



SPARK

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

Volume 49, Number 3

15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003

May 2019

Quaker Commonality

What Do All Quakers Have in Common?

United in The Light

Don Badgley
Poughkeepsie Meeting

As we consider what binds or divides Friends as a religious society, perhaps we should begin by identifying what is distinctive about “Quakerism.” The surface differences between our diverse practices are easy to identify. Does there remain a mutual distinguishing characteristic of Friends? Perhaps. This Friend hopes so and offers this for discernment.

George Fox and the other founders proposed that Christianity was in grave error regarding the human relationship with the Divine Source. Friends did not claim to be a new religion but merely a “society” within the body of Christ, one that pointed toward an alternative approach to God. That insight did not claim exclusivity but rather universal inclusivity.

Friends understood that when a religion or its followers claim that theirs is the one true path to salvation, or to God, and that others are in error, the seeds of war and suffering have been sown in fertile ground. One need only look to human history to confirm this sad truth. Consider these foundational beliefs of the three Abrahamic religions; “*Our prophet is the final prophet.*” “*No one comes to the father except through me.*” “*We are God’s chosen people.*”

continued on page 4

That Which Unites Quakers

Caroline Lane
Flushing Meeting

I first became a Quaker by joining Lincoln Monthly Meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Some of the founding members of the meeting had come to Lincoln from elsewhere and were keen for Lincoln Meeting to affiliate with a larger community of Friends. Fortunately, there were traveling Friends from Friends General Conference who supported us in that endeavor. Our nearest options were two yearly meetings in Iowa, one conservative and the other, Iowa Yearly Meeting, orthodox, a group of programmed meetings. One of our older members had grown up in the Iowa Conservative Yearly Meeting and urged us to attend some of their mid-year and yearly gatherings. There we found people deeply committed to Bible study and waiting worship. We were warmly welcomed at these meetings and soon agreed to apply to join them. What followed

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More Quaker Commonality 
pp. 4-5

News from NYYM Friends pp. 2-3



Looking southwest from Slim Point, Silver Bay, NY. July 2018.

Clerk’s Invitation to Summer Sessions 2019

We Friends are a driven people. We work hard to make the world a better place. A Quaker hero from our own 15th Street Meeting named Bayard Rustin, who organized the March on Washington where Martin Luther King Jr. shared his great dream, called us “angelic troublemakers.” Our positive influence on history has often been disproportionate to our numbers. We have been at the forefront of the abolition movement to free slaves, of the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, including voting suffrage, the prisoners’ and native American rights movements, the peace movement, the LGBTQ movement. Yet, we remember that we have also dropped the ball; we are anguished when we learn that there were Quaker slave holders for far too many years, that black Friends were originally relegated to the rear benches, and that vestiges of racism remain today. Nevertheless, we have the will to achieve greater understanding of the depth of racism that still engulfs our world, and how we can address it.

The Divine Spark that can be found in each of us has led us to work hard to make a better world, starting in our own lives, our own spiritual community.

Eleanor Roosevelt, a great American hero, said “*The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.*” There is great value in remembering to celebrate our good works and our loving time together. And remembering how beautiful our labor is that advances the beloved community for all people.

This year’s theme is “**Friends Come in All Ages, Sizes, and Colors: Our Path Toward Being Inclusive.**” A wonderful part of being inclusive at this year’s Summer Sessions is Pay as Led, welcoming everyone who wants to be among us. Please come to Summer Sessions 2019 and we can all celebrate together.

—Jeffrey Aaron, NYYM Clerk

More Summer Sessions pp. 6-8

Notices

New Members

Pamela Eckstut — Rockland
Gail Merian — Hamilton
Sigrid Mortensen — Poplar Ridge

Transfer

Brandy, Carter, & Miles Witthoft, to Syracuse from Alexandria (VA) Monthly Meeting.

Marriages

Katherine Shine and Louis Kelley, on April 6, 2019, under the care of Wilton Meeting.

Deaths

William Bortree, member of Scarsdale, on April 26, 2019. (Memorial Meeting: June 2, 3pm, at Scarsdale Meeting.)

