



# SPARK

New York Yearly Meeting

*The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)*

Volume 53, Number 2

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March 2023

## Quakers and the Arts

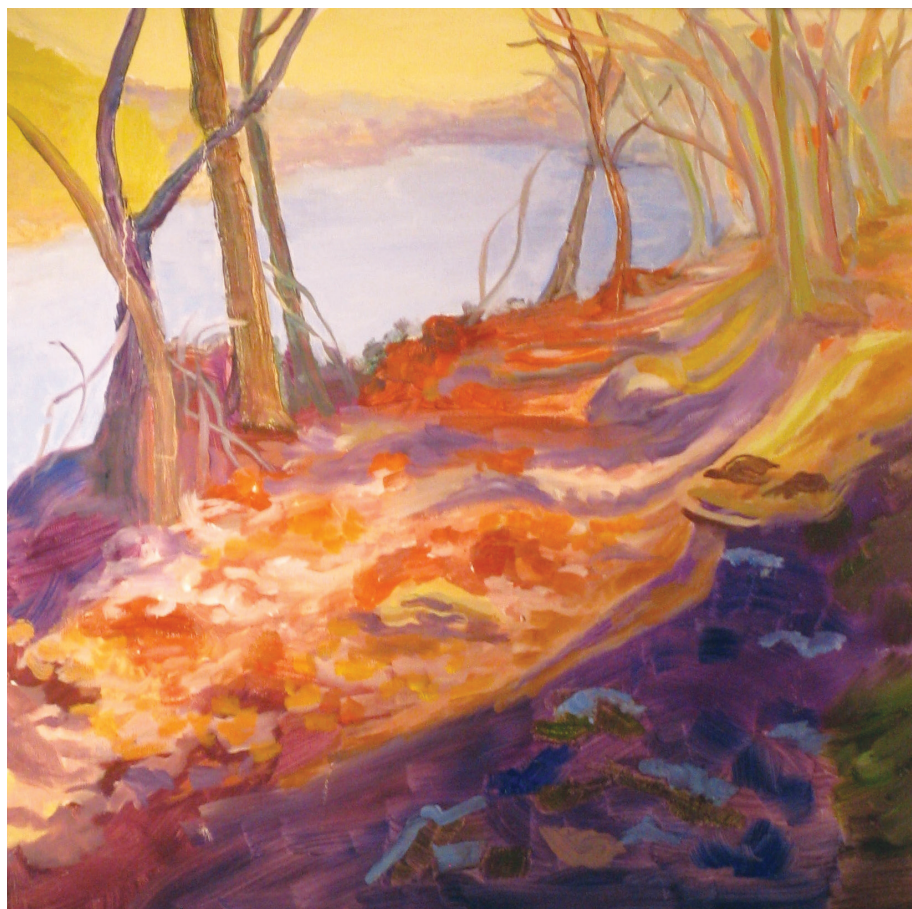
### Finding the Divine in a Mosh Pit<sup>1</sup>

Kirsten Cole  
Brooklyn Meeting

On a recent Saturday night I was brought to tears of joy as I watched about 80 people of various ages gathered at the Brooklyn Meeting-house enthusiastically dance to a punk rock cover of Leonard Cohen's song "Hallelujah." Over the course of the evening Brooklyn Meeting's social hour room was filled with an audience of mostly young people who were there for a show featuring five different bands. The event was curated by several Brooklyn Meeting teens and supported by adult organizers from the meeting community. (Full disclosure: The drummer in one of the bands is my own 17 year old.) Their vision was for a celebration of art and music by and for young people and that the space affirm and celebrate the LGBTQIA+ community. In addition to the bands who performed, young graffiti artists were invited to bring canvases to hang around the dance floor. The organizers decided together to collect voluntary donations at the door that would be contributed to the Vera Institute

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<sup>1</sup> I couldn't resist the poetry of this headline, but, in fact, this event did not include an actual mosh pit. While there was joyous and energetic movement, out of safety concerns, everyone respected the request that the dance floor stop short of becoming an actual mosh pit.



*Down the Hiking Trail, oil on linen, by Sybil Perry, 2022*

### Drawing as Worship in Meeting for Worship

Karen Peissinger  
Buffalo Meeting

In the mid-to-late 2000s, while on hiatus from Quakers, I attended Sunday services offered by an evangelical Christian faith group. At one point, creating art as a form of worship was introduced. The artist

*continued on page 5*

### My Quaker Way Has Opened Through Art

Mary Pugh Clark  
Montclair Meeting

I am a visual person. I make sense of things by looking. Words, ideas, decisions—all grow from what I see. I let what I draw or paint, or photos that I take, help me clarify my thoughts. This process of mine has informed and deepened how I have practiced Quakerism. How I have

*continued on page 6*

### Re-Building FAITH in Changing Times

The Theme for NYYM's  
2023 Sessions

*read more on page 7*

**SPRING SESSIONS**  
**APRIL 14-16, 2023**  
**At Oakwood Friends  
School and Online**

Dear Friends, please come to Spring Sessions. I hope to see you—in person or on the screen—for good times together.  
— Elaine Learnard, Clerk of NYYM

