



SPARK

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

Volume 53, Number 1

15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003

January 2023

Mindful Eating Nourishing All Life While Nourishing Ourselves



The minute that inspired this issue of *Spark*

The Friends in Unity with Nature committee of Fifteenth Street* developed a Minute on Mindful Eating and Compassion for Animals during the summer of 2021. It was adopted by Fifteenth Street Meeting, and subsequently by New York Quarterly Meeting. The committee trusts that reflection about, and ministry on, the minute will support Friends in daily practices of mindful eating and inspire wider actions that foster compassion for animals and care for the Earth.

The minute then came to Witness Coordinating Committee,

where it was agreed that, with minor changes, we would bring it to Spring Sessions 2022. The minute was first presented during a business session Saturday afternoon, where ministry was shared proposing further changes. A small group met during a worshipful gathering Saturday evening, resulting in the following minute. When the revised minute was presented during Sunday's business session, we were still unable to reach unity. Because our yearly meeting clearly needed further opportunities for reflection, it was suggested that a special issue of *Spark* be used as one forum for discussion and discernment.

* – *Friends in Unity with Nature Committee of Fifteenth Street Monthly Meeting: Sally Artese-ros, Mary Grimes, Christine McVay, Katherine Mylenki, Janet Soderberg, and Helen Saffran*

Minute on Mindful Eating and Compassion for Animals

Let us be mindful of what we are eating. John Woolman, the eighteenth century Quaker preacher, wrote:

“That as by [God’s] breath the flame of life was kindled in all Animal and Sensible Creatures, to say we Love God as unseen, and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature moving by his life, or by life derived from Him, was a contradiction in itself.”

Today’s factory farming practices often treat animals, which are sentient beings, with cruelty. And many such animals end up as meat for human consumption. In the face of such mistreatment, we believe it is time to put our faith into action on the issue of animal rights. We encourage our members and attenders to be mindful of the impact of their food choices—choices that may contribute to the suffering of an animal.

As a community we can live our peace testimony by condemning cruelty to animals, being aware of all our food sources, re-evaluating our personal food choices, supporting efforts to help animals, and expressing our support for a more sustainable food system that does not harm our Earth.

How can every meal we eat be like saying grace?

GUEST EDITORS:

Margaret McCasland

co-clerk, Earthcare Working Group & Climate Justice Working Group

Rebekah Rice

co-clerk, Witness Coordinating Committee

Friends sought a deeper conversation once it became clear we were not yet ready to reach unity on what mindful eating might comprise. Food is very personal, but as Friends we

can respect each other’s differences at the same time as we seek common ground around more systemic and spiritual aspects of food.

People submitted carefully discerned spiritual **testimonies** on mindful eating, **stories** about their personal relationship with food, and pieces on **regeneration**: how food related practices affect our Earth.

We were surprised to not have received articles on food justice, food processing, bioengineered foods, animal cruelty and concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), industrial agriculture, or relevant public policies.

All of us want to nourish our bodies and our souls while we

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SPRING SESSIONS APRIL 14-16, 2023 HYBRID at Oakwood Friends School and Online via Zoom

Dear Friends -

Please come to Spring Sessions. We are planning a hybrid meeting, with some of us on Zoom and some of us in-person at Oakwood Friends School. We had to cancel the Spring meeting in 2020 which we intended to hold there, so this meeting feels like it has been a long time coming and I am really looking forward to being there.

We will have a report from the Task Group on Financial Sustainability, as we approved at Fall Sessions. I hope the task group recommendations will be a useful step in thinking through changes that can make us more healthy financially but also that they will help us serve and respond to the monthly meetings with a fuller sense

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Mindful Eating

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Spring Sessions

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Notices

New Members

Heather Buchan—Brooklyn
Kaitlyn Pawlukoje—Westbury
Diane Robinson—Farmington
Louise Smith—Farmington
Renee Thompson—Farmington

Marriages

Christa Farmer (member of Westbury) married **John Refior** at Westbury Monthly Meeting on June 25, 2022.

Transfers

Astuti Bijlefeld, to Farmington from Central Finger Lakes
Irene Goodman, to Westbury from Manhasset
Carol Kitchen, to Buffalo from Rochester
Cherry Rahn, to Farmington from Central Finger Lakes
Anthony Salem, to Rochester from New Paltz

Deaths

Sybil Ann Brennan, former member of Scarsdale Friends Meeting, on September 3, 2022.
Polly Nicholson, member of Farmington, on July 26, 2022
Louise Pingrey, member of Adirondack, on September 29, 2022
Katherine Ramsey, member of Adirondack, on December 20, 2022.

NEWS

State of Society Query

The 2022 State of Society query is intended to speak to a range of meetings, worship groups, and at-large members of the yearly meeting. We encourage you to engage with the query as it speaks to you and your Quaker community.

The State of Society Committee is seeking Quaker simplicity in this year's query and is hopeful that you will find avenues of engagement as individuals and within your membership group. This is the query for 2022:

“HOW DO YOU LIVE YOUR QUAKER FAITH?”

For help we refer you to *Faith & Practice*—State of Meeting Reports (p. 126 in the 2020 edition.)

Meetings and individuals are asked to return their responses by April 17, 2023, to state-of-society@nyym.org.

Around Our Yearly Meeting

UPCOMING EVENTS

Winter Meetings for Discernment

The Winter Meetings for Discernment will be held on Zoom **Saturday, March 4th**. Meetings for Discernment are periods of extended, waiting worship designed to discern leadings and strengthen connections in our yearly meeting. We will center around these queries:

- How might we nurture our spiritual community in a way that cultivates gratitude for our diverse concerns and experiences?
- What do we do when it is challenging to recognize that of God in another?
- How will we know when everyone feels welcome and deeply listened to?

Please save this date and encourage Friends in your meeting to consider attending.

Spring Sessions 2023

April 14-16, Hybrid: Online and at Oakwood Friends School

Please see page 12 for more details.

Summer Sessions 2023

July 22-27 (Sat. lunch to Thurs. morning), Hybrid: Online and at Oakwood Friends School

Summer Sessions 2023 will also be at Oakwood Friends School (NOT at Silver Bay) and online from lunch on Sat. July 22 to the morning of Thurs. July 27. See page 12 for more.



POWELL HOUSE WORKSHOPS

Visit poho.org to see the full list of upcoming events and to register.

Water of Life Retreat

With Barbara Shulamith Clearbridge
February 17-19, 2023

This in-person retreat includes Quaker and other time-tested ways to deepen our spiritual lives. There will be times of prayer, of learning, of healing, and of silence. In creating a retreat environment, Shulamith builds an atmosphere of stillness, spaciousness, acceptance, prayer, healing, and love.

Pastoral Care and Counseling in Your Meeting

With Lucinda Antrim

March 17-19, 2023

During our in-person weekend together we will weave together time to focus on learning and/or

refreshing concrete pastoral care skills with time for spiritual refreshment and deepening.

FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

Upcoming Powell House Youth Conferences – visit poho.org

STORIES AND PERFORMANCE for 9th-12th Grade

February 24-26, 2023

Acting gives us a chance to explore different personalities and concepts in an intimate and energetic way. What stories will we share with each other in our performances?

This will be a deep and expansive weekend, with good fun and connection.

WILD WILDLIFE for 4th-5th Grade

March 10-12, 2023

This weekend, we will get to know these critters around Powell House. We'll spend time in the maze noticing what different animals are up to. We will also discuss with each other what it might be like to be an animal living here. Let's get wild with the wild wildlife!

PLAYFULLY RIGHTEOUS for 9th-12th Grade

April 28-30, 2023

This mix of games and justice is sure to be a fun and fulfilling time.

EARTHSONG 2023

for 7th-12th Grade

May 27-29, 2023

Join us for our annual celebration of our loving, strong community.

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Beth Kelly maintains a list of upcoming YAF events at nyym.org/yaf-events

FCNL Spring Lobby Weekend 2023

March 25-28, 2023, Washington, D.C.

Friends Committee on National Legislation's Spring Lobby Weekend offers young Friends and other young people the tools to be effective advocates. This four day conference will bring together hundreds of students, recent grads, Quakers, and young adults to learn about their power as advocates and lobby Congress. Sign up to receive updates at act.fcnl.org/sign/young-adult-program-updates/.

OPPORTUNITIES

Job Openings at American Friends Service Committee

AFSC has a number of positions open in their Philadelphia PA, DC, and Newark offices. Visit www.afsc.org/job-center

Job Openings at Friends Committee on National Legislation

Visit www.fcnl.org/about/work-fcni

New NYYM Directory

For many years, the New York Yearly Meeting office has printed a *Yearbook* containing information from the past year. Now, most of that information is kept updated online at nyym.org/yearbook.

The parts of the *Yearbook* that contained personal contact info—including the local meeting clerk information and the contact list of Friends serving the yearly meeting on committees or as clerks or representatives—will not be posted online but will be printed in a yearly *Directory*. Each local meeting and Friend on a YM committee should receive this *Directory* by the end of January or beginning of February.

If you'd like to receive printed versions of some of the material that used to appear in the *Yearbook*, please visit nyym.org/request-print or call the NYYM office at 212-673-5750 with your request.