Ty Dewhurst, member of Chatham-Summit, on April 16, 2019.

Mary Elizabeth Gulamerian, member of Rahway-Plainfield, on April 1, 2019.

Robert E. Newman, member of Syracuse, on March 18, 2019.

MEETING NEWS

Larry White Awarded

Larry White was awarded the International Gramsci prize for Theatre in Prison in Italy last December. Due to health restrictions, he was not able to travel to receive the award. Ron Jenkins went to Italy and received the plaque in Larry's name. On March 22, the American Friends Service Committee presented the plaque to Larry in their office. From the award program: "The International Gramsci Prize for Theatre in Prison was awarded to the 82-year-old African-American Larry White. He spent 32 years in a prison in the United States and wrote a survival manual for men and women condemned to life sentences. The manual, *Hope Lives for Lifers*, is based on the principles described by Paolo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which inspired Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Larry White is considered a hero by every US prisoner thanks to his commitment for a prison reform. He spent his time advocating for other people's freedom, and even though he is now a free man, he often goes back to prison to give inmates hope."

Around Our Yearly Meeting

Online Meeting for Worship with Buffalo Friends

7:30 p.m., May 22, June 12 & 26
All are invited to the Buffalo Friends Meeting Online Mid-Week Meeting for Worship, held the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month. The meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. with a welcome message from the Outreach Committee, followed by worship for about 30 minutes. Afterwards, there is time for check-in/follow-up amongst the participants. The meeting ends about 8:15 p.m. This virtual meeting is held using Zoom, a free video conferencing service.

Instructions for joining the meeting: From computer or smartphone for audio & video: Enter this link into your web browser: zoom.us/j/486346925

From telephone for audio only: Dial (669) 900-6833 or (646) 558-8656, then enter the Meeting ID: 486-346-925

Friends having technical difficulties connecting may call or text Matt at (716) 507-6562.

Bayard Rustin Honored

NYYM Administrative Associate Walter Naegle, the surviving partner of civil rights activist Bayard Rustin, attended two recent events at which places were renamed in Bayard Rustin's honor. On April 7, a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Anita May Rosenstein Campus of the Los Angeles LGBT Center was held. The campus includes a plaza named for Bayard Rustin (see photo). And on April 11, the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBTQ Community Center in Allentown, PA, hosted a street renaming dedication for Bayard Rustin Way.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Stoking the Fire: Stirring Up the Embers

June 7-10, 2019, at Quaker Hill Conference Center, Richmond, IN
Friends United Meeting invites you to an annual retreat for individuals who are "on fire" with the Holy Spirit and are seeking deeper faith and bolder witness. Music at Stoking the Fire will be led by Cathy Harris and Nikki Holland. Speakers will include Mary Glazer, Doug Gwyn, Bob Henry, Kelly Kellum, Richard Sitati, and Katie Ubry-Terrell. Registration Deadline is May 31. For more information, visit friendsunitedmeeting.org and click on Programs.



Walter Naegle at Bayard Rustin Courtyard dedication in Los Angeles, CA, April 7, 2019.

Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series:

Why Am I? An Exploration of Authenticity, Integrity, and Courage
A one-day mini retreat for young adults on June 8, 2019, at Farmington Friends Meeting, Farmington, NY. This workshop will be focused on finding and illuminating your heart's Truth. Together, we will explore our Faith journeys and make active connections between our inner and outer selves, considering the intersections and gaps between our Faith, our dreams, and our realities. Through worship, fellowship, learning sessions, and games, we will dig deep into the big questions of why we are here and what we are being called to do. Join us to explore these questions and what it means to live out our visions, callings, gifts, and ministry with authenticity, integrity, and courage. Register here: youngadultfriends.weebly.com
What do Young Adults Need?
A Residential Closing Celebration, July 20-21 (Before Summer Sessions—car pool/caravan to Silver Bay to follow) at Powell House, Old Chatham, NY

The grand finale! As we consider the year together and our experiences as Friends, join us to discuss what Young Adults need to be full participants in Quaker communities and what it will take to meet these needs. Help us draft an epistle that captures our experiences over the year that we can bring with us to Summer Sessions. Then join us in a joyful caravan to Summer Sessions at Silver Bay, NY! Attendance at Summer Sessions is not required but encouraged, especially because, for the first time, Summer Sessions is Pay as Led (see page 6). Register at youngadultfriends.weebly.com

POWELL HOUSE is for you!