*read more on page 7*

**SUMMER SESSIONS**  
**JULY 22-27, 2023**  
**Saturday to Thursday**  
**At Oakwood Friends  
School and Online**

*read more on page 8*



**Quakers and  
the Arts: pp.**  
**4-6**

**Spring Sessions:**  
**pp. 7-8**

**Summer Sessions:**  
**p. 8**



## Notices

### New Members

**Marie C. Brown** — Amawalk  
**Vivian Shelton** — Matinecock

### Transfers

**Elizabeth Brown Johnson**, to  
Poplar Ridge from Saratoga  
**Rachel Ruth**, to Ithaca from  
Poughkeepsie

### Deaths

**Linda Clarke**, member of  
Brooklyn, on March 1, 2023  
**Heloise Rathbone**, member  
of Brooklyn, on January 28,  
2023

*Correction to a typo in Jan. 2023  
Notices: the new member of  
Westbury is Kaitlyn Pawlukojc.*

## 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@nnyym.org](mailto:state-of-society@nnyym.org).

### Do You Receive the Weekly NYYM Email Update?

Each Friday an email newsletter from NYYM is sent out to over 1600 people. Past editions are available at [nnyym.org/weekly-updates](http://nnyym.org/weekly-updates). To subscribe, fill out the brief form at [nnyym.org/subscribe](http://nnyym.org/subscribe). If you think you're on the list but haven't received any emails, please check your spam folder.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Spring Sessions 2023

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

Please see pages 7-8 for more details.

## Around Our Yearly Meeting

### 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 8.



### Powell House Workshops

Powell House is the retreat and conference center for NYYM. Visit [poho.org](http://poho.org) to see the full list

of upcoming events and to register.

**HOSPITALITY, the final session of the Testimonies to Mercy Series June 2-4, 2023, in person**

Our keynote speaker is Rhiannon Grant, who will be joining us online from the UK. Her remarks will be about moving, in our communal homes, beyond more chairs and a bigger table to a new menu: embracing deep hospitality and exploring our changing Quaker community as we welcome different forms of theological and social diversity.

Susan Wilson will join Windy Cooler as the co-leader for this retreat, exploring this message in embodied, curious ways. Expect this to be a time of discernment and exploration. Visit [www.powellhouse.org/event-list/hospitality](http://www.powellhouse.org/event-list/hospitality)

**Save the Date: Young Peacemakers Week, August 14-18**

Young Peacemakers Week will again take place in 2023, from August 14-18, 1:30 to 6:30 in the afternoon, at the Albany Friends Meetinghouse. Our goal is to bear witness to the Quaker Peace Testimony, and all our activities and events are infused with that purpose. We welcome children going into grades 2 to grades 8. We are also actively looking for volunteers, paid interns, and paid teachers, who can also apply online. Interns are generally high school age and assist the teachers, who are college age and up. Persons applying should be committed to building a peaceful community within ourselves, our families, our communities, our environment, and on a global level. We include families at a simple meal for three out of our five days, and host a field trip to a local nature preserve or farm to empha-

size peace within our environment. Other activities include arts and crafts, non-competitive games, music, dance, dramatic play, and cooking. For more information, please visit our website, [www.youngpeacemakersweek.weebly.com](http://www.youngpeacemakersweek.weebly.com), or contact Anita Stanley at 518-441-7722 or [meridiancomm@earthlink.net](mailto:meridiancomm@earthlink.net).

## FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Children, Youth and Young Adult Community Director Beth Kelly maintains a list of upcoming YAF events at [nnyym.org/yaf-events](http://nnyym.org/yaf-events).

### Does it Nurture Myself?

**A Young Adult Conference (older than high school age) at Powell House**

**June 9-11, 2023**

Care for oneself can take on many forms. While one person may unwind with a bubble bath, another may prefer a wilderness hike. Others may find it difficult to make time for self-care at all. Join us as we discuss different ways to give ourselves care as well as challenges that can stand in the way of good self-care. We will play games and make art to help us navigate this tricky and important topic. Visit [poho.org](http://poho.org).

**Continuing Revolution 2023: Nurturing Experiments in Spiritually Grounded Abolition**

**June 2-6, 2023, on-campus at Pendle Hill and online via Zoom**

Continuing Revolution, Pendle Hill's annual conference for young adults (ages 18-35), is a space of collective exploration and learning for the spiritually curious who are striving to live in ways that reflect their values. Join other young adult Friends and seekers exploring abolition of police and policing. Building on themes and feedback from 2022's Experiments in Spiritually Grounded Abolition, we will focus this year on the relationship between individual and structural transformation. Visit [pendlehill.org/learn/continuing-revolution-2023/](http://pendlehill.org/learn/continuing-revolution-2023/)

## FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

**Powell House Youth Conferences**

**PLAYFULLY RIGHTEOUS for 9th-12th Grade**

**April 28-30, 2023**

At this conference we will play lots of games and think about games in the context of social justice. 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.

## OPPORTUNITIES

**Pastor Position at Farmington Friends Meeting, Farmington, NY**

The position is for full-time pastoral ministry that is both Christ-centered and rooted in Quaker tradition and practice. Our ideal candidate has a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent, is recorded in Quaker ministry, and is available January, 2024. We seek someone who can thrive in a rural setting while being enthusiastic about outreach and diversity. Expertise in technology and social media is an asset. Salary, health benefits, housing, vacation, and retirement packages are negotiable.

Please direct inquiries to Search Committee at [quakerhiker@gmail.com](mailto:quakerhiker@gmail.com) by March 31, 2023.



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## Letter to the Editor

### On Richard Nixon

Joseph Olejak

*Old Chatham Meeting*

**Regarding "Richard Nixon's Quaker Witness," (*Spark*, Nov. 2022):** Yes, he was a member of the East Whittier Quaker Meeting, but rarely attended and he certainly did not put the testimonies into action in either his life or his public work. In his memoir of 600+ pages Nixon devoted a mere 3 paragraphs to his religion; a sad commentary on his "Quaker Witness."

