



# SPARK

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

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November 2018



Leo Quirk, Corina Tulevech, and Annalea Blackburn demonstrate the arm gestures for All God's Critters during the Junior Yearly Meeting singalong at NYYM's Summer Sessions. *photo by Sarah Way*

## Cultivating Quaker Worship

Renee Fogarty  
Amawalk Meeting

After about a dozen years attending meeting, it was at a fancy-schmancy Omega Institute workshop in Rhinebeck, NY, that I finally understand Quaker worship.

It was day four of a weeklong, mostly silent retreat. The instructor suggested that we listen for wisdom that arises between thoughts and stories of the mind.

On this afternoon, we were invited to break our silence and speak from an embodied place, closer to the belly than the head—a place of primordial vitality, a place of truth. The words that come from this place are halting, yet deliberate,

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## Farmington-Scipio Faces Forward

Kathy Slattery  
Orchard Park Meeting

“Visioning a Future for Our Region: A Retreat for the Farmington Scipio Region,” a 24-hour retreat under the care of regional Ministry and Counsel and facilitated by Angela Hopkins, gathered October 26 and 27 in Dundee, NY.

This event followed the “Dundee model” of our regional retreats, with persons gathering on Friday from 4 p.m. on, offering overnight hospitality, and continuing on Saturday from about 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The programs are planned so participants who attend on Friday get a

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## Cultivating Quakers *Growing our Faith*

### To Cultivate Is to Cherish

Ty GRIESE  
Wilton Meeting

“How I do love these Quakers!”

I love finding out more about them, both early in our history and in the present day, the world over. Having read and continuing to read widely in spiritual literature, including works by Quaker authors, I bring insights and perspectives that I’ve harvested to meeting. I bring learnings from Eastern spirituality and techniques, as well as writings of our human mystics. The bite-sized Pendle Hill pamphlets have always appealed to me, along with their wide and deep range. I endeavour also to listen to our other-than-human community members. (Spirit speaks always, and everywhere.) I try to apply Martin Buber’s “all real living is meeting” to our widest community. Still, I have the longest way to go.

Our meeting has not done much worship sharing of late, though we certainly should, as being “real living” it excels at knitting the community together! I had the honor to be part of a Quaker support group requested by one of our members a couple of years ago, though we called it a Clearness Committee. One of its (meaning the committee members and certainly our focus Friend) gifts to me was an opportunity to listen wholly and purely—ideally without focusing on fixing them. Not unexpectedly,

*continued on page 4*

### Worship at Your Computer?

Sue TANNEHILL  
Buffalo Meeting

We had our doubts. Buffalo Monthly Meeting draws from places that range from 30 minutes northeast of the city of Buffalo to 40 minutes south, making it difficult for people to drive into the city for mid-week meeting. But several members had used a video conferencing tool for committee meetings, and it seemed like a way to have mid-week worship too. Our Outreach committee decided to try out the Zoom application. Currently we hold mid-week meeting for worship (using the Zoom platform) twice a month on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 7:30-8:15 p.m. It is announced on both our website ([buffaloquakers.org](http://buffaloquakers.org)) and our Facebook page (Buffalo Quaker Meeting). Readers of this article are very welcome to join us!

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**Cultivating Quakers** pages 4-6

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**Pay As Led** page 7



## Notices

### New Members

**Robert G. Docters** — Wilton  
**Richard Z. Duffee** — Wilton  
**Nicholas Knibbs** — Binghamton  
**Jayant Singh** — Bethpage  
**Adrian Vasilko** — Matinecock  
**Martin Vasilko** — Matinecock  
**Bryan Wigfall** — Morningside

### Transfers

**Robert Martin**, from Poughkeepsie to Bulls Head-Oswego  
**CORRECTION: Elisa Stewart** to Hudson Monthly Meeting from Palm Beach Monthly Meeting (SEYM).

### Marriages

**Joanna Dreby and Moses Nagel** on September 8, 2018, under the care of Albany Friends Meeting

### Deaths

**Isabel Chiquoine**, member of Mohawk Valley, on September 2, 2018  
**Louise de Leeuw**, member of Poughkeepsie, on August 29, 2018  
**Ruth Helen Detjen**, member of Poughkeepsie, on August 20, 2018  
**Joseph Levinger**, member of Albany, on October 25, 2018

## MEETING NEWS

### Flushing Friends Interfaith Breakfast

Flushing Friends Meeting, along with the Queens Bahá'í Faith Community, hosts a monthly interfaith breakfast at the Flushing meetinghouse. Neighbors are encouraged to break bread with each other and connect with people of different faiths. These breakfasts provide a platform for the sharing of concerns and build cross-cultural solidarity in Queens, NY, one of the most diverse counties in the United States. For more information visit [flushingfriends.org](http://flushingfriends.org) or [facebook.com/flushingmeeting](https://facebook.com/flushingmeeting)

### Outreach Discernment and Planning Meeting

Twenty-five Friends met at Chatham-Summit Meeting on Oct. 6-7 to plan for the future of outreach in New York Yearly Meeting. It was

## Around Our Yearly Meeting

a weekend of lively discussion, worship, discernment, and hard work. We developed an Outreach Action Plan, a summary of which was presented at Fall Sessions and appears online at [nym.org/session/fall-sessions-2018#documents](http://nym.org/session/fall-sessions-2018#documents) (click on "Outreach Working Group Report.") This plan lays a framework for a new structure to support outreach in our meetings. It will be taken to the Coordinating Committee Weekend in January for further discernment, with a final plan to be presented at Spring Sessions.

