



SPARK

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

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15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003

November 2017



Maggy Wiard (left) and Barbara Sinacore helped with Albany Meeting's outreach activities at the Upper Madison Avenue Street Fair.

Quaker Presence at a Street Fair

Judith Fetterley
Albany Meeting

Our outreach committee had a busy year. We removed a hedge to create a more welcoming entrance to our meeting house. We sponsored a series of programs on Quaker Faith and Practice. We participated in NYYM's Outreach Practitioners' Circle. But our biggest project was participating in the Upper Madison Avenue Street Fair that took place September 24.

We worked for months to get ready. The first problem was being accepted. We were told initially that churches are not included in the

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Using Social Action for Community Outreach

Barbara Ransome
Conscience Bay Meeting

Our meeting is in unity about the importance of outreach, but, as a small meeting with limited resources, we are challenged with expanding our membership and letting the outside world know about our very existence. We are finding that involvement with local organizations, including the opportunities provided by NYYM's Quaker Outside the Lines program, is a good

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Quakers Reaching Out Outreach Very Much Alive in NYYM!

Robin Whitely

Co-convener, Outreach Working Group

When asked to coordinate this issue of *Spark* on the topic of outreach, Arlene Johnson and I, as co-conveners of the NYYM Outreach Working Group (OWG), welcomed the opportunity to use this important platform to keep the topic of outreach in front of NYYM Friends. Since the primary focus of the OWG has been on nurturing outreach at the local meeting level, we are happy to highlight in this issue four meetings who agreed to share, as members of the Outreach Practitioners' Circle (OPC), their experience with some aspect of outreach. Many of their efforts arose out of their own energy and insights and there are also gems here and there acquired as a result of their OPC engagement.

It is worth noting that each meeting has a unique set of circumstances. Size, location, history... No two are alike. Consequently, approaches and solutions are vastly different—and yet wonderfully creative. What works for one is not necessarily what another would or should choose to do. What they *do* share, and what the Outreach Practitioners' Circle seeks to support, is a strong desire to share the Light by opening their meetings to seekers, each as it feels led and able. In each case, there is a sense that they have been energized and grown more confident in their ability to reach out.

Conscience Bay MM, despite its size and stretched resources, has found ways to magnify its presence and do meaningful service in the

community by participating in a local grassroots coalition of social action-minded organizations and by participating in the "Quaker Outside the Lines" program. Their self assessment about what feels right and doable and their faithfulness are admirable.

Albany MM wouldn't take "no" for an answer. They gently but firmly challenged the idea that churches were somehow not acceptable nonprofits as participants in a local street fair. And they got their table! In turn, they learned a great deal and herein generously share with us their dos, don'ts and do-better-next-time wisdom.

Wilton MM shares a rich and deeply purposeful outreach journey with us as the entire meeting worked through major changes to its physical property and its use, revamping their presence on the internet, strengthening their First Day School and making the meeting more family-friendly. It is an inspiring read about a meeting that has continued to discern multiple, fruitful avenues for outreach as it changes and grows.

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A Letter from Fall
Sessions page 3

More on
Outreach
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Notices

New Members

Marian Jeannette Maguire —

Chatham-Summit

Katherine Shine — Wilton

Transfers

Sarah Gerk, to Binghamton
from Ann Arbor Friends
Meeting (LEYM).

MEETING NEWS

AVP Youth Leadership Camp

This summer's AVP Youth Leadership Camp at Chatham-Summit Meeting was our third successful year. 18 new participants and one returning participant became graduates of the BASIC and ADVANCED AVP program. Some numbers:

- 4 facilitators (2 youth and 2 youth in spirit) facilitated the AVP part of the camp for the 3rd time
- 5 youth facilitators facilitated the AVP part of the camp for the 2nd time;
- 6 youth facilitators facilitated the AVP part of the camp for the 1st time; and
- 4 facilitators facilitated different logistic elements of the camp for the 3rd time.
- Another 10 adults were actively involved in different support activities.
- Altogether almost 50 individuals crossed Chatham Summit's doorstep and were embraced by Quaker values as they participated in our camp activities in different ways. Because of siblings and parent involvement this translates to about 37 families.

A dream is definitely becoming reality as one child at a time is reached. There is a lot to do in this world but, though we may feel frustrated a lot of the time, we are doing something good here.

— *Stuart Sydenstricker*

ARCH Workshop in NYQM

Friends from New York Quarterly Meeting met at Brooklyn Monthly Meeting with ARCH Director Callie Janoff for a workshop titled "Aging: It's What We Do!" This intimate gathering engaged a thought experiment, imagining ourselves

Around Our Yearly Meeting

older than we are now, and then in our final year of life. We discovered what was most important to us in these times: personal relationships, the life of the spirit, and feeling connected. We practiced asking for and offering help to one another—which proved exceptionally difficult! With all of this in mind we discussed our advance care directives: identifying who we want to be our health care proxies, and committing to complete or update our documentation. This and other workshops facilitated by NYYM staff and volunteers are available to monthly and quarterly meetings and worship groups. Please contact the YM office to arrange one!

