiritual counseling. The type of services offered depends on the skills of those who volunteer. If you are skilled in a healing art and you’d like to volunteer, please indicate that on your registration form and someone will contact you.

Disability Concerns

Friends who indicate special needs on their registration form will be contacted by the NYYM office to gather specific disability information. Five mobility-accessible sleeping rooms, with bathrooms, are reserved in the Inn for those using wheelchairs (and their roommates). Other more accessible rooms in the Inn may be reserved by people who, for any reason, find it physically difficult to room elsewhere. Friends who require special assistance with personal needs must arrange this assistance on their own, and the person assisting them must stay in their room with them. Please indicate on your registration form if you require help with hearing or movement. Note takers can be provided or accessible locations allocated for worship-sharing groups and committee meetings.

Golf Carts

Silver Bay is a beautiful place, but it can be challenging to walk up and down its hills and from one meeting place to another. As in previous years, we will have golf carts to help Friends get around. We need volunteers to drive the carts, and you can indicate your interest in driving on the registration form. Driving is easy, fun, and a great way to get to know Friends of all ages.

If you will be staying with a roommate or in a family group, please make sure you name each other on your registration forms. If you need a roommate, NYYM will make every effort to assign one to you.

For your reference, the full table of room rates is available at nyym.org/session/summer-sessions-2019/room-rates and includes the **Pay as Led** rate options for each type of housing.

Camping and Staying Off Campus

Do you camp? Silver Bay YMCA offers lean-tos and tent platforms on their campus for NYYM use. Experienced woodland campers may consider the Silver Bay YMCA Adirondack-style lean-tos on Ryan’s Ridge. Closer to campus are two raised wooden tent platforms near the gym. Rental is \$28 per night, per person, and includes the daily off-campus day membership which allows campers to use all of the Silver Bay facilities. Meals are an additional cost and must be purchased separately.

Off-campus camping options include Rogers Rock State Park, north on Route 9, near Ticonderoga; find it on www.reserveamerica.com or call 800-456-2267. The nearby Brookwood RV Resort has tent platforms: www.brookwoodrvresort.com. Friends staying off campus must pay the Silver Bay day membership fee.

Pay as Led

After you register, you will receive a follow-up email with your **Pay as Led** rate options.



The three options are: the standard rate, which covers the cost of room and board; the full rate, which helps others attend; and the **Pay as Led** minimum rate, which is the lowest suggested amount. Please factor in any financial assistance that you will request and expect to receive from your local or regional meetings or yearly meeting committee.

Friends should carefully consider how much they can afford to pay. The **Pay as Led** plan is designed to encourage new people to attend Summer Sessions, and it relies on generosity from those who can afford to pay more.



Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM)

Junior Yearly Meeting is the program for children ages 3-18 during Summer Sessions. Groups are arranged according to grade, and meet every morning, Mon.-Fri., from the rise of Community Worship to lunchtime at 12:15 p.m. JYM volunteers plan a community-building week of activities for the children, including games, discussions, art projects, and more. We see JYM as a time for young people to experience a community based on Friends' testimonies and practices. Age appropriate and experiential Quaker content will be part of the program, and each group will spend some time in quiet worship or worship sharing every day.

When you arrive at Summer Sessions, after checking in with NYYM, you must bring your child to **JYM registration** in the Inn's Gullen Lounge.

Cell phones are our primary way of communicating within JYM at Summer Sessions. If you are a parent or guardian of a JYM registrant, please provide a cell phone number at the time of registration.

For children under 3 years old, Silver Bay offers childcare through their Silver Camp on Monday through Friday mornings from 8:30 to 11:45 a.m. Parents do not pay for this; Sessions Committee and donations cover the cost. We usually ask parents who are making use of this childcare service to sign up to take turns helping cover the time from 11:45 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. so they can attend the last part of business meeting on the other days. If you might use Silver Bay's morning childcare program, you will have to complete the NYYM-Silver Bay camp form, which will be emailed to you after you register.

JYM provides **afternoon and evening (PM) childcare** in Morse Hall for children up to 10 years old. This is available whenever plenaries or committee meetings are scheduled. Parents using this service are asked to volunteer some of their time when they are not in meetings.

Can my child go to Silver Bay without me? Yes! If your child is under 18, they may attend Silver Bay with an adult chaperone. They must room with the chaperone if possible and appropriate; otherwise they should be in adjoining rooms. The chaperone should be designated by the parent or legal guardian on their registration forms, and must be at least 10 years older than the young Friend they are chaperoning. The chaperone and the child should know each other reasonably well. The parent or guardian must provide a signed note giving the chaperone the authority to care for their child, to be presented at JYM registration.

Volunteer Opportunities

There are many opportunities to help create the blessed community during our week at Summer Sessions. Please consider supporting our community by volunteering in one of these ways:

- **Special Needs volunteers:** Help someone by carrying a tray for them at mealtime, among other ways. Sign up to help on your registration form.
- **Golf cart drivers:** Want to drive a golf cart all around campus—AND make it possible for people with limited mobility to attend Sessions? Are you at least 21 years old with a valid driver's license? Indicate your interest on your registration form.
- **Healing Center volunteers:** Are you skilled in the healing arts? Help staff the Healing Center during the week. Check the box on your registration form.
- **Interest group leaders:** Do you have knowledge to share? Volunteer to lead an interest group. Contact Martha Gurvich (margurvl@aol.com) or Helen Garay Toppins (office@nyym.org).
- **JYM leaders and resource people:** You can volunteer to help lead a Junior Yearly Meeting group or PM childcare. Or, if you have a special talent or information to share, you can be a resource person that visits the JYM groups. Please indicate your interest on your registration form and you will be contacted by a JYM coordinator. Everyone who volunteers for JYM must complete the safety form at nyym.org/content/nyym-child-protection-policy before July 1st.
- **Other Options:** You can also check a box on your registration form if you are interested in serving as a microphone carrier during meetings for worship, including those with a concern for business, or with welcoming and assisting Friends with luggage.



TRAVEL

The address for Silver Bay YMCA:
87 Silver Bay Rd., Silver Bay, NY 12874
Driving times: approximately 90 minutes north of Albany; 4-5 hours north of New York City; 6-7 hours north east of Buffalo. NYYM will share a link to a web page where people can arrange carpools. Public transit: take an Amtrak train to Ticonderoga, or an Adirondack Trailways bus to Lake George Village. Friends interested in traveling together via train or bus should contact Helen Garay Toppins at office@nyym.org.

REGISTRATION

This year, we are making a special effort to encourage everyone to register online. Registering online makes the process more efficient for staff. If you are unable to register online please ask someone to assist you. We will also have volunteers ready, willing, and able to provide online registration assistance.

The online registration form is not for making payments. It is for collecting your preferences so volunteers and staff can plan sessions. You will be contacted to discuss your **Pay as Led** options, after which you can pay online or by mailing payment(s) to the NYYM office.

Register online at www.nyym.org/summer-sessions-registration. If you cannot register online, or need assistance, please email office@nyym.org and provide your phone number and times that someone can call you. If you don't have email, please mail in the form below.

The deadline for registrations is May 15. If you register after that date, we can't guarantee that there will be a room available for you, and your **Pay as Led** options may be limited. So register as soon as you can! We can't wait to see you.

Register by May 15 at www.nyym.org/summer-sessions-registration

If you are unable to register online or to email this information to office@nyym.org, please fill out and mail this form to: NYYM, 15 Rutherford Pl., New York, NY 10003

PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____ Meeting: _____

Day phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Best time for someone to call you (days of the week, times of day): _____