### New Energy at Mohawk Valley

Members of the Mohawk Valley Monthly Meeting shared that they have an energetic attender who has a passion for outreach and has taken over their website and Facebook accounts, keeping them interesting and updated, and is involved in the Outreach Practice Group of NYYM. They are working to create a welcoming and active group of adults interested in helping to provide childcare and First Day School for young ones on a regular basis. Visit [mohawkvalleyfriends.org/](http://mohawkvalleyfriends.org/) and [www.facebook.com/Mohawkvalleyquakers/](https://www.facebook.com/Mohawkvalleyquakers/)

### Worshipping with Students at Skidmore College Continues

Easton and Saratoga Friends are cofacilitating worship at the Skidmore Chapel. We meet every other Sunday during the semester while school is in session. This is our third year at student request for us to be on campus. We have been starting with 15 minute of fellowship, followed by 30 minutes of worship and 15 minutes for reflection and sharing. Discussion of this format is ongoing.

*See page 8 for more meeting news.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### The Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series Continues!

#### Part 2: The Intersection of Faith and Everything Else

A one-day retreat for young adults, 15th Street Meeting, NYC, on Dec. 1.

This workshop will be an opportunity for Friends at various points in their journeys to think about our existence in the world (career, studies, job, side projects, hobbies...) and how it intersects, complements, juxtaposes, or deviates from our



Presenters and guests from the Friday night program at Fall Sessions, "Quakers, Indigenous Peoples and the Land." From left to right: Mattie Schmitt, Mike Farrell, Aimee Stafford Carpenter, Brian Carpenter, Michelle Shenandoah, and Neal Powless. *photo by Sarah Way*

Faith and spiritual lives. How do we or can we take care of both our spiritual and professional selves, even when they're interwoven? How do we reconcile work in the world that stands in contrast or works against what we know as Truth? We will reflect, share concerns, listen, and dream as we explore where we are and where we would like to be.

### Part 3: What is Discernment? Quaker Decision-Making in the 21st Century

A one-day retreat at Poughkeepsie Meeting, NY, on February 24, 2019 (Following Meeting for Discernment on Saturday.)

Meetings for Discernment are an ongoing experiment in extended worship of New York Yearly Meeting—two periods of silent, waiting worship held twice a year, each lasting more than the usual one hour, with some interval of time between them. This year's winter Meeting for Discernment is February 23. We invite you to join us in extended worship on Saturday and then for a day of reflection and learning about discernment on Sunday. It is not required for you to attend both events. We will explore the history and purpose of discernment and Quaker decision-making and we will explore ways that this history informs and translates into the 21st century.

**VISIT [youngadultfriends.weebly.com](http://youngadultfriends.weebly.com) for more information, registration, and to nominate a young adult Friend to attend!**

### LISTENING CIRCLES for building relationship and transforming conflict

January 25-27, 2019

A weekend facilitated by Heather Cook and Karen Reixach at the Woolman Hill Quaker Retreat Center ([www.woolmanhill.org](http://www.woolmanhill.org))

When conflict reveals itself, it often feels like both an institutional

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and a personal crisis. Frequently, we try to ignore or smooth over the ruffled feelings, only to find the conflict resurfacing in unexpected ways. Caught up in our reactions, we often forget that conflict is a normal and integral part of all dynamic organizations and relationships. It can be an indication of people feeling safe to be authentic and to take risks. Addressed creatively and confidently, it can be transforming. This workshop is for people who are ready to help their meetings—and themselves—grow less fear-driven and more whole. Circle processes are in harmony with Quaker faith and practice. Circles provide a structured way to follow our practices of deep listening and of seeking connection through that of God in ourselves and others.

### Powell House is YOUR Retreat Center

You are cordially invited to visit Powell House, the NYYM retreat center in Old Chatham, NY. Some upcoming events for adults and families:

- **PoHo's Annual New Years**

**Celebration**, a joyful multigenerational gathering, Dec. 30, 2018–Jan. 1, 2019

- **Dwelling Deep, a Contemplative Retreat** (co-sponsored by School of the Spirit Ministry), Jan. 18-21

- **Friends Decision-Making and Clerking**, with Arthur Larrabee and NYYM General Secretary Steve Mohlke, Feb. 1-3

And for youth:

**Wintersong**, for grades 7-12, is Dec. 14-16.

A **conference** for 11-12th graders and young adults, Feb. 1-3

Visit [powellhouse.org](http://powellhouse.org) for more!

## OPPORTUNITIES

### Meeting Houses and Properties Fund

**What:** for building and repairing meetinghouses; under the care of the NYYM Trustees.

**Applying:** Apply to the NYYM Trustees using the form at [nyym.org/sites/default/files/NYYM-MeetingHouseFund-Application.pdf](http://nyym.org/sites/default/files/NYYM-MeetingHouseFund-Application.pdf). Applications must be sent to the Trustees by the end of February for grants in that year. The Trustees' decisions as to the fund allocations will be announced by the end of May. See the descriptions of the funds managed by the Trustees at [nyym.org/content/nyym-financial-resources-individuals-and-meetings](http://nyym.org/content/nyym-financial-resources-individuals-and-meetings)

### Editor's Note

Welcome to the November *Spark*: Cultivating Quakers. In addition to a stellar collection of articles and essays, this issue contains a "How-To" guide for people just starting to navigate New York Yearly Meeting; see pages 5-6. It includes answers to questions I've been asked (or had to ask, myself) about Quaker process, an explanation of the current yearly meeting structure, a list of regular NYYM events, and more. I hope you find it useful.

You, reader, are invited to write an article for *Spark*. Articles should be spirit-led, and are considered a form of ministry. Submissions should be fairly short—400-600 words—and may be lightly edited.