SPARK (ISSN 00240591)

New York Yearly Meeting News
Published five times a year:
January, March, May, September, and
November by
New York Yearly Meeting
Religious Society of Friends
15 Rutherford Place
New York, NY 10003
212-673-5750
info@nyym.org
www.nyym.org

Editor: Sarah Way
communications@nyym.org
Editorial Board:

NYYM Communications Committee

Spark deadlines are the first week of the month preceding the publication month. Permission is granted to reprint any article, provided *Spark* is acknowledged as the source.

Periodicals Postage Paid
at New York, New York
Postmaster: Send address changes to:

SPARK
15 Rutherford Place
New York, NY 10003

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Letters to the Editor

On Daisy Douglas Barr

Chad Dell

Manasquan Monthly Meeting

I read Susan Weisfeld's (Nov. 2022) portrait of Daisy Douglas Barr with increasing discomfort, as it seemed to lack any directly expressed concern about Barr's alliance with the KKK. Yes, the author bookends her portrait with a discussion of white supremacy. But she seems to ask the reader to connect the dots, rather than taking a more critical perspective on Barr's choice, implying that Barr did so more to empower women. One cannot view Birth of a Nation without clearly seeing its bigoted racial argument. Barr asserted a leadership position in what then and now was seen as a domestic terrorist organization. To let this pass without naming it repeats the damage American racism has been causing for over 400 years.

Response to Quaker Earthcare Witness Steering Committee's "Statement on Reproductive Services"

Mary Pagurelias
Brooklyn Meeting

(Editor's Note: the message below is responding to an item that appeared in the weekly NYYM email newsletter on October 14, 2022, which reported that the Quaker Earthcare Witness Steering Committee has endorsed, and asked meetings to consider, a statement from the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population in support of global accessibility of reproductive services, including abortion.)

With the knowledge that the Religious Society of Friends is not in Unity, nor is it ever likely to be in Unity, regarding abortion, Quaker Earthcare Witness Steering Committee "approved" a statement put out by the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population that expresses their concern with the Supreme Court's decision on abortion.

First, as members of a faith community we should be extremely wary and uncomfortable when asked to focus on worldly politics. Worldly politics divide us by their nature. Spirit led concerns and Divine Light will not divide us.

We need to ask ourselves the following:

What is the connection between sexual reproductive services and Friends' stewardship of the environment?

Why should the international union for the scientific study of population concern themselves with a woman's right to her body and her right to abortion?

Why are Quakers being asked to "sign-on" to a political statement focusing on individual and personal matters, and not even claiming to be Spirit led?


Whether we are for abortion or not, it is a private matter.

Whether we are for contraceptives or not, it is a private matter.

Whether we are theists, Christ-centered, non-theist, etc., and etc., this is not a Spirit led concern. It is of the world and its politics that are both self-serving and dangerous.

Is this the faith community that we hold so dear?

Let us stop rubber stamping things like this.

One Friend challenges us to "find the references to our Guide in this statement." What challenges you? 

Corey Devon Arthur: One Painting Away from Being a Whole Man

Judy Meikle

Wilton Quaker Meeting

Corey Devon Arthur is an artist, published writer, and practicing Quaker. His upcoming exhibition of paintings and drawings, "She Told Me To Save the Flower," explores feminism and his connections with feminist women. Since becoming incarcerated at the age of 19, Corey has suffered under the patriarchal domination culture of violence, control, and aggression that is at the heart of our prison system. He says, "The criminal justice system with all its patriarchal knowledge and resources gave me a cell/cage to become an animal in. They gave me a wooden baton, chemical agents, gloved fists, and steel toe boots to wound my flesh. They tell society justice has been served. I rebelled against all their treatments. In response they increased their doses tenfold. I only became colder

and reverted deeper into the dark."


Historically, Quakers had a hand in reforming 18th-century dungeons into modern-day penitentiaries. Quakers have also accompanied people in ways that have mitigated the pains of incarceration. Corey's journey is a testimony to this. Corey recalls his first encounter with Quakers: "I attended an Alternatives to Violence Project three-day retreat. It was a pivotal moment in my redemption. I was 23. I only went to get away from the stressful and violent atmosphere of the prison. When I found out the volunteers were Quakers, I went on a rant about how the Quakers created this hell hole called prison. They let me scream and yell until I began to cry. Cheerful Charlotte (a volunteer) cried along with me and simply responded, 'I'm sorry Corey.' Then she hugged me. That was the first time I had an inkling of how bad I was hurting and how bad I had hurt others."

Corey began to attend Quaker Meetings on a regular basis. "Becoming a Quaker allowed me to confront the pain of my inner truths within a community of love and trust. I learned how to shape out the contours of my spirit using the sources of my truth. As I became more conscious of my spirit, I also became aware of its source and its place in the spiritual community of Quakerism and God. Quakerism cracked a spiritual code that I could never break with just my humanity alone."

In addition to Quakerism, Corey's personal transformation has been greatly impacted by his relationship with seven women, as well as his exploration of feminism. "These women introduced me to feminism... They healed me without breaking my bones and locking me in cages... It began when they created a space of radical acceptance that empowered me to be honest with my authentic self. They taught me how to honestly engage my emotions. Beginning to understand my emotions led to me understanding the feelings of the people I hurt and why it was important for me to apologize and make amends."

Corey expresses strong emotions through his art. "Something special comes about by sharing yourself in small but sure measures. As an artist, I take it as one brush stroke at a time. As a wounded animal, I

take it as one heartbeat to becoming a person again. Somewhere along the way, a savage that slings words and sketches, became just a tortured artist, and one painting away from being a whole man."

A collection of Corey's work dedicated to the women who have impacted his life will be exhibited at My Gallery, 587 Franklin Avenue, Brooklyn from March 4th – 24th 2023. Friends are encouraged to visit. The exhibition is being organized by artists/curators Sasha Chavchavadze and Larry Weekes, both attendees at Brooklyn Monthly Meeting. Supporters include the BMM Ad Hoc Group for Welcoming (Formerly) Incarcerated Friends, Empowerment Avenue, and the Fulton Art Fair. For more information and to donate: www.gofundme.com/f/hosting-a-feminist-art-show-from-prison. 

Editor's Note

I am massively grateful to guest editors Margaret McCasland and Rebekah Rice for their work on this issue. I hope you enjoy and share it.

Please consider writing (up to 600 words) for *Spark*. Upcoming themes:

March 2023: Quakers and the Arts. What does art mean to you? Are you spiritually inspired or nurtured by writing, music, theater, dance, or visual arts? Do you create art, writing, or music, and does Quakerism inform your creations? Please share your favorite pieces of art that relate to Quakerism.

Submissions due February 10.

May 2023: How Do We Talk About God? Friends in NYYM use a lot of different words to mean "God" — Spirit, divine, Jesus Christ, the Light, etc. Let's talk about it. **Submissions due April 1.**

Please also share your news, events, and letters to the editor with NYYM. Email them to communications@nyym.org.

To join the email list, visit nyym.org/subscribe. To join the mailing list, email walter@nyym.org or call 212-673-5750.

NYYM is on **Facebook** (NewYorkYearlyMeeting), **Twitter** (NYYMtweets), and **Insta** (newyorkyearlymeeting).

—Sarah Way, NYYM
Communications Director



How can every meal we eat be like saying grace?

Margaret McCasland & Rebekah Rice

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nourish our planet, but we use a mix of criteria when deciding what to eat. For some, mindful eating requires an understanding of where our food came from. Some people focus on food miles and pay attention to where their food was produced (see map of the NYC foodshed on this page). For some, the way in which food is grown and the effects on water, sky and land is their dominant concern, with solutions ranging from home gardens to Regenerative Agriculture and Permaculture.

As Michael Pollan wrote in *The Omnivore's Dilemma*:

Imagine for a moment if we once again knew, strictly as a matter of course, these few unremarkable things:

- Imagine if we had a food system that actually produced wholesome food.
- Imagine if it produced that food in a way that restored the land.
- Imagine if we could eat every meal knowing these few simple things: What it is we're eating. Where it came from. How it found its way to our table. And what it really cost.

If that was the reality, then every meal would have the potential to be a perfect meal.

We would not need to go hunting for our connection to our food and the web of life that produces it. We would no longer need any reminding that we eat by the grace of nature, not industry, and that what we're eating is never anything more or less than the body of the world.

I don't want to have to forage every meal. Most people don't want to learn to garden or hunt. But we can change the way we make and get our food so that it becomes food again—something that feeds our bodies and our souls.

Imagine it: Every meal would connect us to the joy of living and the wonder of nature. Every meal would be like saying grace.

Food for all: Personal Choices, Public Policy

Margaret McCasland
Ithaca Meeting

Most of this issue of *Spark* focuses on what we personally eat, but we wanted to also note some of the broader aspects of food systems that provide a context for our personal and corporate witness in the world. Food is fully integrated into our social, cultural, economic and political systems and is thus associated with multiple overlapping concerns. Our testimonies of justice, equality and simplicity (plus Quaker traditions that value ecosystems that are healthy for people and other living things) are interwoven with all aspects of food.

Food is a basic human right.