The Vietnam conflict is mentioned in the article's list of his "colossal accomplishments" but it is not mentioned that he presided over the bombing of Laos. The US incursion into Laos created the conditions for Pol Pot to murder 2 million people in what is now considered a Cambodian genocide. His so called "getting the US out of Vietnam" occurred because of events like Kent State. Americans were fed up and there would soon be rioting in the streets if he failed to act. If not for American activism he would have gladly continued to pour money and bodies into that pointless war. He even went so far as to call students "bums blowing up college campuses."

Nixon is cited in the article as a "steward of the health of millions of Americans." I'd like to remind readers that the Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 was a racist act designed to put black people in jail. In the book *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander details how the war on drugs was really just a war on black people.

On opening up China and Japan: this was not to bring about world peace and a brotherhood of mankind. It was a race to the bottom economically. Looking back at history these two decisions hollowed out American manufacturing and shipped millions of jobs overseas to workers who got paid a fraction of what American workers were being paid.

One bright spot was the environmental laws, but the Nixon tapes reveal that he was disgusted by "tree huggers." He passed the environmental acts begrudgingly because he feared the environmentalists had organized political power. It was Rachel Carson and her book *Silent Spring* that created a hue and cry

about the destruction of the natural world; Nixon merely took advantage of that rising tide as a political operator.

Lastly, would a Quaker use the IRS to attack his political enemies? I think not, and that is exactly what Nixon did. Last time I looked revenge was not a part of the SPICES. As a man Nixon lacked decency and integrity, a core Quaker value.



## Making Peace and the Peace Testimony

Greta Kirk Mickey

Gunpowder Meeting, BYM

Since the outbreak of war between Russia and Ukraine I have read numerous articles examining whether the Peace Testimony remains relevant in our times. As someone who carries a leading to work for world peace, my unequivocal answer is yes. Here's why.

None of Friends' testimonies stands alone. Simplicity, Peace, Equality, Community, Integrity; they are all intertwined. Together, they lead us to a way of life that defines us as Quakers. If we each seek peace—not just an absence of war or violence, but that deep internal peace that our practice brings—then we are better able to live into each of our other testimonies. We are called to an immersive practice, a practice that defines the way that we live and interact with the world. Our inner peace is at the core.

We live in a world where crisis intervention is all too frequently the model on a global, community, and even on a personal level. We often wait until the very last minute, when there is almost no hope of rectifying a problem, to address it. This makes us feel hopeless; and from that place of hopelessness, we question the possibility of ever finding our way to peace. When we are truly at peace within ourselves and seeking equality for all, then we also have the wisdom, strength, grace, and discernment to listen, see, and feel the early seeds of unrest, and to act.

When we are at peace within ourselves, that peace begins to radiate outward to our communities and throughout the world. In 2008 I was blessed with a call to do peacemaking and conflict trans-

formation within the country of Georgia. As a facilitator in the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) I carried my understanding of that work to Friends in Georgia. Over the course of three years, I made three trips to Georgia, running back-to-back AVP workshops while I was there.

This past summer I was asked to speak to NYYM's Annual Sessions about the work that I had done in Georgia. As I prepared my talk, I thought about my understanding of peacemaking as the planting of seeds with the knowledge that we may never see those seeds bear fruit. I have stayed in touch with many of my Georgian friends, so I decided to reach out to them. I asked one question: Were you "able to carry anything that you learned from our time together into the way that you live and work now?"

The responses that I received touched me deeply. Each person spoke of how the AVP experience opened their understanding of how they could use the tools that they already had within themselves to find peaceful ways to deal with conflict in their lives. For many it caused them to shift their career paths. Natuli was working as a bank manager and in an abusive marriage when I met her. After her AVP experience she left both her marriage and her job. Today she works with the UN as a coordinator of the UN women's project "Stop the Violence". Natuli shared that she "wanted to do more to spread peace...to show how amazing life is without violence".

Others shared that they use the skills that they learned in their daily work. Davit uses them in his work with children. Anna works with international peacemaking organizations. Eliko remains in Georgia and heads an organization doing AVP both in Georgia and Ukraine. Tamuna shared "... AVP opened my eyes and I learned how we can reply to violence nonviolently. Thanks to [the] AVP program I started to feel life again, started to believe in myself again. I became emotionally stable (again), and the quality of my and my children's life improved. Many thanks to this program and people who work hard to bring peace in the world."

These are just a few of the people in the country of Georgia that I was privileged to meet and to work with.

They are the living example of what our loving and caring outreach can do. They represent a small fraction of the seeds planted in Georgia; seeds that have sprouted, bloomed, and continue to bear fruit as they themselves plant the seeds of peace. It is an immense blessing.

As Friends, living into our testimonies can and does have the potential to change lives at home and around the world.



### Editor's Note

Many thanks to the Friends who sent in artwork to share for this issue. I hope you find this issue inspiring. I'm thinking I might restart my practice of drawing during meeting for worship, as long as others don't find it distracting.

At press time, the NYYM staff and Sessions Committee were finalizing details for Spring Sessions, being held online and at Oakwood School; see pages 7-8 in this issue.