Powell House is the conference and retreat center for NYYM and hosts adult, youth, and intergenerational programs. Some upcoming events:

Earthsong — for 7-12th graders
May 31–June 2, 2019

Join us for the year-end celebration of our community and of our going-out-into-the-world seniors. There will be workshops, festive foods, large group games, a dress-up dinner plus a fabulous cabaret.

Forgiveness as Spiritual Practice — with Sue Regen

June 14-16, 2019

Life brings to each of us, experiences of anger, fear, hurt, and pain. What we do with these is up to each individual. Choosing to practice forgiveness can bring healing and inner peace. Forgiveness work helps us reconnect with ourselves and others in more loving ways. Research shows that it's great for our physical health, too! Come, join with others who are willing to take some steps along this spiritual path. Focus is on tools and techniques, not on therapy.

Nonviolent Communication: A Spiritual Practice and Act of Social Change

June 21-23, 2019

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Facilitated by Dian Killian
During this weekend-long intensive training in compassionate Nonviolent Communication, we will learn practical skills to put Quaker principles into action: self-managing our own reactions, empathizing with others, and finding solutions that restore harmony, are in integrity with our values, and hold everyone's needs with care.

Creating Generous Congregations Aug. 16-18, 2019

Facilitated by Colin Saxton
This interactive and practical workshop is focused on inspiring and equipping meetings toward generosity and faithful, financial stewardship.

OPPORTUNITIES

Stevens Fund Applications Open

The Stevens Fund is a small fund held by NYYM Trustees in order to assist retired or disabled Friends who are in need; often, but not exclusively, pastors and ministers. The next list of distributions will be decided by the Ministry and Pastoral Care committee at Summer Sessions, July 21–27, 2019.

If Friends or meetings know someone who would benefit from the Stevens Fund, please encourage them to apply. Friends may note that the fund currently has more recipients than fund income permits, and we have had to receive assistance through an added budget line of Ministry Coordinating Committee. The Stevens Fund committee and Ministry & Pastoral Care Committee are currently discerning solutions to this budget gap. For now, contributions from individual Friends and meetings would be most welcome. Please send checks to NYYM with memo: Stevens Fund.

Those who would like to apply please request an application from David Herendeen, dherendeen55@yahoo.com, 518-836-7209; or Anita Paul, anitalouisepaul@gmail.com, 518-374-2166. Applications are due by July 1, 2019.

NYYM Meeting Houses & Properties Fund

The Trustees would like to remind all about the Meeting Houses and Properties Fund. From the New York Yearly Meeting Trust Fund Descriptions, August 2018 Version: "This fund was established in 2017 at the direction of the Trustees. The proceeds from the sale of the Plattekill Meeting House was depos-

ited in this fund. The income is directed to the Meeting Houses and Properties designated use fund. The income from the Brinkerhoff fund is also directed to (that) Fund." Per the Trustees minutes of May 23, 2017, "...the approved uses of that Fund are expanded to include maintenance, repair and new construction of meetinghouses and properties."

The Trustees will be reviewing all applications to this fund at the **end of May**, so please submit any requests prior to that time. Visit this webpage to find an application form: nyym.org/content/nyym-financial-resources-individuals-and-meetings#properties

Letter to New Zealand Friends

NYYM has directed the clerk and general secretary to act as the public voice for the yearly meeting when urgent and appropriate. The letter below was written and sent to Christchurch, New Zealand Friends after the mosque shootings there in March.