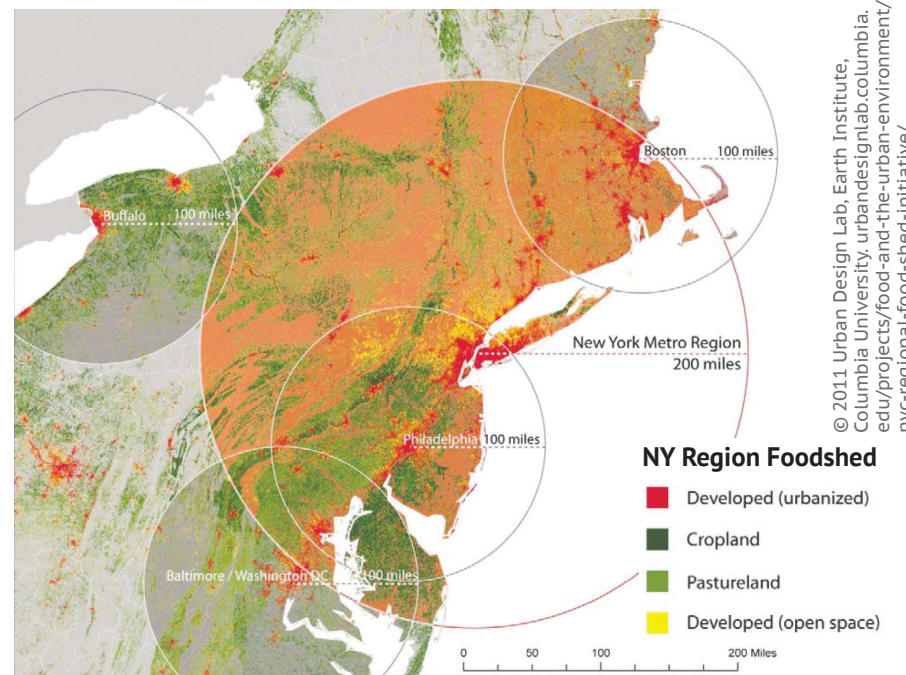
Every person has the right to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food.

“Food deserts” (neighborhoods with limited access to healthy, affordable food) are far too common in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods across the United States. According to a study of the NYC and Hudson Valley Foodshed by Scenic Hudson, “New York City has an estimated \$866 million or more of unmet demand annually for regionally produced food, *with substantial demand coming from underserved communities.*” (See: scenichudson.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Foodshed_Conservation_Plan.pdf)

Food injustice takes many forms and must be addressed in many ways. The human rights of the people who grow, harvest, process, prepare and serve our food are fundamental to our right relationship with food.

The lockdown of all but “essential workers” during the initial response to Covid-19 taught us how dependent we are on people who work in every stage of getting food to our table, but this increased awareness has not resulted in better working conditions or pay for most of them. Likewise, farmworkers received very few accommodations during the 2021 Western North America heat wave, sometimes with fatal consequences.

An especially egregious form



Finding food grown in your foodshed

Local Harvest is a great resource for finding local and regional food. www.localharvest.org

The Real Organic Project promotes farming that is both organic and regenerative. www.realorganicproject.org

Cooperative Extension offices usually have guides to local foods. In NYS, visit cals.cornell.edu/cornell-cooperative-extension/local-food-guides

of food injustice is the creation of sacrifice zones by governments and corporations on the few remaining lands of indigenous people. In New York State, both the Onondaga Nation and the Mohawk Nation have had ongoing contamination of their food sources from industrial pollution.

Food is personal. Food is very personal. There are many reasons we chose a given food or beverage. Some are based on our own nutritional or emotional needs. Some are moral and relate to fairness for the people who produce our food. Some relate to the ethical treatment of animals. Some decisions are based on ecology.

But we shouldn't have to research everything that we consider ingesting. Organizations like the Environmental Working Group and Seafood Watch produce guides which are helpful, but having to consult the guides still involves time and complex decision-making. (Can I afford the more expensive product? Do I have time to make this recipe from scratch?) Deciding what to eat should be a joy based in gratitude, not a burden based on fear.

What matters most is what we eat most of the time. Cutting ourselves some slack for special occasions and unusual circum-

stances will give us more emotional and mental energy to make sure that the majority of our food is in alignment with our values.

There are three main areas we can influence food systems: as consumers, as advocates for better public policies, and through our witness work.

As consumers, the more food we buy directly from farmers and the less we eat highly processed foods based on commodity crops, the faster farmers can transition to more regenerative practices.

As citizens, we can call on local state and federal governments to support farmers, farm workers, and the people who process and prepare our foods. The economics of farming and the quality of life of farm workers are highly influenced by state and federal laws, regulations and policies, which often subsidize unecological and unethical practices. Social policies such as a universal basic income and expanded SNAP benefits can make it easier for everyone to afford healthy food.

Through our witness work, we can support projects locally and around the world that bring food security to communities while growing food in ways that nurture local ecosystems.



Mindful Eating, a Journey through Testament

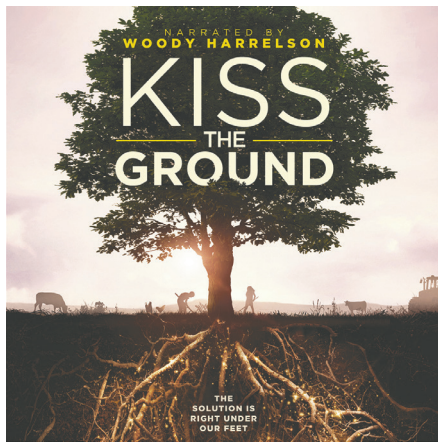
Rebekah Rice
Saratoga Meeting

As co-clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee, a participant in the worshipful changes that were made during Sessions, and an enthusiast of mindful eating, I'm still curious about why we didn't reach unity.

- Are there Friends among us who disagree with John Woolman regarding the flame of life?
- Are there Friends among us who believe factory farming is acceptable?
- Are there Friends among us who do not condemn cruelty to animals?
- Are there Friends among us who don't wish to become aware of our food sources?
- Are there Friends among us who don't wish to re-evaluate our personal food choices?
- Are there Friends among us who don't wish to help animals?

Have you considered your Spirit-led Testimony regarding Mindful Eating?

For me, the personal experiences that I recognize as informing my dialog with Spirit include my connection to Earth and all beings; learning to be a regenerative farmer; becoming healthy after cancer; and providing balanced diets for loved ones including vegans, vegetarians, those with allergies, and those who are meat eaters.



ing of our lives.

On November 13, 2022, Nadine Hoover brought this testimony to Buffalo Friends Meeting for Business who affirmed it for Nadine. Friends expressed concern that not everyone has access to nor can afford organic non-GMO food, and asked for more information and ideas on where to shop.

In Buffalo, local markets, coops, Aldi's, and others carry organic foods. Being organic does not guarantee it is produced in a regenerative manner (watch *Kiss the Ground* — kisstheground.com/support-the-film; the poster is above). Consider purchasing from a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). Good water filters include Zero Filters (zerowater.com) and Berkey Filters (www.berkeyfilters.com), among others.

Foods sprayed with glyphosate or other poisons lose the glory of their cellular structures. When magnified 10,000 times, sprayed food cells appear in amorphous, globular patterns, while organic cells appear in spectacular crystal patterns with an inner life and beauty obscured by the blemishes on their surface.

Contemporary obsession with surface appearance is poisoning us. Farmers talk about being horrified at the current practice of spraying grains with Roundup, not only once, but a second time at harvest, especially ones that are genetically engineered. Glyphosate dries out the crop to harvest it sooner than if allowed to die naturally, and ensures against any small green flecks in processed products.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency found glyphosate in 80 to 90 percent of their wheat-based products. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration found 63 percent of corn and 67 percent of soybean

products were contaminated. Oats, chickpeas, and lentils had even higher levels. PFAS and PFOS called "forever chemicals" are also pervasive in water supplies and top soil, leaching into food supplies. These chemicals are causing health defects and chronic ailments.

One out of eight women in the U.S. today develop breast cancer. Toxicity in our food and water is draining our energies, stamina, concentration, decision-making, and initiative. I carry the genetic variant PON1, which although it does not predispose me to cancer, means that my body struggles to excrete pesticides and other toxins. I'm a canary in the coal mine. What is killing me will eventually kill everyone.

Our collective blinders to this pervasive violation of Spirit's gifts of life, vitality, and healing shows how corporations have permeated and controlled our lives and society.

NOTE: Glyphosate, the active ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup and other herbicides, is linked to cancer. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency refutes this, protecting corporations such as Monsanto rather than the people. The scientific research and legal evidence produced in court has led countries around the world to ban or restrict glyphosate-based herbicides. This includes Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Fiji, France, Germany, Greece, India, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Oman, Qatar, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and Vietnam. Though banned in many countries, Roundup is still the most widely used herbicide in the world. [www.baumhedlundlaw.com/toxic-tort-law/monsanto-roundup-lawsuit/where-is-glyphosate-banned] To learn more, read the new book, *What Your Food Ate*, by Anne Biklé and David R. Montgomery, or the article "Glyphosate Contamination in Food Goes Far Beyond Oat Products" by the Environmental Working Group (www.ewg.org/)

[news-insights/news/glyphosate-contamination-food-goes-far-beyond-oat-products](https://www.ewg.org/news-insights/news/glyphosate-contamination-food-goes-far-beyond-oat-products/)).