First Day School Conversation Circles

Friends gathered online October 16 and November 1 for "Conversation Circles" with others serving First Day programs in their local meetings. These are opportunities to gather with our community of practice, to share ideas, questions, and support one another in the ministry of spiritual formation with children and youth. The "BYOM" events online (bring-your-own-mug of coffee or tea!) allow Friends to gather from across the yearly meeting, and are hosted by the Children and Youth Field Secretary using the NYYM Zoom video conferencing account. Themes lifted up in the recent discussions included: supporting children in a small meeting, ideas to engage teens as they transition to a First Day program for older youth, multigenerational worship, pastoral care for parents, and ways to connect children and youth regionally (including inter-visitation in regions). It was wonderful to create a space where Friends could share their experiences and resources, and offer ideas and possibilities to one another. Watch for upcoming Conversation Circles to be announced and join us!

Unite in Light March

Quaker Activism, with support from Brooklyn Monthly Meeting, held Unite in Light on Saturday, November 4. Unite in Light was a family-friendly, interfaith, and joyful march from the Brooklyn Quaker Meetinghouse across the Brooklyn Bridge. Roughly 50 marchers carried LED signs, flashlights and



The Unite in Light marchers pose with their glowing signs on the Brooklyn Bridge. *photo by Nadine Baldasare*

glow sticks, or draped themselves in strings of lights, to reclaim the act of raising light as a show against racism and white supremacy. The parade was led by a glowing peace dove followed by LED signs reading: LOVE, PAZ, AMOUR, BE THE LIGHT, PEACE, and a crowd favorite "Kind is Cool." Marchers received overwhelmingly positive responses to their chant "No to racism. Yes to love." People from all walks of life, from all over the world, smiled and took photos of the light and love brigade. QA members handed out flyers to passersby with resources for how to get involved in local activism and family guides to talking about equality and race. Organizers plan to hold similar events at locations around the city.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Powell House is YOUR Retreat Center

You are cordially invited to visit Powell House for an upcoming retreat or conference. Many exciting and spiritually nurturing programs await you at powellhouse.org. Some upcoming events:

Mary Kay Glazer is facilitating an **Advent Retreat**, Dec. 15-17. *What are you waiting for?* During this retreat, we will have the gift of time to reflect on the season of Advent, the season of life unseen, the season of dwindling light. Mary Kay is also running a day-long retreat on Dec. 21, **Solstice, the Birth Within**.

For youth, **Wintersong** is coming on Dec. 8-10. This is our traditional two-house conference where older middle schoolers join our high schoolers to create a vibrant, joyful community. Saturday night culminates in a dress up dinner and talent-filled cabaret.

And don't forget to register early for the always-popular, annual intergenerational **New Year's Celebration**, Dec. 30-Jan. 1. Come to Powell House! It's for you.

OPPORTUNITIES

Quaker Intentional Village-Canaan is Seeking New Renters and Members

The Quaker Intentional Village in Canaan (QIVC) is seeking new members. Rent, buy, or build a house in the intentional community in East Chatham. NYQIVC, estab-

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lished in 2000, is a community of 20+ people of all ages living close to the land on 135 acres of forest and pasture in the upper Hudson Valley. We strive to live spirit-focused lives that are simple, sustainable, and joyful, benefitting from and enjoying our close connections with each other and the land. We welcome diversity of all sorts, and don't all need to identify as Quaker.

Spaces available: 1-2 Rooms in Community Farmhouse, with preference given to those interested in exploring intentional community; The East House, available to rent or buy, is ~1,260 square feet with three bedrooms and 1.5 bathrooms; and one building site is available for purchase. Sales are to members only, following a successful trial period of about a year while you rent or live nearby.

Come join us! Want more information? Contact Sandra at info@qivp.org or Noah at 518-392-0289. Visit www.qivc.org.

Interested in Sustainability?

Susanna Mattingly, the new Sustainability Communications Officer for the Friends World Committee for Consultation, is looking to connect and support Quakers who are taking action on sustainability. She writes, "At the start of this project I am keen to first learn more about what your yearly meeting needs in relation to sustainability and the interconnected issues of climate change, reduction of natural resources, human rights and economic justice." Email Susanna at susannam@fwcc.world. For more information see fwcc.world/sustainability.

For more opportunities for you and your meeting, see page 7. 



The QIVC farmhouse in spring.

Editor's Note

Welcome to the November *Spark*. This issue on Outreach was guest edited by **Arlene Johnson and Robin Whitely** of the **Outreach Working Group**. Robin and Arlene were incredibly helpful, thorough, creative, and always on time. Thank you, Arlene and Robin!

Everyone reading this is welcome to write an article for *Spark*. Articles should be spirited and are considered a form of ministry.

Upcoming Spark themes:

January: Why Membership? What does membership mean? Why do people choose to become members—or not?

March: Earthcare Now Where is the life and energy in earthcare right now? Inspired by the Pisac Sustainability minute.

May: Learning from First Day School

Please send your submissions for upcoming issues of *Spark* to communications@nyym.org by the 10th of the month prior to the month of publication. (For Jan. *Spark*, the deadline is Dec. 15.)

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

Keep up to date at facebook.com/NewYorkYearlyMeeting/

Follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/NYYMTweets

And you can manage your NYYM email list settings at NYYM Connect! Go here: **www.tinyurl.com/nyymconnect**

—Sarah Way

A Letter from Fall Sessions

Dear Friends,

We were blessed with deep, nourishing worship at Fall Sessions, grounding us for challenging work. With sadness we heard that Melinda Wenner Bradley, our Children and Youth Secretary, will be leaving us for a full-time position with Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Emily Provance's term as our Interim Young Adult Field Secretary has come to an end. Both positions are now open. Sessions Committee needs time to develop a structure for the implementation of Pay-as-Led for Summer Sessions, so we will begin that experiment in 2019; in the meantime, access to the Equalization Fund is being simplified.