March 17, 2019

Michael Winter, Clerk
Christchurch Monthly Meeting
Christchurch, New Zealand

Dear Friends in New Zealand,

When any among us is injured or killed, we all suffer. And so we know that Friends in New Zealand are suffering now, and our hearts go out to you. Know that, just as when Friends from around the world prayed for us after the attacks of 9/11/2001 and at other times, our prayers and the prayers of Friends around the world are being offered for the healing of your nation and your people.

We send you our deepest condolences on the tragic incident of blind hatred in Christchurch. We pray for the full recovery of your community's injured and for the emotional recovery of those who lost friends and family, and for your entire community. We pray that the felt presence of the Divine Spirit, so palpable to so many Friends and others, can be found once again, knowing that the Ocean of Love can overcome the Ocean of Darkness.

We wish you peace and we send you our love.

Jeffrey Aaron, Steve Mohlke
Jeffrey Aaron, Clerk
Steve Mohlke, General Secretary
New York Yearly Meeting

Letter to the Editor

Submit letters of under 250 words to communication@nyym.org or mail them to the NYYM office.

Settling into my chair this morning, in preparation for an appointment later today, it occurred to me to reflect on this past weekend's Spring Session to glean what I had gained from the experience.

1. What is important versus what is interesting.
2. How listening to all of the voices at Meeting for Business can be a form of worship as we hear and speak to that of God in others.
3. How little we really listen to others sometimes.
4. How much we need others to listen to us.
5. Why listening to others cannot be deemed a cost but rather an investment.
6. Why the "why" behind an idea must come first and the "how" second. God will help with the how if we speak the why.
7. How easy it is to let others lead us astray.
8. How hard it is to pay attention to self, others, and Spirit.
9. How important it is to say no.
10. How good it is to be alive.

Be well and shine your light for others to see. — Roy Allen

Last Chance to Match! Commit to a Recurring Gift Before Summer Sessions



An enthusiastic supporter is offering a match to encourage us all to make sustaining contributions to New York Yearly Meeting. \$50,000 is available to match new and increased recurring gifts offered before Summer Sessions 2019. For your contribution to be eligible, all you have to do is indicate that your gift is recurring (monthly, yearly, etc.). Your gifts help support all of the work of NYYM, work that strengthens our communities and helps us continue to bring our Quaker faith to the world. Donate online by clicking the "Donate" button on nyym.org and selecting the General Fund. You can also donate by calling 212-673-5750.

Editor's Note

Welcome to the May issue of the printed NYYM newsletter, *Spark*. What do all Quakers have in common? What unites us? Articles in this issue examine the bedrock upon which our faith rests.

Summer Sessions is coming up soon! This is NYYM's annual, fabulous, week-long, multi-generational, Quaker *happening* at the beautiful Silver Bay on Lake George. Come and spend a spirit-led week with Friendly people. It's a rejuvenating, deepening, and inspiring experience. More information is on pages 6-8 and online at nyym.org. Register before May 15 if possible—if that date has passed, please register ASAP!

Spark will be evolving soon. Printed *Spark* will probably become shorter and less frequent to free up time for more immediate and responsive communications via email and the web. Details are to-be-discerned.

For now, the next issues of *Spark* are in September and November. If you like to write, you are invited to write an article for *Spark*. Articles are a form of verbal ministry. Please limit yourself to 400-600 words.

Upcoming *Spark* themes:

September: post-Summer Sessions/open theme

November: Light Behind the Walls. On prison worship. Guest edited by Jill McLellan and the Prisons Committee.

Send articles and meeting news to communications@nyym.org by the 1st week of the month prior to the month of publication.

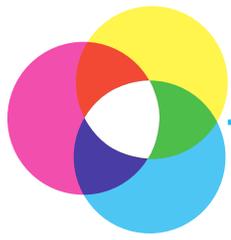
InfoShare, NYYM's e-newsletter, is now MONTHLY. Please send me **news and events** to share by emailing them to communications@nyym.org.