Full-Body Mindfulness

Cai Quirk
Ithaca Meeting

I love food. I love the physical sensations of eating food — the feel, the taste, the smell, even sound and sight. It can provide sensations that I can't get anywhere else. Eating mindfully has helped me heal from a restrictive eating disorder, and helped me get to this place where I can enjoy food again. Sometimes though, the mindfulness leads to such joy in the sensations that they override listening more deeply to my body's hunger cues; crunchy or spicy snacks are a particular favorite.

This year, I began to transition from the idea of 'mindful eating' to 'full-body mindfulness.' In times where I feel the desire for food, I ask my body where the desire is coming from. Sometimes it truly is hunger, sometimes it is my taste buds which can often be happy with some herbal tea, and sometimes the desire is for sensation. When I release the focus on food as the sole possibility for filling this desire, I can listen more deeply for what my body truly needs in that moment.

Right now I am enjoying the sensations of laying in bed, swaddled in blankets with the computer's weight on top of me. I also find fulfillment in stretching, running my hands over tree bark, back rubs, drinking cold or bubbly water, shaking out laundry, holding a huge breath in and feeling the air pressure, sifting hands through rocks and sand, breaking sticks, and more. Once, when I was helping my godmothers shell beans, I noticed that there was a similar very satisfying sensation to crunching chips: the crackle of the shell, the pop of beans coming out, the dry whisper as each moved through my hands.

Humans used to shell a lot more beans by hand. So much physical stimulation has been removed in this society with many people having less exercise, less physical

continued on next page

Testimony

Nadine Hoover
Buffalo Meeting

Nadine Hoover, Rebekah Rice, and Gay Howard feel we need to:

- *Eat natural, organic foods, and drink fresh or filtered water to be fully open to Spirit's regenerative, healing power. This means we need to:*
- *Stop eating food that is genetically modified or sprayed with poisons, such as glyphosate. To do this, we need to:*
- *Slow down, plan ahead, and not succumb to the corporate poison-*



Mindful Eating


Testimonies

continued from previous page

contact with people, blander food, more and more desk jobs than physical labor, and machines to do things like wash dishes and laundry. Our houses are made of more limited and uniform surfaces like smooth floors and chairs rather than undulating ground and rough logs to sit on.

Many of us get notably less stimulation than our ancestors did. Many of us don't immediately miss the loss of sensation through modern day conveniences and appliances. Many of us struggle with feeling too tempted by certain kinds of food, but is it always the food we're really craving? What other sensations might nourish deeper longings? What did we each enjoy as kids... swimming, biking, cuddling in bed, the wind or sun on your face?

There are so many incredible sensations to love, yet sometimes I resist that love and joy, worrying that it might turn into a covetousness that takes over my life. I worry I'll focus too much time on outward sensation and not go deeper into spirit or intellect or being productive. I fear nothing will feel like enough even if I give it more time or that it will feel like a waste of time if I do.

And yet, this is where the mindfulness comes in. This is where pausing and taking a moment to breathe, to notice the sensations that are already here, to listen deeply to my body is so important. Many times, in this moment of pause, I realize that I do already have enough sensation, if only I'll let it be enough. And when it isn't, I've learned the stretches and squeezes and jumps that can give me more. Sometimes I even eat potato chips, but when I do, it's because that's exactly what is right for my body in that moment. 

Were the walls of our meat industry to become transparent, literally or even figuratively, we would not long continue to raise, kill, and eat animals the way we do.

Michael Pollan, "An Animal's Place", The New York Times Magazine, November 10, 2002

Finding our Common Unity

Sheree Cammer
Albany Meeting

Nature has the right to exist. The life in nature is that of God in all. Nature pours out love for us. When we align our energies with the forces of life and wholeness, as one of the council of all beings, we find right relation.

I have been lately focusing the flow of good energy out to unseen many who have lost heart and live under the veil of darkness that George Fox perceived. And, over all, an Ocean of Light.

There is not a moment to lose.

Joyful work in community lies ahead: growing food locally, restoring natural ecosystems that hold onto rainwater and make communities more resilient to drought, floods, heat waves and wildfires. Allowing nature to regenerate, finding our right relation as kin with all life, finding our common unity, living as community where the needs of all are considered. Recognizing the right of nature to exist by learning "enough." Designing housing on minimal footprints, using minimal resources, and crowding human dwellings.

Globally:

Regeneration is life thriving.


Deserts can become green.

Lifeless soils can teem again with microbial life.

Barren, degraded, eroded landscapes can be regenerated to thriving ecosystems that can host plentiful biodiversity.

Regenerating the fertility of our soils holds the key to growing nutrient-dense food for people, and pasture for animals.

The dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico could disappear as nature heals herself from the runoff of synthetic fertilizers.

Natural landscapes can hold water, streams can run, aquifers can be replenished. Communities can manage their stormwater by maximizing the natural landscapes that can hold onto water. 

Regeneration

Dear Community

Sheree Cammer
Albany Meeting


Let's share our experiences with regeneration! This could include rewilding a lawn, regenerating dirt into living soil. Our experiences might include preserving critically significant biodiversity areas and corridors, restoring degraded ecosystems, working with nature to create landscapes to retain water, thus increasing resilience to flooding, drought, wildfires, and heat waves.

What fabulous news that regenerative practices including farming and grazing can turn desert into verdant pastures, alive with streams and wetlands!

Plants and trees pull carbon from the air and down into their roots, feeding microbes, which store the carbon in their bodies unless exposed to the air, where they die. Keeping soil covered and minimally disturbed are key regenerative practices.

May our coming together in this January Regeneration issue celebrate a coming back to life, in spirit realizing our connection with all life and each other, linked by each with the All Good, the Infinite, All Powerful.

May we connect deep in this ocean of spirit.

Contact Sheree to learn more about NYM's Friends in Unity with Nature Regeneration Group (FUN/Regeneration). 

Resources from Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW)

Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) produces a quarterly newsletter called *BeFriending Creation*. Most issues include material on food and/or regenerative agriculture. You can have a print version mailed to you or receive it via email.

QEW also offers videos, over 30 pamphlets, and a couple of Earthcare curricula, all available at their website, quakerearthcare.org.

QEW offers a wide range of workshops. Here are a few most relevant to Mindful Eating:

Equality or Equity? What is Our Testimony?: Beverly Ward examines Friends' equality testimony, the concepts of equity and justice, and the relationship of these to Earthcare.


Permaculture is Not Just Agriculture: Beverly Ward introduces permaculture design and domains and ways to bring these practices into Earthcare.

Project Drawdown, Introduction and more: Beverly Ward presents information on actions that "drawdown" carbon emissions and ways to promote drawdown choices as individuals and communities.

Regenerative Agriculture: Sustainable Is not Enough: Carol Barta discusses what it will take to produce nutrient dense food on

healthy soil. "Over the course of the last four decades a growing number of farmers and ranchers have risked, stumbled and learned how to build healthy soil and healthy profits for their farms by going against the conventional wisdom. Along the way they discovered that healthy soil is the basis for a healthy ecosystem and potentially a healthy planet. We'll explore the component parts of regenerative agriculture and discuss why whole-system-thinking is the best way to feed the world."

Restoring Life and Hope:

Jim Kessler shares "powerful and inspiring stories of how creating native plant habitat has positively impacted the mental, physical, and spiritual health of our Quaker family. The presentation also describes how songbird, pollinator, and wildlife populations have dramatically increased in response to the introduction of native plants." 

Selected Readings from QEW's *BeFriending Creation*

Ruah Swennerfelt's book review of *Regeneration* by Paul Hawken: "Regeneration offers an approach to climate change that weaves equity, justice, climate, and biodiversity, instead of focusing only on energy issues. The book was written with six basic frameworks for action, and

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the first is equity. Paul writes, “This comes first because it encompasses everything. All that needs to be done must be infused by equity.” (quakerearthcare.org/book-review-of-paul-hawkins-regeneration-ending-the-climate-crisis-in-one-generation/)

Tom Small’s recent article **Regeneration: A Matter of Life and Breath** gives an overview of healthy soil, the disruptions caused by industrial agriculture, and brings it back to how we might all “Participate, as we are able, in the patterns, the relationships that involve the passing of the seasons, the rising and setting of the sun, and the breathing of forests.” (quakerearthcare.org/regeneration-a-matter-of-life-and-breath/)

In **Permaculture: The Art of Designing Beneficial Relationships**, Carol Barta provides a brief introduction to Earth care, people care, and fair share, which lie at the heart of the ethics which permaculture has taught and practiced around the world for the past 45 years. (quakerearthcare.org/permaculture-the-art-of-designing-beneficial-relationships/)

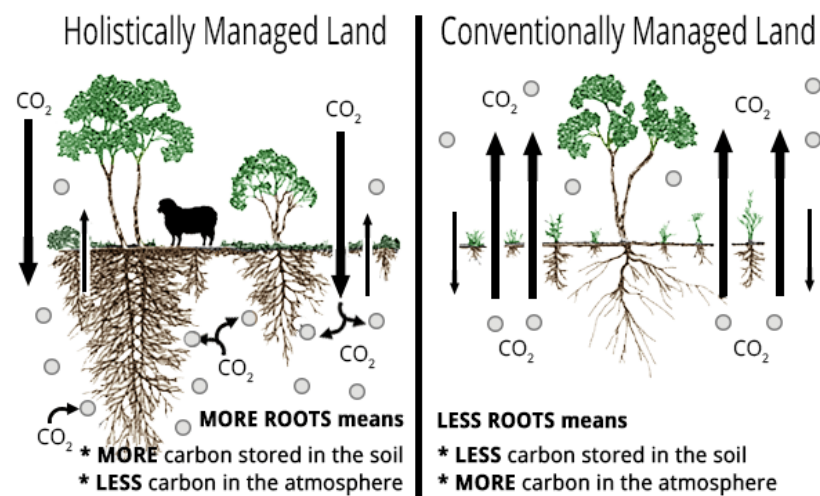
The Unrealized Radicalness of a Home Garden

Elizabeth Keosky
Ithaca Meeting

Abridged from a larger article available at www.tompkinsweekly.com/category/opinions-columns/sustainable-tompkins/

The common reasons for home gardens are clear enough: fresh vegetables, saving money, being outdoors. But after decades of gardening, I am just now seeing the radicalness of a home garden.