**Upcoming *Spark* themes:**  
**May 2023: How Do We Talk About God?** Friends in our yearly meeting use a lot of different words to mean "God" — Spirit, the divine, Jesus Christ, the Light, etc. Does this language divide us? Is the division fundamental or superficial? Let's talk about it.  
**Submissions due April 1.**

*Spark* accepts article submissions of 400-600 words, artwork, poetry, shorter news items and announcements, and letters to the editor. Please share your gifts with the rest of NYYM. Deadline for the May issue is April 1. Email submissions to **communications@nyym.org**.

Please send in your meeting's news so it can be shared in the next NYYM weekly email update or in *Spark*. If you'd like to join NYYM's weekly email list visit [nyym.org/subscribe](http://nyym.org/subscribe).

NYYM is on **Facebook** (NewYorkYearlyMeeting), **Twitter** (NYYMTweets), and **Insta** (newyorkyearlymeeting).  
—Sarah Way, NYYM  
Communications Director  
[communications@nyym.org](mailto:communications@nyym.org)

**[NYYM.org/donate](http://NYYM.org/donate)**





# Quakers and the Arts

## Finding the Divine in a Mosh Pit

Kirsten Cole  
Brooklyn Meeting

*continued from page 1*

for Justice in support of their work to end mass incarceration. Though they really didn't need us, a handful of adult members of the Brooklyn Meeting community attended that evening to support the young folks and to share in the joy that they created. Most of us were fully outfitted with ear plugs and one of us wore a threadbare Ramones t-shirt from shows at CBGB's in the 1970s. All of us smiled ear to ear as a transcendent evening unfolded.

A few weeks before the show, one of the adult organizers made an announcement about the upcoming show at the rise of meeting for worship. He explained, "We did a really radical thing. We asked our teens what they would want to do if they could organize an event for young people. And they told us. And we listened." At a time when we are deeply engaged in conversations about the direction of Quakerism, it's powerful to be reminded that building toward our future might be easier to achieve if we open our hearts and minds and listen to the next generation.

While the evening itself was magical, what has unfolded since then has moved me even more deeply. 90% of the young people who attended the show were not themselves Quakers, but attended because they follow one or more of the bands that were performing. Members of these bands came

to the meeting house a few times before the show for planning discussions held during social hour. As they talked to the teen and adult organizers about the space, they also learned about what we do there when we're not hosting loud, all-ages punk shows. As a result, since that evening, a handful of young people have returned each week to attend meeting for worship. One non-Quaker band member even encouraged their parent to start attending, and both have gotten involved in Brooklyn Meeting's Pride planning discussions.

As a lifelong Quaker I have always felt that my capacity for a direct experience of the spirit, unmediated by a hierarchical religious structure, enables my faith. Unsurprisingly, this space of possibility makes Quakerism appealing to many young people. As a parent of two teenagers, I am reminded time and again that my own kids are in an amazing stage of development, a time when they are practicing the skill of standing on their own, independent of adult caregivers. In addition to being amazed, I am also tested in my faith in them and myself. I am learning to be able to let go, to listen and learn, and to watch them navigate what it means to be themselves, to be human. Since that night at Brooklyn Meeting, and every Sunday since, I have been moved by the recognition of just how much is possible when we make space for all of us to speak the messages that are written in our hearts, even when I may occasionally need to travel with an extra set of ear plugs.



## Quakerism in the Creative Process

Diane-Ellen McCarron  
Poughkeepsie Meeting

This watercolor painting is called "Rise Again," although I also considered titling it, "Do Not Collapse." At first gaze the content of the painting may seem far away from a more typical representation of the Quaker process. But, in my life experiences of over seventy years, I have learned, mostly from trial and error, that wholeness and truth cannot manifest fully without accepting my own darkness—my mistakes and failures that often flip over and attempt to teach me once I accept them. The infused and empowered Light bestowed with my "yes" can help guide and humbly integrate parts of myself into the whole of who I am. For me, this practice is my life's work. Both art and writing are processes that guide me into a deeper love. When I participate in a creative pursuit, it opens me and helps me let go of what takes me away from the Spirit

and helps reveal what behavior choices bring me closer to our living God. Sometimes, a silence rises along with an unexpected Quaker listening that delivers me to sacred tears. I feel very grateful at these times of stillness. And so, the title, "Rise Again."

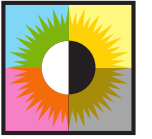
George Fox spoke these words: "I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the darkness, in that I also saw the infinite love of God, and I had great openings." The figure in this painting (which may represent everyone) responds and embraces this spiritual truth. I feel overwhelmed at times because of the level of chaos acted out in wars, poverty, climate change, etc., etc. Also, I sometimes realize how I can be at odds in relationships—on the verge of a collapse or depression due to the weight of many day-to-day burdens. Yet a "still small voice" reminds me that one can rise again out of the ocean of darkness as unifying and healing Light brings forth living peace—"great openings."

*continued on next page*



*Lake Reflections*, oil on linen, by Sybil Perry, 2022.





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Collapsing is not a permanent state when my faith knows that God's love is always infinitely available to me as it also is to all of us everywhere.

My spiritual life is an important priority. When I write and paint, it is as if a lens opens for me to see the world more sacredly. I think I am lighter and more able to "...walk cheerfully over the earth."

## Drawing as Worship in Meeting for Worship

Karen Peissinger  
Buffalo Meeting

*continued from page 1*

for that day's service was up on the stage with the praise and worship band. As the band played for the first 20 minutes of the service, the artist began to create a drawing or painting of a spiritual subject. I thought this was an interesting way to express a sense of God's movement in one's being.