#### Upcoming Spark themes:

**January: Lessons from Quaker History.** What can we learn from different facets of Quaker history—from George Fox, to the Hicksite/Orthodox split, to conscientious objection to war? Why were the yearly meetings in the US formed and how have they evolved? How do modern Friends relate themselves to Quakers of the past? Are there lessons from the past that may help us move into the future? Submissions due Dec. 10.

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

Please email your articles, as well as your meeting or committee news and upcoming events, to [communications@nyym.org](mailto:communications@nyym.org).

In between issues of *Spark*, I distribute InfoShare, NYYM's e-newsletter. InfoShare has a rolling deadline. Please, **share your meeting's news and events** by sending them ASAP to [communications@nyym.org](mailto:communications@nyym.org).

"Like" us on [facebook.com/NewYorkYearlyMeeting/](https://www.facebook.com/NewYorkYearlyMeeting/)  
Follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/NYYMTweets](https://twitter.com/NYYMTweets) and on Instagram at [instagram.com/newyorkyearlymeeting/](https://www.instagram.com/newyorkyearlymeeting/)

And you can manage your email list settings at [www.tinyurl.com/nyymconnect](http://www.tinyurl.com/nyymconnect)

—Sarah Way

## A Letter from Fall Sessions

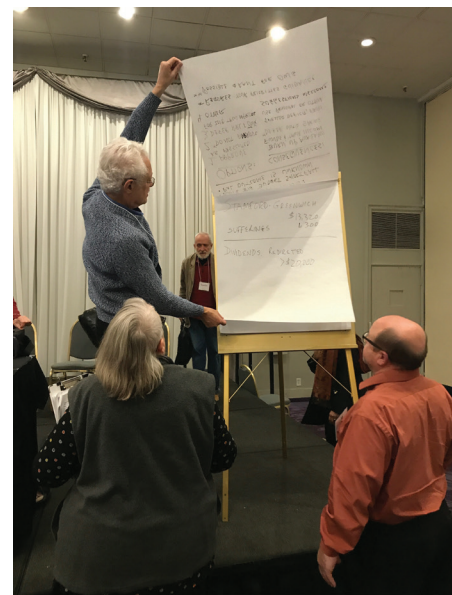
Dear Friends,

Fall Sessions 2018 in Rochester was at once a grounded and deep gathering of Friends laboring together lovingly, and a time of serious concern about the need to face difficult financial decisions which for some years have been predicted to be imminent. We also heard uplifting reports, including an exciting new outreach proposal and an intriguing new membership concept.

At Summer Sessions 2018, the Personnel Committee advised Friends that they wanted to hire a full time Youth and Young Adult Field Secretary to support the monthly meetings, replacing two vacant part time positions. The work of the former part time staff members was truly invaluable, but there have been very few applicants for these part time positions. Unfortunately, we did not at that time appear to have the finances to make a full time hire with benefits. Calling on faith and a Spirit-led way forward, Friends approved the hire and asked Financial Services Committee to find the funds for the new position to be included in the 2019 budget.

At Fall Sessions, Financial Services Committee reported that our trustees provided options to cover an anticipated deficit in the 2019 budget that came in at well over \$100,000, but all the options were unsatisfactory, and would have included the sale of invested principal, which the trustees urged not be done. Therefore, the proposed budget, which included the sale of principal, was withdrawn. There is no 2019 budget at this time. The process for this situation, which has occurred before, is for the creation of an interim budget to carry us until Spring Sessions. At Spring Sessions, Financial Services Committee will present a new budget. Gathered Friends were asked for input as to priorities and ways forward for the committee to consider.

Friends responded again with a call to faith, as they did at Summer Sessions, asking those who are able, to reach deep, including making pledges to the anonymous \$50,000 matching grant that is now in effect (see [NYYM.org/matching](http://NYYM.org/matching)). We were reminded that use of invested principal could quickly deplete what little unrestricted investments



Jeffrey Aaron flips pages on a paper easel, on which he'd written some of the details we began to consider while confronting next year's budget. Fall Sessions, 2018. photo by Sarah Way


that there are, which would also eliminate the income they provide, income that supports important witness work. Friends asked that we carry this report of our situation back to their local meetings in the hope of increasing both meeting and individual donations. Financial Services Committee will also seek ways to reduce expenses. Comments about priorities, ways to increase donations or reduce expenses can be sent by anyone to Mary Harpster, clerk of Financial Services Committee, at [financial-services-clerk@nyym.org](mailto:financial-services-clerk@nyym.org).

All Friends are invited to take part in Coordinating Committee Weekend, January 25-27, where these concerns and other matters, including needed structural changes, will be discussed. Coordinating Committee Weekend is always a joyful (and delicious) occasion, in part because it takes part at our own wonderful Powell House. Please consider attending regardless of whether you are or are not a member of a coordinating committee. You are welcome! See the Powell House calendar at [powellhouse.org/index.php/calendar](http://powellhouse.org/index.php/calendar).

In the Light,

Jeffrey Aaron, Clerk, NYYM 

### NYYM CONNECT!

There is an easy way to connect with all that NYYM has to offer: **NYYM Connect!** At [www.tinyurl.com/nyymconnect](http://www.tinyurl.com/nyymconnect) 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. 





# Cultivating Quakers

## To Cultivate Is to Cherish

Ty Griese

Wilton Meeting

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I need to do more of that to be of better service. It certainly need not wait on another formal invitation to participate.

Within the past year, I have begun a daily prayer or “holding” practice—another way of rippling out in to the rest of the life of me the way of a Friend. Certainly I am not what I would call “good at it,” but it does “get me out more.”