We heard from our new General Secretary, Steve Mohlke. In talking with monthly meetings, committees, and staff, Steve has heard "both concern about our decline and excitement about new projects" (from minute 2017-11-10). Emily Provance reported on encouraging results from the Facebook ad campaign she shepherded. Powell House directors Regina Baird Haag and Dennis Haag, and Chris and Mike Clark for the Youth Program, reported that their conferences serve many, and that many more could benefit—please spread the word, especially to those young people who could benefit from the Youth Program.

We were not clear to suspend Nurture Coordinating Committee, one of our four coordinating committees, or to move its constituent entities to the care of other coordinating committees. In the absence of other oversight for the committees under Nurture, the yearly meeting assistant clerk will sign vouchers and coordinate budgets.

We listened deeply for God's will for us. We found that into the gaps in our structure, in ways that are not yet clear to us, Spirit is moving. We do not yet know what form the work will take, but we will work to uncover a structure that leaves room for the breath of Spirit and the emerging gifts of each one of us in the Yearly Meeting, paying particular attention to ways to include voices that are marginalized.

At times in our corporate discipline we fell away from tenderness and trust but found, overall, that we were held in the Spirit.

We were able to name, in a way we might not have been able to in the past, what some perceived as a racist comment. We acknowledged that the intent was not racist, but that the impact of the comment by


You Are Invited to Subscribe to Quaker Outreach A New, FREE, Online Newsletter

Each **Quarterly Newsletter** contains:

- Colorful, brief and practical articles about Quaker outreach
- Links to informative resources and further information
- Ideas for effective Inreach, Witness and Welcoming
- Strategies and resources for building the Quaker movement
- Information about religious education and ministry to families
- Opportunity to ask questions and get advice "from the field"

To see a **sample** of "Quaker Outreach", follow this link: goo.gl/VM6xNG

NYYM Friends: to subscribe and receive the newsletter in your email inbox quarterly, simply follow this link: eepurl.com/c5EQwT

This newsletter is the result of a collaboration of New England Yearly Meeting and New York Yearly Meeting, made possible by a grant from the *Thomas H. and Mary Williams Shoemaker Fund* in support of *Fostering Vibrant Meetings*. 

a white Friend was harm to Friends of color and to the body as a whole. We differ on whether the comment was racist; some of us focus more on the intent, some on the effect. We have begun a larger conversation on the fertile ground of the work we did during the business session toward apology and forgiveness.

We have much work before us as we nurture these shoots of trust and growth. We seek, in the words of Britain Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice* (5th edition), to "allow our own lives to be broken open and poured out for the life of the world." We have so much to offer to a broken world, because we ourselves are both broken and becoming whole.

In peace,
Lucinda Antrim
Clerk, New York Yearly Meeting

Quakers Reaching Out

Outreach Very Much Alive in NYYM!

Robin Whitely
Co-convenor, Outreach Working Group


(continued from page 1)

Binghamton MM's story is heartwarming: a small meeting, often disillusioned with past outreach efforts, that has gained a more nuanced understanding of outreach and greater confidence in its outreach efforts.

Chatham-Summit MM. My home meeting! With outreach challenges very similar to many other meetings. One of the greatest, as you will see from Arlene Johnson's article, is cultivating a mindset among ourselves that reaching out to seekers is a *practice* to be shared by everyone, each according to his gifts.

By no means does this exhaust the topic of outreach in NYYM. Lots of creative outreach activity is under way or under consideration. We encourage readers to check out the **Outreach Resources list** on page six where you can learn more about other outreach efforts and gain access to outreach materials from the very basic to more sophisticated. It has something that every meeting can use.

Meetings interested in joining the Outreach Practitioners' Circle can learn via the link provided in this issue's Outreach Resources Box or by contacting Arlene and me at outreach@nyym.org.

May the outreach work among us be thoughtful, joyful and become increasingly an ongoing practice! 

Quaker Presence at a Street Fair

Judith Fetterley
Albany Meeting

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space available to non-profits but that we could make a case for our inclusion, if we wanted to. We based our case on the Fair's mission statement: to promote City Living at Its Best. We argued that participating in social justice projects was part of the best of city living where people of difference races, cultures, and


incomes live in close proximity. We would be promoting the opportunities that Albany Friends Meeting provides for this kind of engagement. We were given a table.

What, then, should we do at the Fair? We needed an activity for young folks. One member suggested temporary peace tattoos. We tried them out on ourselves; they looked great. We ordered forty more. Another member brought in a peace dove from *Color Me Quaker*, suggesting that we put our contact information on this page and have people color them on the spot or take them home. We got flyers from FCNL; NYYM's Children and Youth Field Secretary Melinda Wenner Bradley sent us fifty copies of "Quaker Meeting and Me"; and we had pens made with our address and phone number. We created an information sheet about our meeting, printed out more "You Are Welcome Here" cards, and were ready to go.