Another experience I had was while attending a death penalty execution vigil at a Catholic church. (At the time I lived in El Paso, TX, and the death penalty was—and still is—legal.) While a musician played a mournful tune on the flute, a vision came to me of the individual music notes carrying our various petitions—for comfort for the prisoner and their families and friends, for mercy for the prison staff, for the end of the death penalty—to God. It was a pretty profound image that stayed with me. So, when I got home to my drawing pencils and notebook, I recreated what I had seen in my mind's eye.

In the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Quakers page on the Friends General Conference website, meeting for worship is described as:

"...silent waiting, where we expect to come into the presence of God. In this living silence, we listen for the still, small voice that comes from God through the Inward Light."

Based on my experiences, I wondered if drawing is a way at meeting for worship to:

- enter the "living silence"?
- listen for "the still, small voice"?
- connect with the Inward Light?

While researching if there is a precedent for what I call Quaker Worship Drawing (and there were very few), I came across the below in an article titled "Art as Ministry" in which Elinor Smallman reflects on a Quaker Arts network event:

We have come together as a Quaker group and have shared our individual experience of creative activity being a way of connecting to a greater energy, coming both from outside ourselves and also from a deep place within. We experience our art work as a way of exploring and communicating the mystery of the divine, often using a language beyond words.

— *The Friend*, 03/15/13

I thought I would consider for myself if drawing was beneficial to my experience of meeting for worship. It seemed promising based on the few times I did. I am not a trained artist. But the drawings I did create were meaningful to me because they were an expression of what I feel the Spirit had put in my mind. This practice made meeting for worship more meaningful to me, and gave me a sense of a greater connection to the Inward Light and the people gathered for worship.

Wanting to share this experience with others, I brought pencils and small journal booklets to this past Spring Gathering. I left the pencils and booklets on a table, including a handwritten note introducing the concept of drawing as worship and inviting others to take a few pencils and a booklet to try it for themselves. There was no request for anyone to report back; I considered this a "soft" introduction and wanted to see what would happen organically. Over the weekend, I did see and hear of a few people trying drawing as worship during various sessions and the meetings for worship and business. One person remarked that after drawing their image at the beginning of meeting for worship, they felt that they had gotten out "all the noise" in their mind and was better able to center down for worship. That Friend spoke my mind.

Based on all these experiences, I believe that drawing as worship can

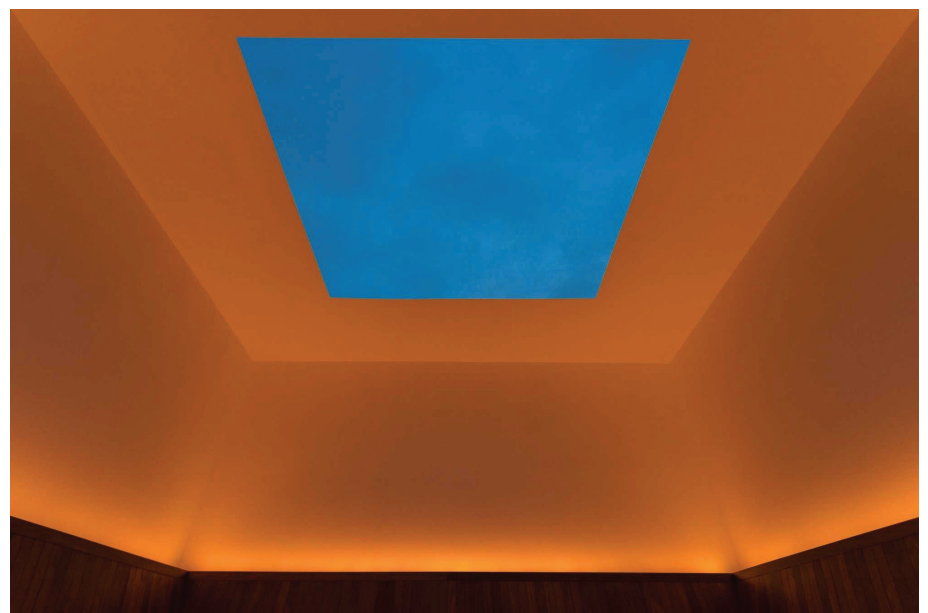
help us to enter the "living silence" in meeting for worship where we listen for "the still, small voice" and connect with the Inward Light.

What do you think?

*This article originally appeared on the Buffalo Quakers website (buffaloquakers.org) on July 5, 2018.*

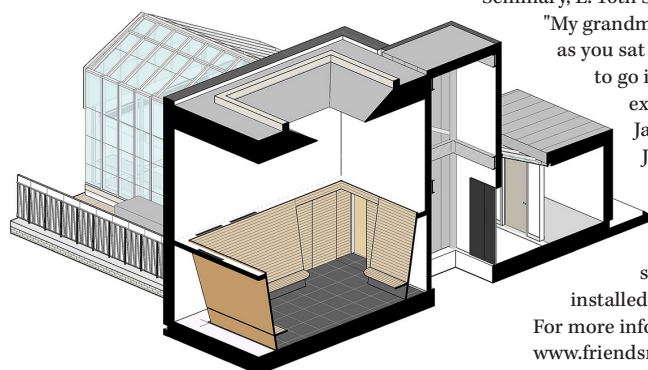


*Rhythm in Blue*, oil on linen, by Sybil Perry, 2022. Sybil has been an artist from a young age and believes Quakerism does inform her art. She offers this quotation (author unknown): "Art is the ultimate physical expression of the insatiable human hunger to create, and it allows humans to send inspiration and energy to one another across space and time."