Our meeting encourages sharing of our Quaker gifts in many areas, certainly in Witness activities such as educating and assisting in our communities about solitary confinement, denuclearization, gun violence, world hunger, and sustainable living. Our Children’s Meeting, though currently quite small in numbers, prepares big salads each month for a local homeless shelter. Also each month, for our taller friends, we have a Friendly Forum and on another First Day, Adult Religious Education. Our clerk has contributed this past year to *Spark* on outreach from our meeting, but he may not have mentioned that he has made a stack of “QuakerSpeak” videos (“What to Expect in Quaker Meeting for Worship”) available to newcomers and old timers alike.

We have been blessed of late with an almost steady trickle of newcomers, some due to our Facebook page, some drive-bys, and some the fruit of Friends being ever at the ready to talk to anyone about what they love! Several to many have returned, some attending business meeting, some our bountiful potluck. A couple of our returning new attenders are now on our Physical Stewardship Committee. Though severely allergic to fragrances, one dedicated attender has hung in there, often entering the meeting room late pending a migraine brought on by fragrances, though the meeting is “fragrance-free.” Aaron has himself brought along a few new attenders in turn. One couple has served hospitality and offered to watch the children



At Fall Sessions in Rochester, Jillian Smith and Trish Eckert introduced the Outreach Action Plan, developed at the Outreach Discernment and Planning weekend held in October. *photo by Sarah Way*

during the summer when Children’s Meeting is not in session. We have asked them to attend the new NYYM Young Adult Friends Series.

Wilton received one new attender stemming from informal conversation in a YMCA locker room. (At least one other, a younger adult, is a work in progress.) If anyone reading this hesitates to seize the day when presented with an opportunity to talk Quakers, I would like to speak with thee, soon!

## Worship at Your Computer?

Sue Tannehill

Buffalo Meeting

*continued from page 1*

Personally, I wasn’t sure I could sit at my desk and feel “worship” staring at a computer screen. I was surprised to find that the same sense of peace and calm I sense in face-to face-meeting for worship often steals over me when I participate in digital mid-week meeting.

How does it work? Each person clicks on a link they have received or dials into the Zoom conference room. When they sign in, we see their faces unless they are using a phone connection. We begin with a brief check in—names, introductions, welcoming newcomers, reviewing the process, and then we settle into a half hour of worship. When the time is up, we hear the usual “Good Evening Friends” to break meeting and we then have a few minutes for afterthoughts or reflections on the process.

While 4-6 Buffalo members regularly attend, we often have people attend from other meeting in other states. So far, we have had people from both PA and CT join us.

This has been great for cross-fertilization of Friends’ practices. Several people in PA joined because they were thinking of using Zoom for the same purpose in their home meeting. At least one out-of-town couple has “attended” mid-week meeting for worship after worshiping with us in person.

I encourage any interested Friends to visit our mid-week meeting! Find the information about future meetings at [www.buffaloquakers.org/events/](http://www.buffaloquakers.org/events/). So, the answer to the question above is, yes, you can have a meaningful meeting for worship experience sitting at your desk using your computer screen. Who knew?

## In Silence

Don Badgley

Poughkeepsie Meeting

*It seems to this Friend that our “cultivation of Quakerism” will bear far more and sweeter fruit when we remember to point to the essentials that are at the heart of our worship and then trust that the Light will nurture the seeds we scatter onto that fertile ground.*

Gathered  
In the place of silence  
We Friends embrace simplicity,  
Surrendering our hearts to wait,  
Together,  
Still—within the rising morning light;  
Centering to sanctify this space  
made holy,  
not in form,  
But rather by the seed of Love;  
not by altar made of stone,  
or temple’s hallowed vault,  
But by The Light—Experienced,  
Present in our midst,  
The infinite—Divine.

## Cultivating Quaker Worship

Renee Fogarty

Amawalk Meeting

*continued from page 1*

markedly different from the heady string of words we typically emit.

It is a place that is immune to the ups and downs of life’s circumstances. It is a place that speaks with gratitude for the raw aliveness of being and the words that arrive are expressions of a basic life energy coursing through us.

I asked for the microphone and confessed to the nearly 50 others at the retreat who, like me, had spent nearly \$1200 to be there, that I finally understood Quaker worship.

Afterward, half a dozen folks approached me with questions. Their interest was piqued, perhaps even enough to visit a local meeting.

## Farmington-Scipio Faces Forward

Kathy Slattery

Orchard Park Meeting

*continued from page 1*

welcome and introduction, and participants who can only attend on Saturday won’t feel like they missed an important part of the discussion/exploration.

The beginnings of thinking in terms of visioning for the FSRM began at our Spring Gathering weekend in May 2018 with a breakout session entitled “An Introduction to Visioning.” This was an experiential happening involving everyone, seated in a big circle in the dining hall, in a rousing game of flyswatter volleyball. We plunged directly into play with minimum direction or rules. We all started as learners, as no one had tried to hit a balloon with a flyswatter before! Everyone was highly motivated to interact—in fact, the squeals of surprise and fun drew kids and others in. Rules were set aside so little kids could fully participate; the circle expanded; nobody complained about missing the rules. It was a parable of living into a joyful, raucous, inclusive Beloved Community.

*continued on next page*





The next step this fall was to bring people together to talk and to listen about each others' hopes and aspirations and to prepare for the challenges and opportunities facing our meetings and worship groups right now and into the near future. It provided an invitation to step outside the realm of problem-solving around issues of aging and shrinking meetings to spaciousness and openness, to where Spirit is leading.

There were 14 persons who participated on Friday evening, joined by an additional 3 on Saturday. Those 17 persons were from 8 of the 13 meetings in our region (we have plans to share the visioning process with our 4 prison worship groups too). There was a lively mix of people who usually don't have the opportunity to be together for a good block of time, from across our huge region (the shores of Lake Erie and Lake Chautauqua to Syracuse, Ithaca, and Elmira). Friends commented on the positive energy and vibrancy in this gathered community. It seems that an essential part of the culture of the FSRM is the high regard for face-to-face encounter and relationship, and the accompanying depth of worship. All valued and used this opportunity for fellowship, both making new Friends and catching up with old Friends. There was much gratitude and we felt blessed to be together.