The big day arrived. We met early at the meetinghouse, loaded up our table, chairs, and handouts, and drove to the site. The fair started at noon. About one hour in, we noticed that people were looking at our banner, averting their eyes and moving on. We hadn't been able to find the banner that said "Albany Friends Meeting," so we were using one that said "Religious Society of Friends." We said to ourselves, "Bet folks are turned off by the word 'Religious.'" So we took the banner down. Then people seemed more receptive. We engaged anyone who looked our way or paused before our table. A few people colored the Peace Dove on the spot; others took one home for their children. Several people took the "Quaker Meeting and Me" booklet and commented on its being bi-lingual. Both adults and children happily got tattooed for peace.

At 4:30 we packed up, but first we did a self-assessment. "On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate this event in terms of outreach for the meeting?" We all gave it a 7 based on the fact that we reached some people with our message. We let others know Quakers are still here. We proved to ourselves that we could do this kind of outreach and we learned how to do it better. We know now that we need a new sign, we need better activities for

children, we need a tent for shade, and...we need to bring cookies.

In summary—we had fun, got to know each other better, did some good outreach, and got inspired to continue. 



When Conscience Bay Meeting hosted a local social action organization, Clerk Elaine Learnard took the opportunity prior to the start of the program to provide the group with some information about Quakerism.

Using Social Action for Community Outreach

Barbara Ransome
Conscience Bay Meeting

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avenue for pursuing community outreach.


A number of us in the meeting have been personally active in a grassroots coalition that cultivates friendships and alliances among the diverse communities in our local geographical area, nurtures positive relationships by building bridges across racial and other divides, and celebrates all efforts that encourage unity. These principles and values align with our Quaker beliefs. With this in mind and through my involvement with NYYM's Outreach Practitioners' Circle and becoming more aware of outreach, our meeting agreed to sponsor one of the coalition's gatherings at our Quaker meetinghouse. It seemed like a wonderful opportunity to have like minds under the same roof expressing social concerns.

What a successful evening of harmony, nurturing fellowship, and acceptance it proved to be! In addition to the organization's agenda, we Quakers gave a short presentation on what Quakers are about and showed the short video entitled 'What Quakers Do in Silent Worship' which is part of the QuakerSpeak video series. Then we invited everyone to join in about five minutes of silent communal

worship. It was very powerful. The very positive feedback that was shared was inspirational, and evoked comments like, "so enjoyed the depth of the silence," "always wanted to visit a Quaker meetinghouse," and "so grateful for this experience." Many said they would come back to visit us again. We also had people come early so they could view our lovely grounds and walk our simple labyrinth. As clerk of grounds I was so very pleased to share the beauty of our gardens and lawns.

This event was easy to sponsor and allowed so many others from different religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds to come together, work on common goals, and learn about Quakerism. Through this outreach we welcomed new faces and were left feeling optimistic about having shared our 'condition' with others, resulting in our being more mindful of future growth and hopefulness.

In addition, with financial support from the Quaker Outside the Lines program, our meeting partnered this spring with the local Association for Mental Health & Wellness, whose mission is to "empower people and communities to pursue and sustain healthy and enriched lives." We assisted in their spring clean-up, purchased new garden tools, and worked with youth volunteers to support their chemical-free garden that supplies an abundance of fresh produce and a place of serenity as a Certified Butterfly Garden. Working with the Association and coming together to tend the earth, we knew we were reflecting our Quaker faith as well as offering a meaningful service outside our meeting.

For our meeting the process of working with community organizations has been an opportunity to reflect, reinforce and practice our Quaker values while also acquainting community members with Quakerism and making our presence more visible. 



A local social action organization met at Conscience Bay Meeting.

The Many Faces of Outreach at Wilton Monthly Meeting

Pete McCaughan
Wilton Meeting

Wilton Friends are finding that outreach has many forms and that it is best accomplished as a shared activity across our meeting. A Long Range Planning Process, combined with the work of an active Advancement and Outreach Committee has brought us through some major changes to a heightened focus on outreach. Here are a few major ports on our outreach journey.

Planning! As part of a long-range-planning (LRP) process, Wilton Monthly Meeting conducted a survey to determine what is most important to our meeting members and attenders. **Outreach, or growing our small meeting, came up as the top priority.** But we were not clear on how to proceed. Initially, we did some simple things such as updating signage and media information about religious services, sponsoring tables at local events, creating visibility through Peace and Service activities, and working with area libraries to sponsor informational programs.

Repurposing and refurbishing for a more welcoming, family-friendly space. For years the Connecticut Friends School (CFS) and Helen Gander Friends Nursery School, both under the care of WMM, had been a major source of outreach to the community. So the merger of the nursery school into CFS and the laying down of the K-8 portion of CFS in 2015 required re-thinking our long-range approach to outreach and opened the door for repurposing and remodeling our space.

A grant from the Hastings estate allowed us to remodel Hastings Hall to accommodate a thriving CFS Preschool, thus freeing up space in our meetinghouse which was looking a bit tired after many years of double duty for the meeting and the preschool. Called meetings arranged by the LRP Committee resulted in agreement to refurbish our meetinghouse now that CFS was in its new space in Hastings Hall.

Melinda Wenner Bradley,
Children and Youth Field Secretary

Outreach is about helping people to find us and, when they do, to offer them welcome, encouragement, and friendship.

—Quakers in Britain
(www.quaker.org.uk/)

for NYYM, offered several ideas to strengthen our First Day School program and make our meeting space more family-friendly. A new floor, paint, and general cleanup enhanced our meetinghouse just in time to hold a fabulous wedding of one of our members. The attractive space should bring in more rentals, another form of outreach. All the work brought out many volunteers and strengthened our sense of community.