Above: A photo of Quaker artist James Turrell's *Meeting*, 1980-86/2016, as installed at the Museum of Modern Art/PS1, New York. Photo by Pablo Enriquez. Visit [www.momaps1.org/programs/123-james-turrell](http://www.momaps1.org/programs/123-james-turrell) for more information. A similar Skyspace — a "specifically proportioned chamber with an aperture in the ceiling open to the sky" — is currently being installed on the roof of Friends Seminary, E. 16th St. & Rutherford Pl., in NYC.

"My grandmother used to tell me that, as you sat in Quaker silence, you were to go inside to greet the light. That expression stuck with me." — James Turrell, *Friends Journal*, Jan. 31, 2014.



Left: A rendering of a cross section of the Skyspace being installed at Friends Seminary. For more information, visit [www.friendsredevelopment.org/overview](http://www.friendsredevelopment.org/overview).





# Quakers and the Arts



"Untitled," acrylic and gouache on paper, by Faith Brzostowski, Fall 2022.

## The Song of Thanks

Ruth Matthews  
New Paltz Meeting

Thank you for the gift of  
this day...

To see, to hear, to taste,  
to smell,

To touch, think and feel

All the mystery and  
wonder of Life on Earth,

Our home in eternal  
vastness.....

Whatever this day brings,

Whatever it brings,

May I meet it with an  
open mind

And a loving,  
compassionate heart.

This is my consecration,  
Amen.



## My Quaker Way Has Opened Through Art

Mary Pugh Clark  
Montclair Meeting

*continued from page 1*

made my way. And sought to grow  
into integrity.

As a child I was encouraged  
to refrain from challenging older  
people. Complaining and voicing  
fears were especially discouraged.  
I remember being told to follow  
the example of the three wooden  
monkeys my grandmother had:  
"Hear no evil, see no evil, speak no  
evil." I found the advice confusing  
but I kept my mouth shut.

Fortunately, no one objected  
to what I drew and painted. I  
could plop dark clouds with black  
raindrops on paper or swoop  
choppy waves around little boats  
on canvas as I wished. I could paint  
mean cowboys getting away. When  
I did my art I could feel clearly even  
if I did not have words.

Much later for a class on journal-  
ing I wrote a piece called "My  
Life in Ten Pages." I made chapters  
based on what I considered "telling"  
photos for chunks of time. Then I  
described the memories that were  
attached to each chosen photo.  
And so I identified challenges and  
achievements.

At the time I was working on this  
project I was experiencing abuse  
in my marriage. I took to making  
small drawings featuring a Mary  
character who could do things on  
her own. I also sought refuge in  
worship at the Quaker meeting near  
where I lived. I knew some about  
Quakers' testimony of equality and  
thought, if there was a God, the

notion that there was that of God in  
every person, was a good one.

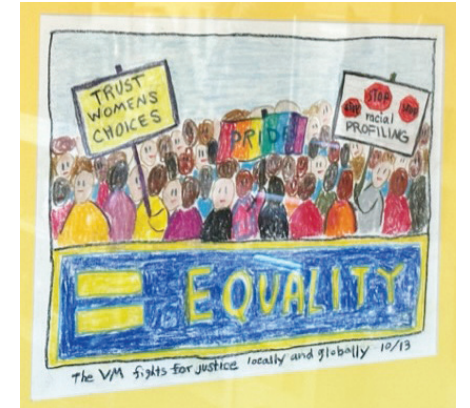
When I finally left the  
constraints of my marriage my art  
work expanded. I could take all the  
photos that I wished. And I could  
curate the walls of my new place  
without the risk of having things  
mocked or taken down. Joyfully I  
arranged photos, postcards, album  
covers and prints up and down the  
walls salon style. My unarticulated  
purpose was to find a purpose and  
direction. That seemed akin to  
continuing revelation.

Later once I retired from teach-  
ing, I began making clear links  
between my art and my spiritual  
practices. Walking in NYC I took a  
photo of my feet pointing to graffiti  
on the sidewalk. My heart was  
drawn to the words, "Become Your  
Dream." I was excited to be finding  
words to describe what I saw that  
meshed with what my heart felt.  
I titled the picture "Self-Portrait,  
Courage:"



When I had the good fortune  
about 10 years ago to buy a small  
ranch house, the well-lit rooms  
invited me to work at composing  
"messages" by the way I put things  
on the walls. One section in the  
dining room celebrates my ongoing  
desire to work for equality. For  
me this means valuing all voices

while also changing the structures  
that give some privilege and others  
limitations.



My bathroom door points to  
how I make arrangements. I link  
what feeds my soul (my Meeting-  
house fireplace, the ocean, and  
my cat) with behavior I want to  
embody. My tee-shirt shows I have  
hope.



By adding Keith Haring's take  
on the three monkeys I affirm that  
I can see, hear, and speak true. In  
these ways I believe I am filling my  
home (and myself) with integrity.



From a series of acrylic and gouache paintings on paper from November 2022, "Dancing with Shadows," by Faith Brzostowski





## SPRING SESSIONS — APRIL 14-16, 2023

### Spring Sessions will be at Oakwood Friends School and Online

Spring Sessions 2023 will be a 'hybrid' gathering, with most events accessible both online via Zoom and in person on Oakwood Friends School's campus in Poughkeepsie, NY. This is the first time we are meeting in person for Spring Sessions since 2019. We look forward to being together.