Angela encouraged us to reflect on what gifts we saw in individuals and in our home meetings, and to write them down. Then we reflected on the gifts we saw in our wider region. Are there similarities that could connect meetings? Are these strengths we can build on? How do we create opportunities for sharing and creating forward momentum? How do we discern what is the spirit of the region? How do we discern what is our work to do?

Farmington Scipio Ministry and Counsel will be exploring these questions, and looking to what's next. And we hope to hear the ways that these questions and others reverberate in the home meetings that the participants returned to and shared with. This is certainly an ongoing and evolving opportunity for imagination, listening, and corporate discernment.

## New York Yearly Meeting How-To Guide

**A practical primer  
on how to participate  
in our yearly meeting**

**Sarah Way**  
Communications Director

*Quaker business practices can be opaque and difficult for newcomers to learn. The following aims to help new Friends navigate and become more active in their local, regional, and yearly meeting. Though Spirit is rarely mentioned here, all our practices are grounded in Spirit. See Faith and Practice for more.*

### What if I want...

**...to find out who the clerk is, or who, for example, is on the Ministry and Counsel Committee, at my local meeting?** If you are not able to ask someone at your local meeting, you can contact the NYYM office: 212-673-5750 or office@nyym.org. The online directory at nyym.org/nyym\_meetings has a contact number for each meeting. And your local meeting has a copy of the most recent *Yearbook*, which contains a list of all meetings and their clerks and contact info. (For a continually updated listing, check online.)

**...to talk about a concern I have about our meeting for worship?** Talk to a member of your meeting's Ministry and Counsel Committee, sometimes referred to as Ministry and Oversight.

**...to talk about an interpersonal conflict I'm having with another person in my meeting?** If the conflict is in your local meeting, contact the clerk or someone on Ministry and Counsel. The yearly meeting's Committee on Conflict Transformation can also help you as an individual or your meeting as a whole; email conflict@nyym.org. During Summer Sessions, NYYM's week-long gathering in July, the Circle of Care and Concern is available to help. Members of that group wear green lanyards.

**...to learn about and maybe join a committee?** To explore joining a committee, talk to your meeting's Nominating Committee. Together you can talk about your gifts and where they can best be used. You can get a sense

of what's going on in your meeting by attending a business meeting. Regional and yearly meetings also have Nominating Committees; contact their clerks, or the NYYM office, the *Yearbook*, or nyym.org for contact information. You may also attend a meeting of a committee you're interested in. Most committee meetings are open to everyone, but check with the committee clerk before attending, as some committees are confidential.

### ...to get spiritual help in making a decision about my life or family?

If you have a spiritual-based concern about a decision you need to make or a difficult situation you are facing, you can speak to a member of Ministry and Counsel to request a clearness committee (a short-term, small committee) to help you gain clarity. Clearness committees are also convened for membership, marriage, and leadings in ministry. The job of a clearness committee is to worship with and deeply listen to the focus person and ask questions that will help bring clarity for the decision.

**...to bring a new idea (or "leading") to my meeting?** If your concern is related to "witness" (social justice or activism), and your meeting has a Peace and Social Action Committee, you can bring your idea to them. Otherwise, contact your meeting's Ministry and Counsel. They may direct you to the appropriate committee for further "seasoning" or they may recommend a clearness committee to help you prayerfully consider your concern, test that it is Spirit-led, and discern your next steps. After "seasoning," if your leading requires support or assistance from your meeting, you may be directed to present your idea at the next meeting for business. The meeting may choose to join you in your effort, providing support and guidance. Depending on the nature of your leading, your meeting may write a "minute" (a statement of support). That minute can be forwarded to regional and yearly meetings for their consideration.

### ...to request financial assistance (also referred to as "scholarship") to attend yearly meeting gatherings ("Sessions") or committee meetings?

This year, for Summer Sessions, we are trying a new Pay As Led system, for which a request will

not be necessary! See page

7. For Spring, Summer, and Fall Sessions, many meetings have funds set aside to help Friends participate; ask your meeting's clerk or treasurer. You should request money from your local meeting before you register for Sessions. For Spring and Fall Sessions, if you are part of the NYYM community but not part of a local meeting, or if you need additional aid, you can request financial aid from NYYM's "Equalization Fund" on the Sessions registration form. Note that registration fees for Spring and Fall Sessions are already "suggested" so this aid is for travel expenses and meals. For travel to committee meetings, request assistance from the committee clerk—some committees have funds set aside in their budgets for this purpose.

**How do I decide how much aid to ask for?** The yearly meeting wants everyone to attend Sessions. If you can only afford to spend a certain amount you can request the rest. Use your best judgment.

### ...to become a member of my local meeting?

Contact the clerk of your meeting or Ministry and Counsel. You will be asked to write a letter requesting membership and will have a clearness committee convened for you.

## The PUBLICATIONS of NYYM

*You can find copies of these at your local meeting, or online at nyym.org (click on the "Resources & Publications" tab). All are updated regularly.*

**Faith and Practice** is our book of "discipline." It describes our testimonies and beliefs and contains guidance on conducting business.

The **Handbook** describes the structure of the yearly meeting and its committees, with details on responsibilities, terms of service, etc.

The **Yearbook** is published every fall and contains information for all Friends, but especially for those conducting business with the yearly meeting. It includes minutes from recent Sessions, committee reports, the budget, the meeting directory, a list of committee appointments, and contact information for those Friends "under appointment" (serving on a YM committee.)

