

# Tending the Garden

a traveling series of spiritual nurture workshops...

*for the Whole Meeting*

from NYYM's Spiritual Nurture Working Group



## **Sacred Journeys**

Everybody has a story to tell, and everybody tells their story a little differently. Do you say "God"? Do you say "Light?" "Divine Presence?" "Jesus?" Whatever word you use, what do you know about Spirit? What do you wonder about? How have you learned what you know? Have you ever called to do something? What does that mean, anyway?

In this retreat, Friends will explore faith, what feeds us spiritually, what challenges us, and how we understand and experience the Divine. We'll share our sacred stories in different ways - sometimes through art, and sometimes by talking. We'll see what it's like to know each another in a deeper way.

## **Opening to Deeper Worship**

"Worship offers us the experience of the Spirit, but that power is not tame, and our lessons from meeting are not always those we expect." -  
*NYYM's Faith and Practice*

What does the power of Spirit feel like? How come we worship together in a meetinghouse instead of one at a time at home? What's the difference between really worshipping and just sitting in a room with other people? Are there things we can do to experience deeper worship?

In this retreat, we'll talk a little and experiment a lot, using music, art, movement, and words to try different ways of understanding what worship can really be.

*With questions, or to schedule a retreat, contact Anne Pomeroy ([apomeroy10@gmail.com](mailto:apomeroy10@gmail.com)) or Lu Harper ([luharper@gmail.com](mailto:luharper@gmail.com)).*

## Vocal Ministry

"When one rises to speak in [a gathered] meeting one has a sense of *being used*, of being played upon, of being spoken through." - Thomas Kelly

Is giving vocal ministry the same as just standing and talking? If it's not, what makes it different?

What's it like to give vocal ministry? Does it feel scary? Exciting? Empowering?

What's it like to hear vocal ministry? Can we hear it with more than just our ears?

We'll explore this topic together with some talking, some singing, some art, and some experimenting. Using familiar analogies (for example - where does water come from? from the faucet or from the cloud?), we'll explore what's it like to be a Channel for a bigger Source.

## Discernment

Sometimes we face a difficult decision - a decision too hard or too important for a human being to make alone. When that happens to Friends, we do something called "discernment," which is when we ask for help from Spirit to guide us in the right direction.

Of course, not everyone hears Spirit's guidance in the same way. We'll talk about some of the many ways that we might know what Spirit would have us do.

We'll also ask some other questions, such as: How do we know the difference between a situation that requires discernment and something we can just figure out for ourselves? How do we get ready to do discernment? How can we help one another discern?

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## Pastoral Care

"Do we make ourselves available in a tender and caring way when we sense a need for assistance in time of trouble? Do we trust each other enough to make our needs known to someone in our meeting?" - NYYM's *Faith and Practice*

Sometimes giving help and getting help isn't easy. When someone needs help, it can be hard to know the best thing to do for them. And when you need help, it can be hard to ask.

In this workshop, we'll learn about some ways to help and receive help in tough situations. How do we live as a true community, in the good times and in the hard times?

## Spiritual Support and Accountability

Friends try to be faithful to Spirit, and sometimes that can mean doing things that aren't easy. That's why we live in spiritual communities; it's our responsibility to support each other in our faithfulness.

Quakers have two special types of committees that help us do this:

"Clearness committees" are groups of people that come together once or twice to help someone know how to be faithful in a certain situation. In this retreat, we'll talk about reasons why you might ask your meeting for a clearness committee and what that experience is like. We'll also do some practice with the best ways to be one of the committee members helping. We'll also explore what it feels like to be the person being helped.

"Support committees," which we sometimes also call "care committees," are groups that meet many times to help someone who's being faithful to something that will take a long time. Usually, our word for that "something" is ministry. There are many types of ministry. An example might be a job that involves helping people, or a writing project, or taking trips to visit other Friends and talk to them about something special. We'll try some practice with these types of committees during the retreat, too.

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## Prayer

What does it mean to pray? Do you have to go to a special place? Do you have to be on your knees? What if you're not so good at thinking of the right words to say?

Does praying mean talking to God? Or listening? Or both?

Does praying mean asking for things? What if you ask for something and you don't get it? Does that mean God wasn't listening?

Can you tell secrets to God? Can you talk about things that make you worry? Can you tell God about the things that make you happy? Can you say "thank you" to God?

Why pray, anyway? Does it do any good? And who's this "God" we keep mentioning?

In this retreat, we'll use many different methods to explore these questions. We'll sing, we'll do art, we'll talk with partners, and we'll hear stories. And we'll try a few different ways to pray.

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## Quaker Toolbox

Over the years, Friends have discovered lots of tools that help us on our journeys through the world. Some of these tools might be helpful even to people who are not Friends.

In this workshop, we'll use art, storytelling, music, and discussion to explore tools such as centering, holding in the Light, discernment, queries, and naming Spiritual gifts.

## Forgiveness

When we feel angry, scared, or hurt, it's harder for us to feel connected with Spirit. When we choose to forgive, we move closer to feeling peaceful and have stronger relationships with others.

But sometimes it can be hard to forgive. In this retreat, we'll learn about some tools and techniques that can help us be able to do it.

## **A Deliberate Faith**

Sometimes it feels like all Quakers do is SIT STILL. But that's not true! We're always doing something--even when we're not moving at all.

So what is it we're doing?

In this retreat, we'll use worship, queries, and lots of activities (music, art, theater, and games) to explore some Verbs of Quakerism, in Quaker history and as understood among Friends today.

Depending on the length of the workshop and your meeting's particular interests, we might talk about:

**Search:** Journeys and Queries

**Listen:** Worship

**Act:** Being the Change in the World

**Speak:** Communicating with Courage and Integrity

**Serve:** Gifts in Community

**Love:** Answering That of God in Everyone

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