My garden has become a portal to a new ecosystem, a microbiome. Growing knowledge of microbiomes has changed what we consider an individual. Each human has a community of microbes in our body; every garden includes a community of microbes in the soil, as well as the more visible plants we see above ground. Seeing microbiomes as “collective individuals”



gives us a more radical, many-layered understanding of the complex challenges and solutions worked out in nature.

I had been treating plants as individuals, but now see them as part of a community. In a miracle of chemical communication, a network of fungi and helper bacteria trade nutrient needs with plant roots, transmit pathogen defense warnings to other plants, etc. The process is remarkably similar to the way that microbes in our human guts talk with our immune systems.

I used to feed my plants; now I feed the trillions of microbes who live in the soil underlying them. I propagate more of these microbes in my compost pile, and compost tea is a fermented probiotic for plants, similar to yogurt for the human gut.

Social Darwinism, an unscientific distortion of Darwin’s theory of evolution, has been used to justify the intense competitiveness of the industrial revolution since the late 1800s: seeing each individual as competing against all others in a marketplace. But the radicalness of a small home garden as a community of cooperating beings turns competitive industrial culture on its head.

We home gardeners are not market driven; we are producers as well as consumers of food. The rewards are in the deliciousness of food grown yourself. A home garden is a pantry where food is always fresh, transportation costs are negligible, and there are no plastic wrappers.

Home gardeners don’t have to make a monetary profit, but there are many cost-saving alternatives to buying plants or garden supplies. Instead of fertilizers and herbicides, I now lug whatever biomass waste I can lay my hands on to my garden.

You can make your own potting soil, apply amendments sparingly and at the right time, plant perennials and self-sowing annuals and save seeds from other annuals.

Frugality also drives inventiveness, such as using limbs and vines for support structures and cutting weeds or grass from your own land to mulch plants. The longer you garden, the more you find you can make do with what is around you (hardly a capitalist mantra).

Abundance happens in a garden. Gardens are not based on scarcity the way capitalistic markets are. They naturally foster sharing and neighborliness, trading plants, surplus produce, gardening tips and tools.

Reading books such as Robin Wall Kimmerer’s *Braiding Sweetgrass* (you can read an excerpt on this page), I am beginning to understand one more radical aspect of gardening, the most important of all: the reciprocity between people and plants. Many indigenous cultures teach gratitude for the gifts nature has given them. They never take more than the Earth can continue to provide, implicitly acknowledging the needs of future generations of all species.

Many people who have grown up in an industrialized culture are only now, when so many species and ecosystems are endangered, beginning to realize our dependency on Earth’s gifts. Our new understanding of microbiomes as part of symbiotic ecosystems provides a model for community on societal and global levels at a time when overlapping crises amplify the need for cooperation. Radically loving, reciprocal relationships are the essential piece needed to reverse a self-destructive worldview that

takes and takes until the abundance and beauty of Earth is used up.

Giving back more than you take out has a name: **regeneration**. Regenerative practices are spiritually based in gratitude for Earth’s gifts and the understanding that it is our responsibility to put back more than we take. Rebuilding the health of soil, of ecosystems, of human communities, and of the planet is a fantastically optimistic practice.

Excerpt from Braiding Sweetgrass

“The Honorable Harvest” chapter in Robin Wall Kimmerer’s book Braiding Sweetgrass both asks the relevant questions and provides guidelines for us to use when making decisions about food (or anything else we consume):

If we are fully awake, a moral question arises as we extinguish the other lives around us on behalf of our own. Whether we are digging wild leeks or going to the mall, how do we consume in a way that does justice to the lives we take? [...]

The guidelines for the Honorable Harvest are not written down, or even consistently spoken of as a whole—they are reinforced in small acts of daily life. But if you were to list them, they might look something like this:

- Know the ways of the ones who take care of you, so that you may take care of them.
- Introduce yourself. Be accountable as the one who comes asking for life. Ask permission before taking. Abide by the answer.
- Never take the first. Never take the last. Take only what you need.
- Take only that which is given.
- Never take more than half. Leave some for others. Harvest in a way that minimizes harm.
- Use it respectfully. Never waste what you have taken. Share.
- Give thanks for what you have been given.
- Give a gift, in reciprocity for what you have taken.
- Sustain the ones who sustain you and the earth will last forever.



Book Review:

What Your Food Ate

David R. Montgomery and Anne Bikle, Norton, 2022

Review by Rebekah Rice

Subtitled *How to Heal our Land and Reclaim our Health*, this engaging and highly readable book takes a deep look at the available research on how the quality of food is affected by soil health, literally exploring how what your food (whether plant or animal) ate affects your health.

How food is grown affects the planet and every living being. This includes you.

The health of a plant grown in soil is affected by the biological life in the soil as the microbes release exactly what the plant needs. When herbicides, fungicides, or insecticides have been applied, the balance in the soil life changes, and fewer nutrients are bioavailable to the plants. Any unbalance in fertilizer can affect bioavailability as well. If soil has lots of organic matter, it does a better job of hosting the microbiome.

What Your Food Ate also explores why meat, dairy, and eggs are actually different if an animal is fed grain and seeds (loaded with omega-6 fats) rather than grass and forbs (rich in omega-3 fats). Healthy omega-3 fats are dominant in the milk, eggs, and meat resulting from pasture-raised animals. CAFOs (confined animal feeding operations) feed grain and beans and thus result not only in inhumane conditions but also in fats that you should not wish to eat.

Whether you are a vegan, a vegetarian, or an omnivore, you will find detailed information to help you make the best possible choices for Earth and for your own body.

Earthcare Grant Supports Nyack Garden

NYYM's Earthcare Fund was pleased to be able to give a grant to the Central Nyack Pollinator Pathway Garden (see "A Little Eden in Nyack" on the next page). Here are a few highlights from their application:

A well traveled foot path, which the town had been spraying with the weedkiller Roundup, follows the southern edge of a low income housing project. People walk through here to catch the bus to work, to play basketball at the community center, to take a stroll with their dogs, and sometimes to do drugs. The housing complex and the surrounding neighborhood is a beautiful mix of people of many colors and backgrounds.

This year, this dusty, burnt earth walkway has been transformed into a vibrant community garden with native plants that are key to supporting native bugs (especially caterpillars), which in turn support native birds.

We also are bringing importance and beauty to a lane that many working people and children walk every day, helping us envision the earth as a nurturing gathering space rather than an abandoned dumping ground. Cultivating this spot as a place of growing beauty shifts our sense of relationship to nature from something someone owns to something we share.

At least 100 people have contributed to the cultivation of the garden. This helps build community resilience; if something happens, neighbors know each other from positive interactions and won't jump to negative assumptions about each other.

By planting some species that are edible to humans, we promote children's understanding that food comes from the plants that grow in the earth while creating a place of harmony and fun for children. Since the walkway cuts through a residential section without being adjacent to a road, children can run the length of the walkway without the danger of cars, giving a feeling of safety and a sense that people, and not just machines, have the right to pass over the earth.

RELATED RESOURCE: Douglas W. Tallamy's book, *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard*, was written to show how homeowners can turn their yards into conservation corridors that provide wildlife habitats. The Central Nyack Pollinator Pathway Garden shows that the same principles apply to urban and shared spaces.

NYYM's Earthcare Fund helps people nourish ourselves while nourishing Earth

NYYM's Earthcare Fund gives grants and donations that provide spiritual and material support to those engaged in the compelling task of transforming our relationship with Earth, including addressing the climate crisis. The Fund is supported by NYYM's Sharing Fund. Grants are from \$50 to \$500. For information on applying see: nnyym.org/content/nnyym-financial-resources-individuals-and-meetings#earthcare

During 2022, in addition to the Central Nyack Pollinator Pathway, the Earthcare Fund supported the following food-related projects:

- **Akwasasne Task Force for the Environment:** support for the Mohawk Nation's project promoting food sovereignty and traditional plant-based medicines.
- **Bard Prison Initiative's Garden Programs:** prisoners growing some of their own food while learning job and business skills.
- **Friends Peace Teams Asia/Pacific:** a donation to help a Philippine village replace fishing boats destroyed by Typhoon Odette.
- **Soul Fire Farm:** At the request of Hamilton Meeting, we donated \$500 to Soul Fire Farm's CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program for low income families.
- **Wounded Knee/Porcupine Garden:** We worked with Farmington Scipio Regional Meeting to help a Lakota band in South Dakota start a garden.