Web and social media presence. At the same time, under the guidance of the meeting's active Advancement and Outreach Committee, we decided to use the Quaker Cloud website template, hosted by FGC, to build a badly needed new website. We initially transferred and updated information from our old website and used ideas from other meetings, including the addition of a Google calendar that is kept up-to-date. Now event descriptions and our calendar are frequently updated making visitors to our site aware of a vital, active Quaker meeting in their area.

Participation in two very helpful NYYM programs have moved us further along. The Meeting Partner Project helped us establish a Facebook presence. Ideas from the Outreach Practitioners' Circle inspired us to improve our new website even further by adding a Seekers/Newcomers page to help visitors better understand what to expect when they visit our meeting.

We have been inspired by our efforts to date and are eager to move forward with more actions. We are hosting WMM 75th anniversary events, AVP workshops, FCNL programs, World Quaker Day celebrations and participating in community events. At each of these activities we aim to inspire, empower, and highlight ongoing contributions Quakers make in our society. 

Outreach as a Quaker Practice

Arlene Johnson
Co-convenor, Outreach Working Group

Two years ago, when several of our members felt led to think about nurturing outreach in our meeting, our first impulse was to create advertisements for our meeting and to upgrade our website. In retrospect, we realize now that, while we were not wrong in this impulse, we were seeing outreach primarily as a campaign, a series of activities, and a number of tasks to get done.

As we delved into resources for outreach and became involved with NYYM's Outreach Practitioners' Circle, our thinking evolved and we began to approach outreach, not as discrete and separate activities, but as an outlook that, to be effective, must enliven all aspects of our meeting's life. We are realizing that, like "listening" or "simplicity," or "integrity," outreach is deeply rooted in the Quaker way and, to bear fruit, needs to be seen as an ongoing Quaker practice.

Like other meetings, we are finding that it is useful to have a committee or working group that helps the meeting focus on outreach and gather resources to do effective outreach. But Quaker outreach is much too diverse and multi-faceted to be the sole concern of one committee or working group. It encompasses serving our communities through social action, fostering religious education for both adults and young children, nurturing greater understanding of our own faith and tradition, communicating our Quaker witness more clearly, and becoming more welcoming to diversity and difference.


Effective outreach, we are learning, has many facets. *Inreach* provides nurture for our members and attenders so that they can speak authentically and clearly about their own faith. *Invitation*

You pray in your distress and in your need; would that you might pray also in the fullness of your joy and in your days of abundance.

—Khalil Gibran

and visibility help seekers to find us and to learn how the Quaker way might speak to their condition. And *Welcoming* is how we embrace and include seekers and visitors, involving everything from our words to how our meetinghouse conveys welcome and inclusion.

Accordingly, our thoughts about how to pursue outreach now include a wide range of ongoing activities, which we expect and hope will become an integral part of our way of operating, in effect, a *practice*. We are working toward having each standing committee develop a sense of how its work can be part of outreach, maintaining our building in a way that speaks welcome, reviewing our welcoming procedures, and practicing seeing ourselves as others see us. We have begun to discuss with intention what we want our meeting to be known for in our community and practice among ourselves how to express our faith personally when we are asked, "So why are *you* a Quaker?"

Outreach is both more encompassing and enriching than we originally envisioned. There are many opportunities ahead, and we have much to do and to learn about sharing the Light, reaching diverse seekers, increasing our visibility and welcoming and including newcomers. We are encouraged in our new understanding that outreach is not a collection of one-time activities. Rather, it must be understood as a Quaker *practice*, grounded in Quaker history, the message of Quakerism, and at the heart of the query "What can YOU say?" 

The underlying key to our renewal, I believe, is not in reinventing or repackaging or rebranding ourselves. It's in naming and claiming and sharing with others the spiritual treasures we've always possessed—treasures sometimes hidden from us by our familiarity with them, and too often hidden from others by our reluctance, even inability, to talk about them.

—Parker Palmer
FGC 2015 Plenary Presentation



Quakers Reaching Out

Making Space for Outreach

Sarah Gerk

Binghamton Meeting

Last fall, my small-but-robust meeting in Binghamton received an invitation to join the NYYM Outreach Practitioners Circle (OPC). I was new to town and had voiced a readiness for service, so I became our representative. The meeting supported and encouraged my participation in the OPC, but some members also voiced past frustrations with outreach initiatives. They had tried to grow, and despite great effort, current membership consisted of a handful of people who had been around for a few decades and now me, a transplant.

With trepidation about our ability to do much more than we already do, I began to participate in the OPC conference calls along with thirteen other meetings around NYYM. The group discussed some invaluable nuggets of information that can foster awareness of the meeting in the community: think about who sees the physical meeting space and how they see it; most people can tolerate a commute of up to twenty minutes; most people have to hear about a new activity multiple times before they are led to try it.

Perhaps, however, the most important lesson we've taken from the group is a new understanding of outreach itself. Rather than thinking about outreach as a results-driven enterprise—a need to grow the meeting—we've learned that the fruits of outreach can be less tangible. In Binghamton, we now work to foster readiness and openness.

The early Friends were fully assured that they had a message for all [people]—not merely that one or other of their testimonies was specially relevant to their own time, but that their message in its totality, in its wholeness, was God's good news for all sorts and conditions... 'Have you anything to declare?' is ... a challenge that every meeting should consider of primary importance.