### What is Spring Sessions?

This is one of the three times a year that members of the NYM community gather to worship, conduct business, and have fellowship together. These gatherings are open to anyone

who is interested in Quakerism and the Quaker meetings in NY state and nearby CT and NJ. Reports to read in advance of business meeting, the business agenda, and more will be posted at [nyym.org/spring-sessions-2023](http://nyym.org/spring-sessions-2023).

### How do I register?

Registration will be posted soon at [nyym.org/spring-sessions-2023](http://nyym.org/spring-sessions-2023). The opening of registration will be announced to the NYM email list—visit [nyym.org/subscribe](http://nyym.org/subscribe) to join this list. You can also call the NYM office at 212-673-5750 for more information and for help with registration. You must register, even if you are attending online.

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

## For Those Attending Spring Sessions in Person

New York Yearly Meeting will gather at Oakwood Friends School, Friday evening, April 14, through Sunday lunch, April 16. Oakwood School is in Poughkeepsie, NY, at the end of the Metro North Line and just off Rt. 9 on the east side of the Hudson River.

All the areas on campus that we will use during Spring Sessions are accessible, including the first floor of the Craig Dormitory. Buildings are close together and easy to move between. One way to help our community is to offer assistance to Friends who may need help getting around campus or getting food in the cafeteria. Childcare will be available; please indicate your interest on your registration form.

Please check in at the Library when you arrive on campus. There is a partial map of the campus on the next page, or you can view an online map at [www.oakwoodfriendsmap.com](http://www.oakwoodfriendsmap.com).

### Friday Evening

Friends who are already in the area on Friday evening are welcome to gather informally to 'meet and greet.' Oakwood will provide light refreshments, but Friends are advised to get dinner on their own.

### COVID Concerns

Sessions Committee agreed to the following suggestions about COVID safety: Masks will be optional. Friends are encouraged to take a COVID test at home before coming to Oakwood. If you feel unwell, please stay home, regardless of COVID test results. If you feel ill at Oakwood, there will be test kits available and you will be asked to take a test.

### Overnight Accommodations

**On campus**—There are limited rooms available to Friends on campus in the Craig Dormitory near the Dining Hall. Each room has two twin beds. The charge will be \$50 a night for the room, regardless of how many Friends stay in the room. Friends staying on campus are asked to bring their own blankets and pillows; Oakwood cannot

provide bedding for dorm rooms at Spring Sessions. Packets of sheets and towels will be available for rent at \$10/person for the weekend, or you can bring your own.

**With Friends**—There is also a limited number of home hospitality offers from regional Friends. You can indicate your interest in either of these options—staying on campus or with local Friends—on the registration form.

**Off campus**—There may be a block of rooms reserved at a nearby hotel; that information and a list of local hotels is at [nyym.org/spring-sessions-2023](http://nyym.org/spring-sessions-2023). Friends are asked to make their own off-campus arrangements.

### Meals

Meals at Oakwood's cafeteria will be available for purchase when registering for Sessions. Our first meal together will be breakfast on Saturday and our last meal will be lunch on Sunday. Meal costs are as follow:

Breakfast	\$8
Lunch	\$10
Dinners	\$12

### Transportation

The address for Oakwood School is 22 Spackenkill Rd, Poughkeepsie, NY; putting that into Google maps will direct you to the Spackenhill

*continued on next page*



The first floor lounge in Oakwood's Craig Dormitory. Photo by Steve Mohlke.

## Inspiration for the 2023 Sessions Theme: Re-Building Faith in Changing Times

"There is no generation of young minds that finds the truths and realities of religion easy of apprehension. Faith is never ready made; it must always be built. The building process is easier in some epochs than in others, but the structure of the spirit must be reared in every case in the face of real difficulties." — Rufus Jones, *"The Trail of Life in College," in Faith & Practice, p. 42*

"Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands." — *2 Corinthians 5:1 (NIV)*

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." — *Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)*

## Spring Sessions Schedule

**April 14-16, 2023**

**Online & at  
Oakwood Friends School**

*All events are hybrid—both online and in person—unless otherwise noted*

### Friday evening, April 14

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. Lunch (on campus)  
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 (on campus)  
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 (on campus)





## SESSIONS 2023

Re-Building

# FAITH



in

Changing

Times



Oakwood Friends School's Craig Dormitory, February 2023. Photo by Steve Mohlke.

*continued from previous page*

Road entrance to the campus (see map). Poughkeepsie is the last stop on Metro-North's Hudson train line, which leaves from Grand Central in NYC. You can find train schedules at [new.mta.info/schedules](http://new.mta.info/schedules). Shuttle service may be available between Oakwood and the train station at certain times; details will be posted at [nyym.org/spring-sessions-2023](http://nyym.org/spring-sessions-2023). Taxis are also available.

### Costs

There are multiple costs associated with sessions.