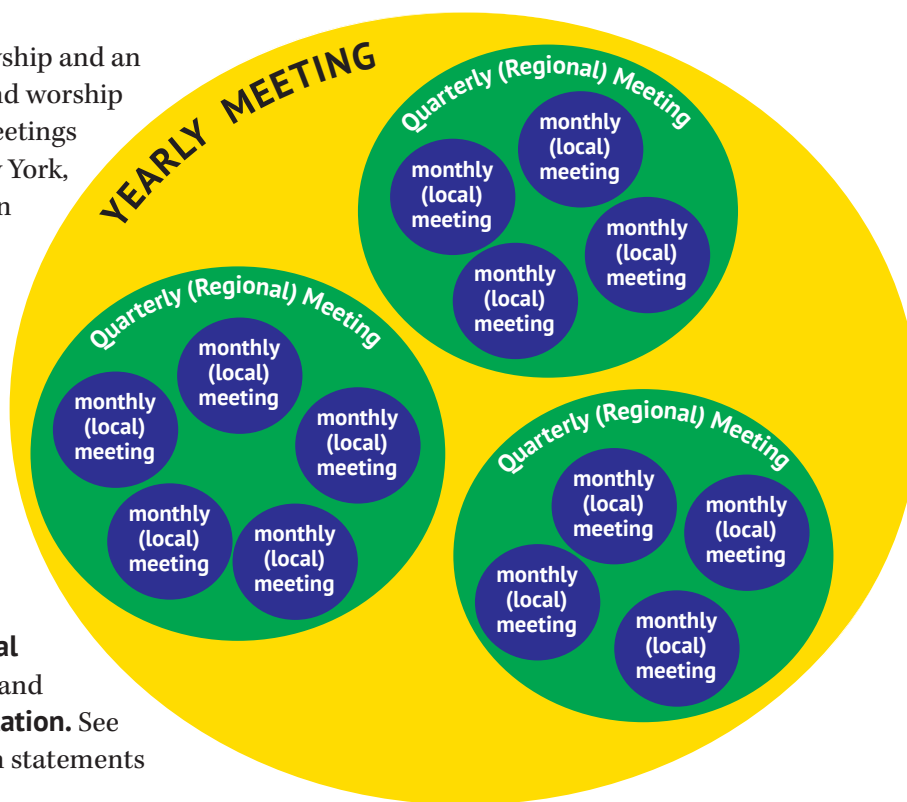


# Cultivating Quakers in New York Yearly Meeting

**New York Yearly Meeting** is a fellowship and an organization of around 80 meetings and worship groups, gathered into nine regional meetings that are spread across the state of New York, northern New Jersey, and southwestern Connecticut.

Monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings are so called because of how many times a year they meet to conduct business, though New York Yearly Meeting actually meets three times a year. Some regional meetings are half-yearly instead of quarterly.

Our yearly meeting, and other yearly meetings worldwide, belongs to the Quaker affiliate groups **Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, and Friends World Committee for Consultation**. See the column to the right for the mission statements of these organizations.



## **NYYM is a member of:**

**Friends General Conference (FGC)**, with Divine guidance, nurtures the spiritual vitality of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) by providing programs and services for Friends, meetings, and seekers. [www.fgcquaker.org](http://www.fgcquaker.org)

**Friends United Meeting (FUM)** commits itself to energize and equip Friends through the power of the Holy Spirit to gather people into fellowships where Jesus Christ is known, loved, and obeyed as Teacher and Lord. [friendsunitedmeeting.org](http://friendsunitedmeeting.org)

Answering God's call to universal love, **Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)** brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications and consultation, to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world. [fwccamericas.org](http://fwccamericas.org)

## **New York Yearly Meeting Committee Structure for July 2018-July 2019**

Each coordinating committee is made up of representatives from its constituent committees as well as some "at large" members (those serving only on the coordinating committee.) Coordinating committees serve to coordinate and season the work and functions of their member committees, all of which share a related mission.

### **MINISTRY**

#### **Coordinating Committee**

*Includes a representative from each regional meeting*

- Alternative Pathways to Membership Working Group
- Committee on Conflict Transformation
- Committee to Revise *Faith and Practice*
- Epistle Committee
- Ministry and Pastoral Care
- Outreach Working Group
- Powell House Committee
- Spiritual Nurture Working Group
- State of the Society
- Committee on Sufferings
- Youth Committee
- Task Group on Racism
- Worship at YM Sessions

#### **Committees Outside the Coordinating Committee Structure**

*Committees with a mission that spans more than one coordinating committee*

- Liaison (consists of NYYM clerk, assistant clerk, coordinating committee clerks, and general secretary)
  - Representatives to affiliate groups (FGC, FUM, and FWCC)
  - Oakwood Friends School Board
- Meetings for Discernment
- Priorities Support Working Group

### **GENERAL SERVICES**

#### **Coordinating Committee**

*Includes NYYM staff\* and officers\*\**

- Committee on Aging Concerns
- Audit Committee
- Communications Committee
- Development Committee
- Financial Services Committee
- Committee on the Expenditure of the Mosher Fund
- Nominating Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Records Committee
- Sessions Committee
- Supervisory Committee for the General Secretary
- Trustees of Lindley Murray Fund
- NYYM Board of Trustees

To find out more about any of these committees, read their annual reports in the *Yearbook* (available at monthly meetings or online at [nyym.org/yearbooks](http://nyym.org/yearbooks)), or visit [nyym.org/content/nyym-committees](http://nyym.org/content/nyym-committees)

\* NYYM STAFF includes: Administrative Associate, Aging Resources Consultation and Help (ARCH) Coordinator, Associate Secretary, Communications Director, Digital Communications Director, and General Secretary.