NYYM is on social media:

- **Facebook:** NewYorkYearlyMeeting
- **Twitter:** NYMYMTweets
- **Instagram:** newyorkyearlymeeting

Happy Spring! —Sarah Way

Join NYYM's mailing lists at **NYYM Connect!** www.tinyurl.com/nyymconnect



Quaker Commonality

United in The Light

Don Badgley

Poughkeepsie Meeting

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How often have “religious” peoples been willing to kill in support of their omnipotent and “loving” God? How many still believe that they must repudiate alternative pathways to fortify their own? This virulent disease arises by ordering one’s life in doctrinal beliefs, in creeds, hierarchies, and myths rather than in a personal relationship with the Inward Teacher.

We Friends know that there is an alternative, not easily found in mainstream religious traditions yet present in each, however obscured. Every genuine spiritual enlightenment arises in a human experience of an ineffable and life altering moment of transcendent awareness. These moments of insight have always had a profoundly positive impact on human consciousness and spiritual evolution.

When Jesus said, “the Kingdom of God is at hand” he was not speaking of an apocalyptic future event. He was pointing straight into a higher awareness, a present and immanent Divine Source of Love that was available to all. It was perfectly inclusive.

Fox discovered this Experience and named it the Spirit of Christ or Inward Teacher. John Woolman expressed it in saying, “*There is a principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places and ages hath had different names. It is, however, pure and*

proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no forms of religion nor excluded from any, where the heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whomsoever this takes root and grows, of what nation soever, they become brethren....”

Wisdom teachers have reported these moments of transcendent awareness for millennia and it is clear that these phenomena are not based in traditional myths or rigid creedal doctrines. They are based entirely in the direct living Experience of the Divine Light, a Light that unites all of humanity and life itself. Thus, Quakers recognize no authority except The Inward Light and this principle is the essential distinctive that underpins “Quakerism.” Absent this footing our testimonies and witnesses are rendered ineffectual. When this simple yet essential principle is restored as our foundational ministry, shared with all peoples we may encounter, Quakers will once again become a great people gathered.

We know experimentally that no priesthood is required, and that creeds and hierarchies may blind us to the Divine Source. This Experiential Faith does not teach us what to believe but rather, what to do and how to be. When we order our lives in The Light, our lives speak, without any need of extraneous, worldly or ritualized distractions. This Truth unites us, and in this Truth we welcome all into the meeting as equals. There we wait in stillness. There we expect to be led. There we trust one another as a body. There we test and then act upon what we discover in that holy place, united in the Light.

That Which Unites Quakers

Caroline Lane

Flushing Meeting

continued from page 1

was a visitation much like a clearness committee for someone applying for membership in our Quaker meeting. After we had been accepted, the meeting attended the next half-yearly meeting and one of the elderly conservatively dressed Quaker women welcomed us with home baked cookies for the children. Members of Lincoln Meeting were appointed to serve on various committees and have remained active participants.

When we moved to New York, we first settled near Croton Valley Meeting. I began attending regularly and soon applied to transfer my membership. New York Yearly Meeting at that time was already a combined meeting of Orthodox and Friends General Conference. So even as I became more active, I was aware of the controversies that split the Quakers during the 19th Century, and the 20th Century actions to re-unite the two branches. I also became aware that there were Quaker meetings that were more evangelical and had sent missionaries to Africa and South America. Friends World Committee for Consultation was bringing all such meetings together to find that which united us instead of that which separated us.

In 1989, I took early retirement from teaching and my husband and I moved to Wales where we had owned a small cottage as a holiday house for nearly 20 years. The market town for the rural area where we lived was Oswestry and Oswestry Quaker Meeting had about twenty active members. We were greeted warmly and soon became actively engaged in the life of the meeting. I took the opportunity to attend a weekend peace conference at Woodbrooke, the Quaker Study Center in Birmingham. During the course of that conference, I was stunned when an idea was proposed to establish a committee for some purpose (I forget what) and the response was a horrified “not a committee!” Suddenly I began to wonder if there

was a special Quaker example of the famous quote “America and Britain are two countries divided by the same language.” I never actually found an answer to why the reaction had been so horrified. What I did experience was serving on local committees for children’s programming, quarterly meeting committees for revising practices for membership, and a yearly meeting committee to promote the Alternatives to Violence Project in which I had long been a Facilitator. Predictably, the committees were both prayerful and diligent in performing the service required of them. Now looking back, I wonder if the fear was that by establishing a committee, people might be complacent that the work would be done by the committee and Quakers on the benches need do nothing.