The Gift of Regenerative Farming

Janet Soderberg
15th St Meeting

Project Drawdown Solution Farming Can Sequester

Huge Amounts of Carbon (about 23 gigatons of CO2 by 2050)

Some people think that regenerative farming could solve the global warming crisis. That's because new practices put a premium on building good soil and sequestering carbon. In fact, no other mechanism known to humankind is as effective in addressing global warming as capturing carbon dioxide from the air through photosynthesis. Carbon produces plants and food. "Regenerative agriculture" practices feed the soil, increasing organic matter, fertility, texture, water retention, and the existence of trillions of micro-organisms that convey health and protection to the roots and plant itself.

Why should Friends be concerned with this?

The best way to support farmers who are using these techniques is to buy their produce, dairy products and meat. You can find farmers markets and CSAs near you by entering your zip code at www.localharvest.org.

Doing so would allow you to participate in what many hope will be a major revolution in farming. It's a revolution that reduces global warming and makes people healthier.

Yes, the food can be more expensive, but look at the benefits: you're making a gift to the soil and the atmosphere. You're showing your love for Earth. You're reducing global warming. You're showing your gratitude to your own body.

Regenerative farming uses organic practices and more:

- **No Tillage.** In traditional farming, plowing exposes the soil and inverts it. Those beneficial organisms within the soil decay quickly and carbon is released. Eighty billion tons of carbon has been released into the atmosphere in traditional farming. Bringing the carbon back into the soil is a gift to the atmosphere, and it increases the life of the soil and reduces global warming.
- **Cover crops** give the soil a rest and add nutrients and positive qualities to the soil. Cover crops also crowd out weeds.

Ask your farmer if he or she uses these practices.



Jack-o-lantern festival, Oct. 30, 2022, Nyack, NY. Photo by Eileen Leith.

A Little Eden in Nyack

Sylke Jackson
Rockland Meeting

On October 30, 2022, a community in central Nyack celebrated fall with a Jack-o'-lantern festival in their new Pollinator Pathway Garden. Here is a report from one of the project's coordinators, Sylke Jackson:

Thank you to all the people who gave your time or funds to make the celebration happen yesterday! We had a wonderful festival that helped spread awareness about the garden and nurtured a deeper connection between the neighborhood and nature. The whole community pitched in (there were 50-100 people who participated through the afternoon and evening), and I heard neighbors saying, "We live across the street from each other but it takes meeting up in the garden for us to catch up!"

I loved watching kids who had never carved a pumpkin before transition from hesitantly contemplating the slimy seeds and fibers inside the pumpkins to squishing the pulp happily through their fingers, pulling out seeds, and even taking some home to grow or roast. This is a personal and intimate lesson on where our food comes from and teaches the importance of the earth and the growing things. Lighting up their jack-o'-lanterns and finding a dark spot to set the glowing pumpkin, munching freshly popped popcorn, and sipping hot cider, the children can feel and taste that the earth is their mama and home.

I feel that as we work on the garden and improve our relations

with the birds, and the insects and the growing things and each other, all those beings know that we are working for their good, and appreciate us. And we help make harmony. I am happy to be getting to know you all and to connect in this endeavor!



Song

Sheree Cammer
Albany Meeting

Oh oohh uh oh!
I forgot to take my anti-love
potion today.
I'm in love with everything.
Again.

The day held out his arms.
We embraced.
"I love you," said Day.
What did I say?
"I love you too."

Energy pouring through all life.
We are attuned.



Raising Sheep, Regenerating the Land

Rebekah Rice
Saratoga Meeting

When my parents purchased our family farm in upstate New York, no one had actively farmed for many years. This land, with a history of having been purchased from Mohawks in 1673, had in the years since been clear cut, overgrazed, plowed, and eventually mostly allowed to grow back to forest. This was typical for land settled by colonizers in this area.

Former fields that had been cut for hay over the previous 80 years were worn down to heavy clay with less than half a percent of organic matter. My father set about making compost and raising a large organic vegetable garden, which was lots of work because the soil was in such poor condition. The fields stopped producing hay, and got weedy. We used fossil fuels to cut them once a year, so they would stay open, which we did not feel good about.

Seven years ago, on a whim, I

got five sheep. I had learned in my Holistic Management* course about rotational grazing and how the process of animals biting the grass and forbs would stimulate growth and sequester carbon. This system borrows from the way in which wild groups of buffalo, antelope, and other ruminants arrive in an area, eat deeply, and leave again — which turns out to radically improve soil.

We got some electric fencing. We got some woven wire perimeter fencing. We built up our flock of sheep, bringing in awesome rams to improve the genetics. We learned to kill lambs of lesser quality, using traditional prayer and processes. Our flock increased. And YES! Our soil improved. We're storing carbon. We are regenerating the land.

Our sheep do not ever receive grain, and thrive directly on our fields from April to November, and indirectly by eating hay from our land the remainder of the year. Their meat contains healthy omega-3, which is one good reason to eat grass-fed grass-finished meat in addition to their soil building gifts.

Friend Sheree Cammer eats lamb from our farm. She testifies we should "Eat food that is regeneratively raised. This includes avoiding animal products from animals who are not allowed to express their true nature, i.e. pasture raised, rotationally grazed, replenishing the fertility and fountain of biodiversity of the land." I would add that it's important to me that no animal should experience fear at the end of their life, which is why we harvest them on our farm, out of sight of the rest of the flock, calmly, quietly, reflectively, with gratitude.

*See: holisticmanagement.org/the-regenerative-solution/

Salmon Lifeway

Joel Isaak, Dena'ina

The Salmon come to us. This simple statement is deeply profound but today western science is just catching up to why this matters. Across Alaska our Indigenous people have lived with Salmon for thousands of years. Scientific fields describe Salmon as a keystone species. In the slow growing glaciated north plants have a limited growing cycle.

Salmon provide the main nutritional value for the entire ecosystem of Alaska. Salmon bring the nutrients from the ocean up our rivers and streams and everything that eats salmon spreads these nutrients inland from the rivers. Without Salmon the north would look very different.

Salmon are spoken of as our relatives. Salmon are individuals and a collective. Our forests and rivers have grown together to create ideal Salmon habitat. Our people have situated our lifeways, our village locations, migration patterns, technologies, medicine, clothing, and ceremonies around Salmon's return. Our people do not view ourselves as separate from Salmon. Recently geneticists have found genetic markers in our ancestral and contemporary DNA that show our people have lived with Salmon as a mainstay of our diet for thousands of years.

The Salmon want to return, they come to us, they give themselves to those who take good care of them. We have a first fish ceremony and a blessing of the water every year as a sign of respect and to call our Salmon relatives home. It is important to return their bones to the water. As much of the Salmon is used as possible. Nothing is wasted. Keep the spruce trees, willows, and grasses growing along the river. Don't take more than you need. Have good thoughts when putting up the Salmon. Don't go out into the ocean to harvest a lot of Salmon, that's their home. Don't go up to the spawning grounds to harvest Salmon, that's their nursery.

If we don't take good care of Salmon they will not return to us and the lands will change as well. It is possible to take Salmon and exploit them. This was done when the canneries first arrived in Alaska. Colonizers saw the sheer abundance of these fish and literally tried to catch them all, every single one. This love for money is diametrically opposed to our spiritual connection with Salmon. There used to be hundreds of Salmon cultures around the world; now there are very few. This is what happens when Salmon are exploited. Elders say, "don't sell our foods." This is a warning to remember to treat the lands and

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Mindful Eating

Personal Stories



Yeva washing Salmon at the Kenaitze Tribal net and processing area in the summer of 2022. Photo by Rebekah Rice.

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waters with respect.

Salmon and the lands and waters they navigate through are considered relatives. We don't have a tradition of buying and selling human beings in our culture. Slavery is not something we have practiced nor is it something that we would impose on our Salmon relatives. If we don't take good care of the Salmon they will choose not to return. We have seen this in the past, and we are seeing it today. However, we have also seen Salmon return when we welcome them back in a good way.

Editorial Note: Joel was a recipient of an Indian Affairs Committee stipend while a student at SUNY Alfred. Rebekah and her granddaughter Yeva visited Joel at his home in Alaska this past summer.

Food is Weird

Joshua Quirk

So it's 2010, I'm 18 years old, and I've left home to live states away with my internet girlfriend. As you know, these types of stories don't often end so well.

Fast forward two years. I'm drowning in a toxic relationship with no room to breathe. I experienced my needs being crushed by the interminable pressure of a partner who just wasn't right for me. The stress led to me giving up my own morals, beliefs, loves, and truly my identity to the situation. I was so deep in it that I couldn't see the light any more.

My health rapidly plummeted. The diet that we shared didn't help that; multiple trips to fast food establishments a week, and we felt absolutely deprived if we didn't

eat out at a sit-in restaurant at least once a week. I'd guzzle sugary coffees just to stay awake, and this magic potion that I once lauded so highly now caused me anxiety, and whole-body pain.