\*\* OFFICERS of New York Yearly Meeting: Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Recording Clerks, Reading Clerks, and Treasurer.

### **WITNESS**

#### **Coordinating Committee**

*Includes groups to which NYYM belongs and sends a representative*

- Alternatives to Violence Project
- American Friends Service Committee
- Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development
- Committee for Black Concerns
- Bolivian Quaker Education Fund
- Conscientious Objection to Paying for War Working Group
- Earthcare Working Group
- European American Quakers Working to End Racism Working Group
- Friends Committee on National Legislation
- Friends Peace Teams
- Indian Affairs Committee
- National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund
- National Religious Campaign Against Torture
- New Jersey Council of Churches
- New York State Council of Churches
- Peace Concerns Working Group
- Prisons Committee
- Quaker Earthcare Witness
- William Penn House
- Committee on World Ministries

### **Important Dates on the NYYM calendar**

(The following dates are for 2019. These events are *usually* scheduled for the same time every year, but please check first.)

**January 25–27: Coordinating Committee weekend.** Members of coordinating committees, and other interested Friends, hold meetings for business during a weekend at Powell House. Open to everyone.

**February 22-24: Meeting for Discernment.** All are invited to attend this extended meeting for worship, focused on a set of queries, at a different meetinghouse each year (Poughkeepsie in 2019).

**April 5–7: Spring Sessions.** The yearly meeting gathers for a weekend of business, committee meetings, and fellowship, hosted by regional meetings on a rotating schedule (Nine Partners in 2019).

**July 21-27: Summer Sessions.** A week of worship, meetings for business, and fellowship. At the Silver Bay YMCA conference center.

**October TBA: Budget Saturday.** A daylong meeting on the yearly meeting budget with the treasurer, clerk, and other stakeholders.

**November 1–3: Fall Sessions.** Same details as for spring.





# Pay as Led is now a reality for New York Yearly Meeting's 2019 Summer Sessions!



In 2019, we are making our **Summer Sessions** more affordable to those who need it. In the past, many have had to stretch mightily in order to be able to attend, and some have stayed away because of the cost. **Pay as Led** is a daring experiment that counts on many people being led to pay more in order to make our summer gathering accessible to a wider range of f/Friends.

We hope **Pay as Led** will open up the NYYM Summer Sessions experience so we may become a more **Blessed Community** that is whole, wide-ranging, and all-embracing.

All the 2019 Summer Sessions information will be online at [nyym.org](http://nyym.org) and will be in *Spark* starting in **January 2019**. Look for the details & join us!

## To be successful....

**Pay as Led will require new thinking!**

**Pay as Led will require close attention to new information!**

**Pay as Led will require us to all to be both conscientious and generous!**

### New Thinking!

2019 is our first year experimenting with a Pay as Led process for lodging and meals at Silver Bay YMCA. Pay as Led invites people with limited financial means to pay less than the standard rate and for those with greater financial resources to pay more than the standard. We are specifying a minimum charge of 25% of the standard Silver Bay rates for the simplest accommodations. If this is still out of reach, we encourage folks to contact the YM office to see what other assistance may be available.

### New Information!

**Registration will begin in January of 2019.**

The reason is two-fold. First, we have a new contract with Silver Bay YMCA that requires us to process registrations and gather payments ourselves. This is so new to us, we will need lots of time to work out the kinks. Second, we want to accommodate and honor those who need time to consider the amount they can afford to pay and, if necessary, set up payment arrangements. The Pay as Led Registration & Payment Deadline is May 15th.

### New Discernment!

For Pay as Led to be successful for each person and for NYYM as a whole, we all need to carefully discern what we can afford — and consider how we can help others attend if we are able. This is our opportunity to listen to Spirit and to reflect on the meaning of community, integrity, right sharing, and just simply wanting to be in the company of our faith community, for worship, work, play, new connections, and lots of hugs!



## Friends Come in All Ages, Sizes and Colors: Our Path Toward Being Inclusive

### New York Yearly Meeting's Summer Sessions Theme for 2019

It was in 1652 that George Fox climbed Pendle Hill and envisioned a "great people waiting to be gathered." We are the heirs to that vision and continue to look for that gathering. How do we bring that vision forward into the 21st century? How do we support the growth of our Religious Society so that it includes Friends of all ages, sizes, colors, and life styles? How do we live into the Quaker life?

It is a challenge to adapt to changing times and ways, but our belief in continuing revelation must be our guide, even when that requires us to be flexible and allow changes that may not be comfortable or easy. This belief and practice will be the way for us to move gracefully into this digital age and into a future that we cannot even imagine from here.

We are looking for ways to make the New

York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends exciting and challenging for all who gather. How can we deepen our spiritual practice for all ages, and include more than the usual participants in our Meetings for Business? We will seek discernment on the way forward. You are invited to join in this seeking and add your voice and your Light.

—Jeffrey Aaron, NYYM Clerk

### Junior Yearly Meeting

Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) is the gathering of young people from NYYM. Young friends, from three years old through high school, come together at Summer Sessions for worship, learning, and fun. Many have found this group

to be a strong foundation for their growing Quaker faith. It is a highlight of the summer gathering. For those who give their time to working with the YM youth, our goal for Junior Yearly Meeting is to give the participants a real

experience of living in a blessed community with age-appropriate worship, play, and the exploration of Quaker testimonies and NYYM themes. Join us!