Some of our Friends in Oswestry were active in the establishment of the Quaker Bolivia Link bringing together Friends who were used to silent waiting worship and those who had been established by the more evangelical branches. Still, there was more to unite than to separate.

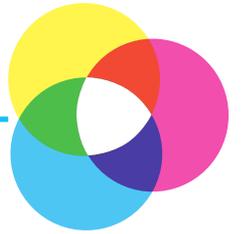
My husband and I took the opportunity of traveling on the Continent and we made it a practice to attend Quaker meetings in the places we visited. My husband was bilingual in German and I had studied enough that I could converse. Wherever we worshipped we found the same expectant waiting worship, closed by handshakes and discussions and/or conversations that centered on concerns of peace, equality, and bringing help to those who were needy.

After some twenty years in Wales, we returned to the US to be nearer to family. We transferred our membership to Flushing Monthly Meeting. Again, I find satisfaction in serving on local, quarterly, and yearly meeting committees. We do work on behalf of Friends and hope that others in the Meeting support our work as actively as they are able. As Quakers everywhere, we know that we are all called to minister in our own way and that ministry takes many forms. In working together in the Spirit, we find that there is far more to unite us than that which may separate us.



Caption and photo by Emily Provance

Ramallah Friends Meeting draws visitors from all over the world. On an ordinary Sunday, there might be 20 or 30 Friends in the room, plus an assortment of those of other faith traditions who have come to meeting for a sense of peace and grounding. There are always introductions at rise of meeting, and it’s generally the case that at least three continents are represented. Ramallah Friends Meeting has a specially made hymnbook available at every seat, and it’s common for someone to ask for a particular hymn to be sung during worship, and everyone joins in. There’s also a Bible available on every bench, a single book containing the text in both Arabic and English.



What DO We Have in Common?

Sarah Way
Brooklyn Meeting

Quakerism has a long history of internal disagreements leading to splits and separations. Recently North American yearly meetings have been broken apart by disagreements over same-gender marriage, with Wilmington Yearly Meeting experiencing a schism just last year. The issue is part of a wider disagreement on biblical interpretation and the role of the Bible as an authority. The beliefs of meetings, which are communities of Friends experiencing “continuing revelation,” evolve over time, sometimes in ways that are different from other meetings in their area. Meetings have chosen to separate because they could not tolerate belonging to a group — a yearly or quarterly meeting — whose beliefs are counter to their own.

There is no central authority, no Quaker Pope, to tell us what we have to do to qualify as “Quaker.” A meeting doesn’t lose its Quaker status over its belief in gay marriage or the primacy of Scripture. If that’s true, what is it that we do have in common? The most fundamental Quaker belief, to me, is that there is that of God — a divine spark, an inner Light — in everyone. This belief leads directly to the Quaker testimonies of equality and non-violence. Surely Quakers can agree on the principle of equality, if nothing else. I sampled the online *Faith and Practices* of a diverse group of yearly meetings to find out.

In the **Witness** section of our NYYM’s *Faith and Practice*, under **Equality**, it says, “The Holy Spirit, which we all share, makes us equal.” Under **Nonviolence and Reconciliation**: “Nonviolence is a way of living every day, every hour, in our personal choices as well as mass struggles for justice. Through it, we affirm the divine Light in every human being and act on the belief that truth and love can overcome ignorance and hate.”

In the **Spiritual Maturity** section of Friends United Meeting in East Africa’s *Christian Faith and Practice* (2002), the practice of non-violence results from following Christ’s teachings. Under

The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious, and devout **souls** are everywhere of **one religion**; and when death has taken off the mask **they will know one another** though the divers liveries they wear here makes them strangers. This world is a form; **our bodies are form**; and no visible act of devotion can be without forms. But the less form in religion, the better, since **God is a spirit**....