I spent years struggling through this. Every week I would find something new to blame my newfound painful existence on: It was brain lesions. It was cancer. It was zinc. It was gluten. It was milk. It was fibromyalgia. It was chocolate. It was my DNA. It was *H. pylori* infesting my gut. It was every single thing that spilled out of my web browser's search results and straight into my screaming amygdala.

Truthfully... it took a while to figure out what it really was. But it wasn't comparing my own condition to others that helped me as much as turning inwards.

It was a lack of spirit.

Eight years later, in 2018 I did something truly bizarre. Led by spirit, that fellow who I'd recently begun to listen to again, I began to eat an entirely meat diet. In that half-year, I consumed more steak, salmon, bacon, and eggs than an average American may eat in half a decade. Nothing else but water.

It was an elimination diet. The purpose was to determine what was causing my illness. By listening to my body. I did find the answers, and I was slowly able to re-integrate other foods.

Bear in mind this whole time my soul was very, *very* consistently keeping me informed of the immense pain that I was inflicting with this diet. I'd write long posts to friends about my struggle with this cognitive dissonance. But it did work, and bizarrely it was what felt right for the time being.

I realized that if I wanted to avoid the obviously forthcoming multiple lives spent living as enslaved cows next to slaughterhouses that I would have to determine a way to heal, so that I could return to a more balanced diet. One that healed not only my body, but also my soul.

Starting by re-introducing broccoli, and then moving to other plants, I began to transition first to a balanced diet that worked for my body, and then, eventually, to a

completely vegan diet.

As I healed my body, and as I healed my soul, I also healed my relationship with my partner. And as that rift healed, as the toxicity coagulated and then dissolved, we realized that it was all that was holding us together. Without our toxic habits, we had nothing to talk about. Nothing to do together. We were suddenly strangers.

It was in 2010 that I began this path to learn this lesson. In 2022 I am healed.

Spiritual Crisis in an Eating Disorder

Cai Quirk
Ithaca Meeting

When I was 13, I heard the word 'transgender' for the first time and it immediately resonated to my core, but I was too scared back then to live into this truth. When I was 14, I developed an eating disorder; my mind tried to starve this truth out of me. I didn't realize that my desire for a 'male athletic body type' was really more rooted in being genderqueer than it was in my size. When I was 15, I rediscovered that I was trans and I began to heal more quickly.

I never understood how I could possibly forget about being trans for a year, but recently I found an answer in the book *Singing the Soul Back Home*. This book described how people who resist deep spiritual calls can develop serious illnesses until they listen to the call and follow Spirit faithfully. Again, I immediately saw the connection to my own life. For years I have understood my gender fluidity and spirituality to be deeply intertwined. Only now, 12 years later, do I see the role of an eating disorder in the spiritual crisis of my mid-teens.

Back then, I saw a therapist and a nutritionist, but both tried to solve the symptoms rather than find a cause. They got me out of immediate crisis, but I couldn't fully heal. Neither was spiritual, and I wasn't open about my eating disorder in my Quaker meeting. I didn't have words for how dissonant the 'therapy' felt, how it forced me into other problematic eating habits,

and how reaching a 'healthy weight' did not in any way mean that I had reached a healthy mental or spiritual state of being.

Nine years later I joined the NYM Mentoring Program and connected with a mentor who is well versed in the 12-step program. I finally began to fully heal. I finally began to fully trust myself. I finally had the kind of support that helped me release the last insidious roots of the eating disorder.

At a recent extended family dinner, we were asked to share memories of similar dinners from years past. I was glad that the circle never got around to me, because the memories that stood out most were of the years I would do hundreds of push-ups, crunches, and jumping jacks in the basement on either side of dinner, and eat as little as I could get away with. This year, I had no idea how many calories were on my plate... not only did I not even try to count, but I don't have the nutritional data of hundreds of foods memorized anymore. I could truly enjoy a meal with my family.

In the past few years, I have found several food intolerances. Physical pain develops throughout my body if I eat gluten, dairy, caffeine, or large amounts of sugar. The spiritual mindfulness around eating that grew with the 12-step program helped me find the causes of low-level chronic pains that I didn't know were there until they were gone. I never knew my body could feel this good. I don't remember what it was like to eat normally — that was half my lifetime ago — but I'm building those memories now.

I have wondered if this is a different manifestation of the eating disorder, and yet I can feel deep within me how much more connected to Spirit I am than I was all those years ago. I can feel how much more I listen to my body now. Sometimes that listening even includes potato chips, and I can eat them guilt-free. And still, in writing this article, I wonder... is my lactose intolerance a symptom that I am resisting a new spiritual call?

If you are in crisis, the National Eating Disorder Hotline is +1 (800) 931-2237.



More Veggies/ Less Meat

Janet Soderberg

Fifteenth Street Meeting

This plan is purposely easy because I don't usually spend more than 45 minutes cooking. It's NOT for hearty eaters. My husband Tom and I eat moderately. For one person, get half of a chicken if possible or get a whole one and freeze the other half. Also, we eat organic whenever possible because it's better for the earth (and us!). Usually I get these vegetables from the Union Square Farmers Market: broccoli, green beans, carrots, bok choy, kale, etc. During the winter I've found organic broccoli florets and more at Trader Joe's and many more choices at Whole Foods.

How to make a cooked chicken from Whole Foods stretch for five meals for two people without scrimping

My partner Tom brings home the cooked organic chicken and I separate the parts: legs and thigh, breasts and wings, and I take all the excess meat off the bones. Into a small glass covered dish I put one leg and thigh for Tom, one thigh for me. I also take all the meat off the wings, extra leg, and remaining bones while the chicken is still warm or room temperature and easy to do. I put all the other parts and meat into a storage container (glass because food keeps longer).

The vegetables: cutting up vegetables for me is therapeutic. I love experiencing their textures and colors, stuff of the earth(!), as I cut them to the right size for steaming.

I take the covered dish of chicken out of the refrigerator two hours early. To heat it up, I often bake a yam so the top of the toaster oven gets really hot and heats up the chicken. We also have a big helping of a steamed fresh swiss chard sprinkled with Balsamic vinegar and salt. Even during the winter, we can get beautiful fresh chard and fine salad greens from a farmer who grows it in a tent at Eckerton Hill Farms.

The second day we have curried chicken using one third of a 12 oz jar of curry sauce. I take all the excess meat and maybe a little bit of one breast and put it into a small covered pan with the curry sauce. I also make basmati rice sprinkled

with cardamon seeds and prepare and steam a big portion of organic fresh broccoli florets from Trader Joe's. A little lemon juice and salt make the broccoli tastier.

The next night might be another curry because we love Indian food. We also steam the last of the swiss chard.

The fourth night we might have chicken (part of a breast) heated up in a small dish. I also make short-grain brown rice. On top of the chicken and rice, we put Thai peanut sauce from Whole Foods heated up in a small pan. We also steam more of the broccoli florets.

The fifth night we might have curried chicken if there is enough chicken left. We also have steamed broccoli rabe. If we have time to saute it, it's great with fresh garlic.

Of course we don't necessarily have chicken five days in a row. We might make a vegetable stir fry using Hempeh, which is tempeh made with peanuts and hemp seeds. Hempeh is a little expensive, but when you consider it's a tasty vegetarian source of protein, it seems worth it.

Happy eating!

Background: Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh has said that making the transition to a plant-based diet may be the most effective way an individual can stop climate change. Eating is profoundly personal and cultural. While reducing or eliminating meat may be difficult for many people, this is a big way to make a difference.

According to the latest analysis by Project Drawdown, eating a plant-rich diet is the third most effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As Drawdown notes, a meat "diet comes with a steep climate price tag: one-fifth of global emissions. If cattle were their own nation, they would be the world's third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases."

"Plant-rich diets...tend to be healthier, leading to lower rates of chronic disease," notes Drawdown. "\$1 trillion in annual health-care costs and lost productivity could be saved." If price-distorting government subsidies, such as those benefiting the U.S. livestock industry, were eliminated, the true cost of meat would then be reflected in its price.

Becoming Flexitarian: When Being Vegan or Vegetarian isn't an Option

Margaret McCasland
Ithaca Meeting

I grew up knowing where most of my food came from. Both sets of grandparents grew, gathered, fished or hunted much of their food: my father's family in the Adirondacks, my mother's family on the shores of the Atlantic. I was born in a fishing village, and we moved to a small farming hamlet when I was nine. Our milk and eggs came from neighbors' farms, and we raised our own goats, ducks and geese. My father had an apiary adjacent to a neighbor's produce farm, and we harvested as many vegetables as we could eat in exchange for the bees' pollinating services.

During neighborhood canning bees, we put up a year's worth of fruit and vegetables. In the late 50s, the women were thrilled when Sears started selling chest freezers, because it was easier to freeze most fruits and veggies than it was to use a pressure canner. My father ordered an extra large freezer so there would be room for the venison he brought back from his annual Adirondack hunting trip.

As a child, I ate what was put in front of me, with one notable exception. Since I spent much of my time after school and summers playing with baby goats, I would not eat their meat when they were slaughtered in the fall. So my father promised (lied) that he would find homes for all the kids. One of the kids did find a home at a friend's house, so I believed him—until the year I killed a deer with my VW bus.