—Edgar G. Dunstan (1956)

We think about small things that increase our relationship with the community, and ways that we can simply let people know that we're here.

So, rather than thinking about ways to reel people into the seats on Sundays, we in Binghamton have been working to raise awareness of our meeting in the community. As we settle into a new meeting place, we are mindful of what people see and how they see it. We wrote an op-ed in the local paper and plan to do more. We are thinking about other ways to engage with the community around us in ways that gently inform people of our practice. Along the way, we've grown a bit more mindful and a bit more open to new people in our community in a way that feels like healthy potential for growth.

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

—Matthew 25:35 ESV

Strange and unendurable irony—that Friends who speak so much about the Inward Light should so timidly hide their own light under a bushel! The time has come to preach the faith we have resolved to practice. If we have good news for our brothers [and sisters], and I believe we do, let us shout it from the housetops!

—John Yungblut, Quaker scholar and Jungian psychologist, 1913-1995

If the call comes, there should be no quenching of the spirit; the sense of our own unworthiness must not exempt us from this service, nor the fear of being unable to find the right words....More important than the actual words is the atmosphere the speaker brings with him the evidence, which his hearers instinctively discern, that he is speaking of what he knows.

—Faith and Practice, London Yearly Meeting, 1959



Friends checking out children and youth resources and materials for all-ages spiritual community at the All Friends Regional Meeting annual summer picnic at Dover-Randolph Meeting. And our Friend/Quaker hats for sale! photo by Melinda Wenner Bradley

Outreach Resources to Explore

Something here for every meeting!

Advancement and Outreach webpage

nyym.org/content/quaker-resources-advancement-outreach

A rich compilation of outreach resources in NYYM and well beyond

NYYM Outreach Working Group (OWG)

nyym.org/committee/outreach-working-group

An exciting new initiative to nurture and support outreach across the Yearly Meeting

Outreach Practitioners' Circle

nyym.org/sites/default/files/Spark-2017-09-Whitely&Johnson.pdf

An OWG program for monthly meetings working together to nurture and support their outreach efforts and share outreach wisdom and information

Outreach e-newsletter

To subscribe: eepurl.com/c5EQwT

An exciting new collaboration between New England Yearly Meeting and NYYM aiming to share fresh, innovative outreach ideas

Monthly Meeting Partners Project

www.nyym.org/content/monthly-meeting-partners-project

The inreach aspect of effective outreach: a program aimed at nurturing the spiritual lives of children and youth and strengthening the intergenerational life of the meeting

Facebook Outreach Experiment

quakeremily.wordpress.com/the-social-media-ads-outreach-experiment/

For detailed reports on how 18 local meetings reached 300,000 young adults through Facebook ads, and information on how your meeting can try this too

Quaker Communications and Outreach Group

www.facebook.com/groups/QuakerComms/

To join a group of Friends regularly exchanging resources and asking questions about outreach, try the Facebook group "Quaker Communications and Outreach"

For even more frequently updated outreach ideas and resources try quakeroutreach.com

A Presentation on Palestine

Jonathan Fluck
Brooklyn Meeting

My trip to Palestine with Max Carter and a group of nine other Quakers last June was an eye-opener. We met with people from many different life situations, listened to their stories, and asked them questions about their everyday life and their hopes for the future.

I gave an hour-long presentation at the Brooklyn Meetinghouse this Fall and am eager to share my observations, photos of where we were and who we met, with any meeting or group of Friends who might be interested.

The optimism that the older among us felt with the Oslo accords in the 1990s has vaporized with the realities of what is happening in the area now—that will be part and parcel of what I cover in my presentation. But that reality has not changed the warmth and welcoming spirit of the Palestinian people! Because we were housed at the Friends School in Ramallah for most of our 15 day trip, we saw a lot of that city and the people who live there. Whenever we went out the people were friendly and inquisitive. I can never forget one of our first days there when we had a few hours of unprogrammed (pun intended) time. Steve, who was raised in an Orthodox Jewish home, decided he wanted a haircut. Out he and I went looking for a barbershop. Why, I asked him? Because, if you really want to know the pulse of the people, where better to go than a barbershop?

Max and Jane Carter have been organizing these trips for 25 years or so, and they have developed a broad array of contacts from many differing points of view. Throughout our 15 days we met with an official of the Palestinian Authority, a representative of the PLO (yes, they're different organizations), two different Israeli settlers, an ex-IDF member who is with Breaking the Silence; we toured hospitals, small towns, a kibbutz; met with church leaders and Imams. The most heart-rending meeting was with two members, one Israeli and one Palestinian, of the Bereaved Parents Circle—both had lost children to

the senseless violence. We were in refugee camps and in people's living rooms, we toured holy sites and archeological digs. We worshiped with Friends and with Muslims. We heard tales of horror and tales of joy.

Whether you choose to invite me to give a presentation or not, I encourage everyone to deeply consider joining Max & Jane next year for the trip. There is a lot of walking, so be prepared for that. But the greater preparation is to be open to the many people and viewpoints that you will hear.

Max & Jane can be contacted at mcarter@guilford.edu

I can be contacted at jonathanfluck@yahoo.com.