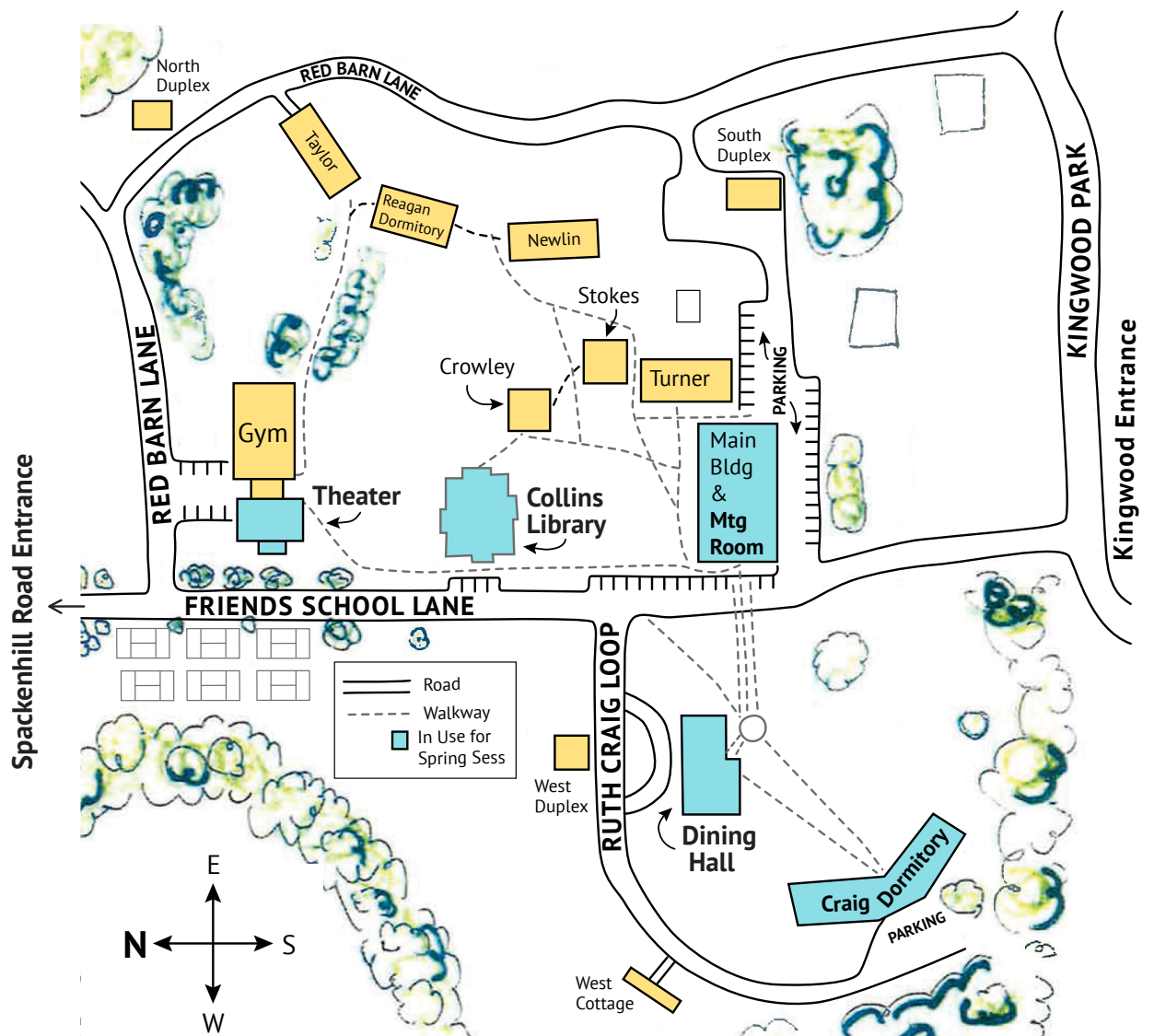
Direct costs are paid through NYYM for on-campus meals and dormitory housing. Indirect costs are incurred by NYYM more generally, such as the contribution NYYM makes to Oakwood for this event, staff time associated with preparing for sessions, and making it possible to hold sessions in a hybrid format. The suggested registration contribution of \$40 helps offset some of these costs.

**Paying less:** Please keep in mind that your presence is more important than your ability to pay these costs. You don't need to pay anything. If you underpay NYYM for meals or housing at Oakwood, the balance will automatically be covered by the Equalization Fund. The suggested registration amount of \$40 is voluntary and you

don't need to pay it.

If you need help paying for your transportation or off campus housing costs please contact [registration@nyym.org](mailto:registration@nyym.org) or call the NYYM office at 212-257-5750.

**Paying more:** Anything you contribute beyond the costs NYYM incurs for your meals and housing will be part of the Sessions Income that NYYM receives to offset the cost of sessions. This will be acknowledged as a contribution to



NYYM at the end of the year.

### Register by April 1

Registration will open soon, if it is not open already; to register, please visit [www.nyym.org/spring-sessions-2023](http://www.nyym.org/spring-sessions-2023). Please complete your registration by April 1, so that NYYM can give Oakwood time to be prepared for our stay with them.

[nyym.org/spring-sessions-2023](http://nyym.org/spring-sessions-2023)

## 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 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](http://www.oakwoodfriends.org). To get a sense of what the campus is like and what will be possible at Summer Sessions, consider attending Spring Sessions, April 14-16, which will also take place at Oakwood.

### Help Create the Youth Program for Summer Sessions!

**Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM)** Sessions for youth will be held Saturday, July 22 through Wednesday July 26 during Summer Sessions at Oakwood Friends School. The JYM Coordinators are seeking Friendly adults to work with our young Friends. JYM volunteers meet with their assigned group Saturday afternoon, every morning Sunday through Wednesday, and gather for other JYM activities during the week. The schedule for the week is open, so the JYM volunteers will help us create the program!

If you are drawn to be a JYM volunteer, a resource person, or an organizer, please contact [jym-coordinators@nyym.org](mailto:jym-coordinators@nyym.org) to start the conversation.

— Susan Stillman & Ellie Rosenberg for JYM