A neighbor and I butchered the deer. Once the meat was packaged and we sat down to eat some pan-fried liver, my neighbor could tell I was in shock and recommended a shot of whiskey. As soon as I began to drink it, I started shaking. Deer had just joined the goats on my "do not eat list."

My husband was happy to eat venison, and I also brought venison to every pot-luck that winter. My

half of the deer was soon gone, and I realized that the single deer my father killed every November could not have fed seven people for over six months. So I called one of my brothers and asked whether some of the "venison" we ate was actually goat meat. He said of course it was, but they had to pretend it was venison so I would eat it. In retrospect, I was grateful they had complied, instead of teasing me about eating "Alice" or "Whitey."

I killed the deer in the early 1970s, while I was part of the "back to the land" movement in central NYS (hence all the potlucks). Vegetarianism was a new idea to most of us, but we were heavily influenced by two books: Frances Moore Lappé's *Diet for a Small Planet*, which taught us how to get complete proteins from vegetarian diets, and the *Moosewood Cookbook*, based on recipes from a cooperatively-owned restaurant here in Ithaca. While Moosewood was famous for their vegetarian recipes, the restaurant served chicken and fish Friday and Saturday evenings. When it turned out that my children had trouble digesting milk, eggs, and some vegetable protein, I took a leaf from Moosewood's book, and introduced them to fish and poultry.

This fall I discovered a name for the way I have been eating for decades: "flexitarian," a combination of the words "flexible" and "vegetarian." When doctors diagnosed my chronic joint pain as caused by multiple food intolerances a few years ago, my diet became extremely restricted. The flexitarian philosophy helps me enjoy the options I do have (occasional small portions of many foods). It also helps me understand and respect why some people choose to be vegan or vegetarian and others choose to eat responsibly-raised meat from mammals.

RELATED RESOURCE: *What Is a Flexitarian?* by Linnea Covington: www.thespruceeats.com/what-is-a-flexitarian-5095820

Read More Online!

You can find an expanded list of resources and additional articles online at nym.org/mindful-eating



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of community. I am expecting that there will be much for us to mull over and to bring forward for discernment.

Worship and social times are still being planned and updates will be coming; stay tuned!

I hope to see you—in person or on the screen—for good times together.

Love, Elaine

(Elaine Learnard, Clerk of NYYM)

Spring Sessions will be held at Oakwood Friends School on April 14-16

Spring Sessions 2023 will be a 'hybrid' gathering, both online via Zoom and in person at Oakwood Friends School in Poughkeepsie, NY.

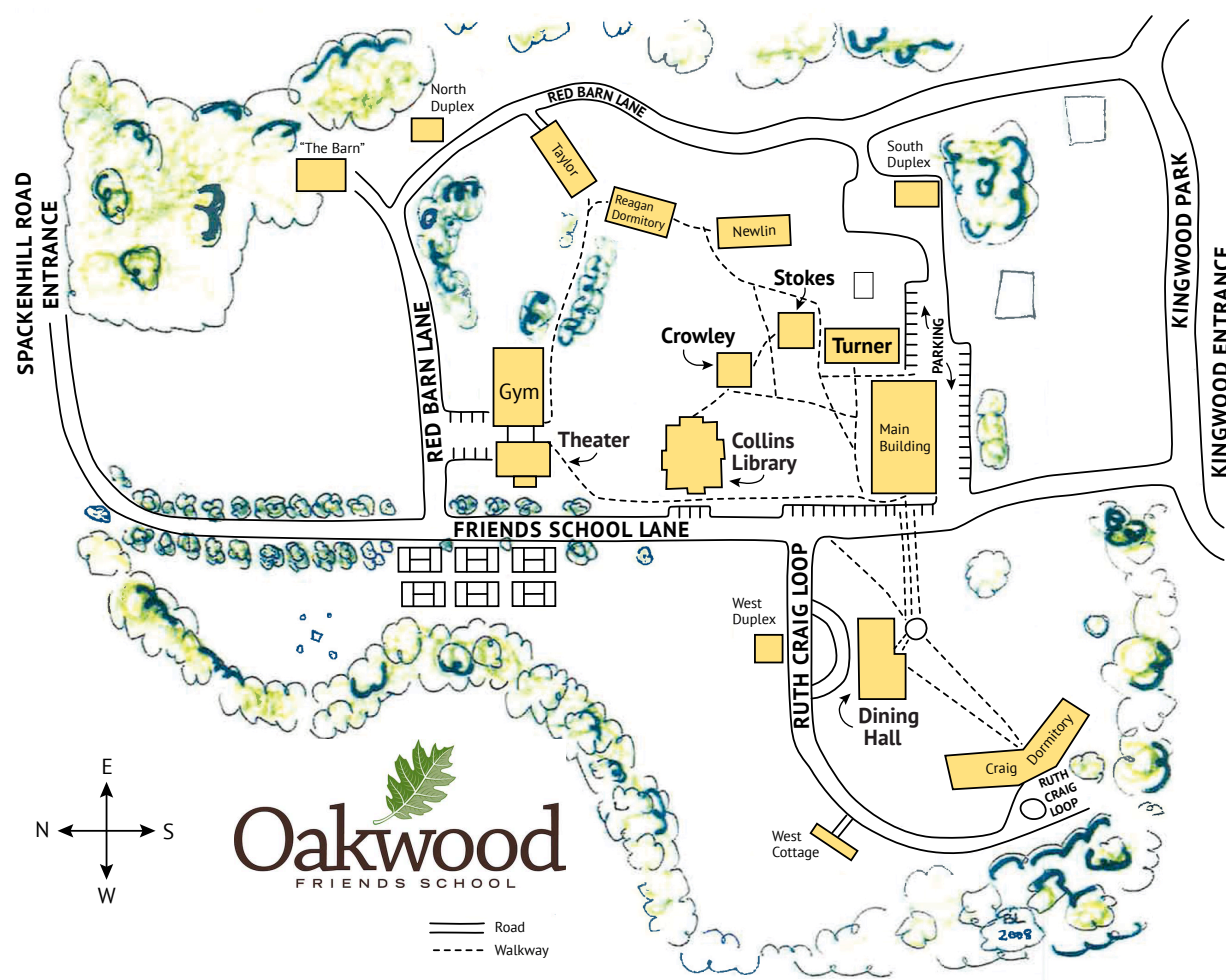
What is Spring Sessions?

This is one of the three times a year that members of the NYYM community gather to worship, conduct business, and have fellowship together. They are open to anyone who is interested in Quakerism and the Quaker meetings in NY state and nearby CT and NJ.

How do I register?

Registration details are being finalized and will be available soon. The opening of registration will be announced to the NYYM email list—visit nyym.org/subscribe to join this list. You can also call the NYYM office at 212-673-5750 for more information and for help with registration.

We hope to see you there, in person or online!



Spring Sessions Schedule

April 14-16, 2023 Online & at Oakwood Friends School

Friday evening, April 14

- 7:00-9:00 p.m. Gathering
- 7:00-9:00 p.m. Informal gathering of Friends on campus

Saturday, April 15

- 8:30-9:30 a.m. Meeting for Worship
- 9:45-11:45 a.m. Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
- 12:00-1:00 p.m. Meals with Meaning
- 1:15-2:45 p.m. Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
- 3:00-4:00 p.m. Worship Sharing
- 4:15-5:45 p.m. Coordinating Committees
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner
- 7:00-9:00 p.m. Fellowship. Singing. Conversation

Sunday, April 16

- 10:00-11:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship
- 11:15-12:30 p.m. Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
- 12:30-1:15 p.m. Lunch & Departure

Summer Sessions 2023 will be at Oakwood Friends School and Online, July 22-27

Summer Sessions will NOT be held at Silver Bay this July, 2023.

The NYYM Sessions Committee announced that Summer Sessions 2023 will be held at Oakwood Friends School in Poughkeepsie, NY. The decision to move from Silver Bay for this year was difficult and painful, but the contract that Silver Bay offered for 2023 was not workable for NYYM for multiple reasons. The time frame will be slightly different than previously years: **July 22-27**, from Saturday, July 22 lunch through Thursday, July 27 breakfast and closing worship. Many program details are still being determined, but we can say that there will be programs for children, youth, and young adults, as well as intergenerational events. The focus is on being together.

Oakwood is enthusiastic about hosting us for

this gathering. NYYM will be the only group on campus (besides the Oakwood staff). There are many meeting spaces available. The school has the technical capacity to run hybrid meetings for worship and business. There are dorms on campus and many other accommodations available nearby. Oakwood is easily accessible by train and bus and has vans available to assist with transportation. To learn more about Oakwood Friends School, visit www.oakwoodfriends.org.

With the change in location as well as all we have learned about the possibilities and limitations of meeting online during the pandemic, we—all of us—have an opportunity to re-imagine what Summer Sessions can be. This will be a new experience in a new space with new resources and possibilities. Sessions Committee

took some time at their most recent meeting to begin answering the question, "Why do we meet in person?" NYYM Friends are asked to help answer this question by sending thoughts to sessions-clerk@nyym.org or attending an online event that Sessions is planning to host in the next few weeks. Visit nyym.org/subscribe to sign up for NYYM's email announcements.