Turning, Turning: A Quaker Blog

Emily Provance, member of 15th Street Meeting and recent Interim Young Adult Friends Field Secretary for NYYM, maintains a blog of Quaker thought and "Holy Experiments" at quakeremily.wordpress.com. She recently completed a series of posts on reaching out to seekers. A seeker must go through the following steps to transform from a person seeking a faith community to an integrated member of a meeting:

1. I know that Quakers exist.
2. I have found a Quaker meeting in my area.
3. I have decided to visit the meeting.
4. I have visited the meeting and have decided to come back.
5. I have developed a sense of belonging in the first few months of attending.
6. I am experiencing long-term spiritual nurture, and I'm providing this nurture to others as well.

To find out how to help seekers at every step, start here: quakeremily.wordpress.com/2017/08/22/from-seeker-to-quaker/

Emily has been the driving force behind the Social Media Ads Outreach Experiment, the Quaker Outside the Lines project, and the Quaker Education and Discourse (QuED) series. She is currently serving under a travel minute, endorsed by her meeting and NYYM, to support her ministry of

hearth-building: "the work of creating a home for Friends, a community rich with opportunities that are so nourishing that each of us can then turn around and minister in the world, fully fed."

To learn more about Emily and her work, and for blog posts on Quaker outreach, leadership, multi-age inclusion, and more, visit quakeremily.wordpress.com.



—Sarah Way

The Gathered Meeting

A Pendle Hill Pamphlet
by Steven Davison
Central Philadelphia Meeting

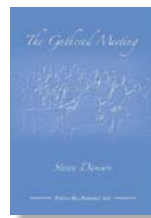
Steven Davison, former Communications Director for NYYM, has written a pamphlet for Pendle Hill on "The Gathered Meeting."

In a review for *Friends Journal* Marty Grundy writes, "Too many Friends have never experienced a gathered meeting and have no idea what they—and we—are missing.... It would be good if every Friend read and pondered this pamphlet, and if every Ministry and Counsel Committee studied it carefully and considered implementing its suggestions."

Read the review at friendsjournal.org/the-gathered-meeting/. The pamphlet itself is available for purchase at pendlehill.org/product/gathered-meeting/.



—Sarah Way



Youth Services Opportunity Project!



Did you know there's an easy way to get middle school, high school and college students

involved in Quaker inspired service learning in New York City? The Youth Service Opportunities Project (YSOP), headquartered in the 15th Street Meeting House in Manhattan, is a Quaker organization dedicated to engaging youth in meaningful service to homeless and hungry people. Since 1983, YSOP has been bridging the gap between youth who want to get involved with service

and service agencies that are happy to welcome the vibrancy and enthusiasm of young volunteers.

You can reserve YSOP daylong, overnight and weeklong programs for religious and community groups, schools, clubs, university organizations, and corporate groups. All of our programs begin with an orientation to homelessness and hunger, send students out in small teams with adult supervision to help at soup kitchens, food pantries, urban gardens and other opportunities to contribute to the hands-on needs of homeless and hungry New Yorkers, and conclude with a reflective discussion led by trained YSOP staff on the various service experiences.

For more information on how to get a group involved in YSOP service, check out www.ysop.org or call 212-598-0973.



Using Quaker Faith to Support & Guide Your Parenting

An online series
in winter 2018

Have you ever wondered:

- How your Quaker faith can give support and guidance to your parenting?
- How your parenting is part of your spiritual journey?
- What guidance does Quakerism give to knowing how to deal with behavior challenges, from toddlers to teens?

The **Quaker Parenting Initiative** (see www.quakerparenting.org) is offering an opportunity to explore these questions in a five-week virtual conference series starting in January 2018. To learn more or sign up contact Harriet Heath:

Harriet.e.heath@gmail.com



NYYM CONNECT!

There is an easy way to connect with all that NYYM has to offer: **NYYM Connect! At www.tinyurl.com/nnyconnect** you can sign up to receive news from NYYM and Powell House, resources and newsletters for Young Adults, Families, and ARCH, and manage your email list options.



Other Articles by Friends

To Be One Body: Prison Ministry in NYYM

Suzanne Blackburn
Genesee Valley Meeting

A Friend in my local meeting recently described prison ministry as my “passion.” The word surprised me—passion—it never occurred to me that I have been attending a prison worship group because I was passionate about it, or that our meeting has been engaged in a greeting card ministry for incarcerated and isolated Friends for over 15 years because I was passionate about it. So why do I do these things? Because I am enriched by the interactions I have with these Friends. Friends who are incarcerated cannot physically join me at my local meeting, so some of us worship in a local prison. Worshiping in prison is not something I do as charity; I go because it fills me with Spirit, it renews my soul, and I am in fellowship with others on the journey. Maybe you attend your local meeting for similar reasons.

Our Yearly Meeting is blessed to have a rich community of Friends, some of whom live behind the walls of prisons. We have Quaker Worship or Interfaith Groups in 8 New York State prisons, but members of our Body are incarcerated all over New York, even in prisons where there is no Quaker group.


Some “inside” Friends have started to reach out to meetings in their local areas, writing to clerks in the hopes of nurturing connections with “outside” Friends. If your meeting receives such a letter, please respond. Let Friends inside know how Spirit is alive in your life and in the life of your meeting.