## Other Articles by Friends

### Sitting in Silence

A conversation among  
teens in the Powell House  
Youth Program

Rebecca Anacheka-  
Nasemann  
and Chris DeRoller  
Powell House

Recently I attended a Powell House high school youth retreat facilitated by Lily Bergstein and Chris DeRoller. As part of the work we were doing around individual and group evolution, we were asked to come up with a list of youth program components that could be uncomfortable in important ways. The list we generated included: Couch piles, 3-way massage, sitting in silence, news of me, Wink 'em, and small group discussions

A group of us self-selected to talk about "Sitting in Silence." We discussed how we didn't initially know what to make of silence, and it seemed strange and uncomfortable, but that it became an experience we all found meditative, relaxing, healing, and deeply important to us. We talked about how love and other emotions can transcend conversation, and really envelope a group of people when they are sitting in silence. The pressure to say something or not say something is relieved. You can just be. The experience is different for each person but important to have. We also talked a bit about adapting silence to a group's energy level, including ways to make it movement-oriented, particularly for younger groups and maybe occasionally for older groups.

At the same time some of us felt that you can't structure silence. You can only structure the space that silence occurs in. So if it's about connecting with other people, then you want a space that is comfortable and cozy and close together where you can be as a group in the silence; and if it's about working on yourself, then you want a space that works for that.

The silence shapes us, but we also shape it.

**Chris's comments:** I expected that 3-way massage would be on that list and perhaps small group discussions and cabaret but this one surprised me most, both in it's naming and in the conversa-

tion around it. I was struck by the participants' recognition that the silence could be communal or individual. That they weren't speaking of silence as a goal but as a means. And when they spoke of the communal aspect, while they didn't use God language, they were sharing experiences of a covered meeting—a sense of connection and wholeness and being where they needed to be.

*Rebecca Anacheka-Nasemann is a junior in high school and has attended over 35 Powell House Youth Retreats since 2011. She co-authored this piece with Chris DeRoller.*



### Children's Peace Week

Anita Stanley  
Albany Meeting

Thirty-four children, along with nine staff members and an army of volunteers, attended Children's Peace Week in August of 2018. Albany Friends Meeting partnered with the local Unitarian-Universalist Church and RISSE (Refugees and Immigrant Support Services at Emmaus), to welcome young people from South America, Africa, and Asia. There were children participating from wheelchairs, as well as those with developmental differences, such as autism and attention deficit disorders. The youth enjoyed a variety of peace-related activities, from puppet shows about bullying, to a field trip to an organic farm (including mingling with peaceful animals), to learning to love the wonderful variety of children represented. We rededicated our Peace Pole with a deeply meaningful ceremony, and hosted family and friends for an end-of-the-week gathering featuring original poems about peace, exhibition of the children's art work, group singing, and creative skits.

Coverage of Peace Week was provided by two of our local television stations, as well as by the Albany Times Union newspaper and several radio interviews. Recent feedback from the community indicates that our camp raised the profile of Albany Friends Meeting, as well as increased awareness of the Quaker Peace Testimony. Some of our families expressed interest in our First Day School, and for many

people who may never have heard of Quakers before, we are now "on the map." Most of our talented and experienced staff indicated that they would like to be involved with Peace Week 2019, which now has a new working title: "Young Peacemakers Week." The planning committee is grateful to New York Yearly Meeting, the Outreach Working Group of NYYM, Albany Friends Meeting, the Nigel Wright Fund of the Unitarian-Universalist Church, and many individual donors, for financial support. Stay tuned for information about our 2019 event. If anyone is interested in participating or supporting Young Peacemakers Week, please contact Anita Stanley at meridiancomm@earthlink.net, or 518-441-7722.



### Solitary Housing Unit at the Columbia County Fair

Bob Elmendorf  
Old Chatham Meeting

From August 29 through September 3, members from four monthly meetings, with additional volunteers, staffed a booth exhibiting a replica of a solitary housing unit (SHU) at the Columbia County Fair for a total of 65 hours. 26 people participated. The replica was built by Doug Van Zandt, who has taken the replica all around NY State.

The exhibit was funded by a grant from NYYM's Outreach Initiatives Support Fund, an allocation from Old Chatham Monthly Meeting (OCMM)'s Bob Bacon Fund for Peace & Justice, and with support from OCMM's Special Projects Budget. Our meeting is very grateful for the financial support it received to present this exhibit.

Our goals were to advocate for passage in the NY State Senate of the Humane Alternatives to Long Term Incarceration (HALT) Act (passed by the NYS Assembly in June), to educate about the problem of mass incarceration in the United States, and to raise the profile of our meeting in the community.



A Children's Peace Week activity at Albany Friends Meeting, August 2018. Photo by Steve Andersen

We conducted training within our meeting about the HALT act and how to listen carefully to opposing views. We put up all the materials available at the fair on our website. We obtained 360 signatures for the HALT petition which we sent to Victor Pate at the Office of The Correctional Association of NY. Didi Barret, NYS Assembly member for District 106, stopped by, as did Tistrya Houghtling who is running for NYS Assembly District 107. They were both very supportive.

We kept a diary in the SHU which received many entries; some unsympathetic, but most expressing compassion and understanding. We were interviewed by Corrine Carey from radio station WOOC, who made six visits to our exhibit, taping fairgoers' reactions and talking with our volunteers. We distributed material on the HALT act and on mass incarceration, as well as brochures about our meeting and wallet-sized cards with our website and phone number. We displayed copies for sale of Ellen Condlief Lagemann's *Liberating Minds: The Case for College in Prison*, and discussed the book with several people. We had scores of lengthy conversations with prison guards, ex-prison guards, families with current or former prisoners, and the general public, some of them very emotionally moving. Several people remembered our exhibit from last year. It was an excellent outreach project for our meeting.

Challenges this year included soliciting volunteers for the shifts, enduring the heat at the fair, keeping the committee on schedule, and not having time to follow up with those who indicated they wanted additional information.