Outside Friends can connect with inside Friends in many ways. If you would like to try attending a Prison Worship Group, you will need to go through the process to become a registered volunteer with the NYS Department of Corrections and Supervision (DOCCS). If you do AVP in prison, you already have volunteer status and attending a worship group would be simpler to arrange. Registered volunteers can attend Quaker Worship Groups as they are able. Some people attend weekly, monthly, or even just one or two times per year.

Our Body has a great need to build up a network of spiritual visitors and correspondents with incarcerated Friends. Being a visitor/correspondent is distinct from being a volunteer. In fact, if you do one, you are not permitted by DOCCS to do the other. Spiritual visitors can meet with and correspond with incarcerated Friends, just as any other friend or family member of an incarcerated person would. Visits take place in a visitation room during regular visiting hours, which vary at each prison.

Correspondence can include letters and phone calls. For Friends who have been transferred to a prison that does not have a Quaker Worship Group, this type of interaction is essential. Here’s why: the prison system does not allow volunteers to be in touch with the men from our Prison Worship Groups if they are transferred. Being “gathered together into one Body” absolutely depends on outside Friends who are not registered prison volunteers. If you don’t live near a prison but feel you could write on occasion and take a call every now and then, becoming a spiritual correspondent would be a way to “sustain and deepen our Society” and to deepen your personal experience of the Spirit. My meeting has been engaged in a greeting card ministry for over a decade. Greeting cards let inside Friends know we remember them, care about them, and love them. Incarcerated Friends from all over NY State write to our meeting to tell us how much this simple act means to them.

If you feel led to be a part of prison ministry but are concerned about the expenses of travel or collect calls, The NYYM Prisons Committee has funds available to support the work. What do you need to get started?

The first time I attended a prison worship group, I went because I could: my work hours and location allowed me to be available when many other Friends would not be. So I went, and I never turned back. I have met people who have taught me and inspired me. I have laughed, cried, and experienced true community. This might be yours, too, and may be right in your own backyard. For more information, contact the Yearly Meeting Office (office@nyym.org; 212-673-5750) to connect with the Prisons Committee. 

Spiritual Preparation for Recording Clerks


Sharon Hoover
Camden (Del.) Meeting

I wanted to serve my meeting as a recording clerk. I needed advice. As a boy, I remember my mother at the clerk's table at New York Yearly Meeting, quietly writing, occasionally seeking clarification, methodically reading. So I called mom. She matter-of-factly told me to read her Friends Journal article on recording (friends-journal.org/task-recording-clerk/). It starts with three paragraphs about Quakerism that lay the groundwork for the advice to come. I share these paragraphs with the hope that you too may find them a helpful reflection on our faith and practice. —Mark Hoover, Ann Arbor (Mich.) Meeting

For me, the first step in all aspects of living, including recording the minutes of a meeting, is the personal practice of awareness of the Spirit. I can practice silence when I have to wait at a stoplight, or when I am walking down the hall to another meeting. It’s as simple as relaxing my shoulders and slipping into a moment of silence. I might read a few lines of a spiritual calendar or book; I can bask in the beautiful long shadows of the rising or setting sun; I can record the day’s gratitudes. The more I practice inner silence, the more I am ready for any task.

Bill Taber was a longtime released minister in Ohio Yearly Meeting and a noted teacher and spiritual nurturer of Quakers of diverse theological styles. He suggested that over time, as we practice silent worship alone and with others, we will learn to move into an “altered state of consciousness” as we enter a worship meeting for business. We will put on “joy” as we come together into community, then we will move gradually to “assurance”: “It is as if we are entering into a stream, which I am fond of calling the Stream of the Quaker Process, which is as real as stepping into a stream of water.” Taber ... advises Friends to enter into worship before a business meeting with “a strong inward intentionality.” Ben Pink Dandelion, currently at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and the University of Birmingham, also reminds Friends ... that we are “open to new light ... a community of seekers,” and he, too,

remarks on the importance of our “intention: to be faithful above all.”

So: First is daily practice. Second is the joy of gathering. Third is our intention to be faithful. Each participant in a meeting for worship with a concern for business is a consequential part of the whole, even if he or she is silent, for we all are part of the “Stream” Taber mentions. Each participant is partly responsible for the quality of the discerning, clerking, and recording. 

A Quaker and Three Marines

Gallia Taranto
Scarsdale Friends Meeting

I became a Quaker after the United States declared war in Iraq. At the time I was surrounded by several people who were pro-troops, pro-president and pro-war. I found the Quaker Peace testimony and other testimonies very helpful and, little by little, I became a member.

A couple of years later, my oldest nephew graduated from college after several volunteer service jobs and decided to join the Marine Corps. I tried to dissuade him, but eventually I realized he was joining the Marines because of his idealism and the desire to serve his people and his country.

Even though I truly believed in Quaker values about war, my first job was to be an aunt and to send love and prayers to my nephew. Luckily he became a reserve officer and has now finished his military career. My two other nephews also joined the Marine Corps following their brother’s example. My only comment to one of them was, “You know we are in the midst of a war, don’t you?” He answered that (the Marine Corps) represents what he stood for and believed in.

I knew once again that wisdom dictated me to accept the situation and put my role as an aunt before that of peace activist or Quaker.

I now feel deeply for war veterans and believe they need to be welcomed and treated fairly after all they go through. My only contribution is to give handknitted afghans (I am an artist) to the VA hospital in Montrose, NY, through different knitters’ groups. Every day that passes I am grateful than none of my nephews have (yet) been called to war. 