—William Penn, *Some Fruits of Solitude*, 1693

Peace and Nonviolence: “When the standards of society tell us to hate our enemies, we follow Jesus’ command to love them. When the standards of society seek violence, we seek non-violent resolution to conflict.” Under **Equality**, in the same section: “Friends believe that all people are made in God’s image and are equal in God’s sight.”

From the *Faith and Practice* of the Orthodox, Christ-centered Western Yearly Meeting, in Indiana and Illinois, under **Concerns for Equality**, comes this aspirational idea: “(Friends’) conception of a Light Within as an endowment of persons makes it impossible for Friends to draw lines of distinction in capacity or privilege between different races or nations. George Fox, in an epistle to Friends in America, wrote, “Let your light shine among the Indians, the blacks and the whites, that ye may answer the truth in them, and bring them to the standard and ensign that God hath set up, Christ Jesus.”

Northwest Yearly Meeting is a community of Christ-centered,

evangelical Friends churches. From *Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends Church’s Faith and Practice*, 2016: “**Vision, Mission, and Values**: All life has its origin in the creative work of God, and human life is to be regarded as a sacred gift from God. Because all persons have equal value and are created in the image of God, we must treat others with respect and dignity, regardless of human measures of merit or value.”

It was more difficult to find common ground in the *Faith and Practice* of the Eastern Region of the Evangelical Friends Church. Their *Faith and Practice* does have a section on equality, though it does not include the belief that every person has a divine Light within them. Under the heading **Equality of Persons**: “Evangelical Friends believe that all people are equal in the sight of God and all are loved by God. All believers, regardless of their race, nationality, sex, social status, or affluence, are encouraged to worship and participate in the life of Evangelical Friends Churches (Genesis 1:27; I Corinthians 12:21-

26; Galatians 3:26-29).”

It looks like a belief in spiritual equality is something all Friends can agree on. I’ll close with this passage quoted in Britain Yearly Meeting’s *Faith and Practice*, under **Unity and Diversity: Friends and Other Faiths**. It suggests there is room in Quakerism for all of us:

“Universalism is by definition inclusivistic, and its adherents accept the right to free expression of all points of view, Christocentric or any other.... From the beginning the Quaker Christian faith has had a universal dimension. George Fox saw the Light ‘shine through all’ and he identified it with the divine Light of Christ that ‘enlightens every man that comes into the world’ (John 1:9). He pointed out, as did William Penn in greater detail, that individuals who had lived before the Christian era or outside Christendom and had no knowledge of the Bible story, had responded to a divine principle within them. In these terms, all Quaker Christians are universalists. Obedience to the Light within, however that may be described, is the real test of faithful living.”

—Alastair Heron, *Ralph Hetherington, and Joseph Pickvance*, 1994

Sources:

Christian Faith and Practice in the Friends Church: Friends United Meeting in East Africa, 2002, at www.quakerinfo.com/eastafricafandp.pdf

Faith and Practice of Western Yearly Meeting of Friends Church, 2005, at www.westernyearlymeeting.org

Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends Church’s *Faith and Practice*, 2016, at nwfriends.org/faith-practice

Evangelical Friends Church, Eastern Region: *Faith and Practice*, 2018, at www.efcer.org/829

Britain Yearly Meeting’s *Faith and Practice*, 2015, at qfp.quaker.org.uk

See also:

Fager, Chuck. “The Separation Generation.” *Quaker Theology*. Winter 2019. quakertheology.org

Huffenberger, Gary. “Several Churches Leave Wilmington Yearly Meeting Over Same-Sex Marriage.” *Wilmington News Journal*. July 31, 2018. www.wnewsj.com



In this photo, Oscar Mmbali of Kenya describes to Friends from New York Yearly Meeting the work he and other Friends are doing in Belize City. Oscar felt called to go to Belize many years before he actually went, and in the time between, he prepared himself by attending Friends Theological College and later getting a PhD in community development in Thailand. One of the questions in Belize has been, “What does Quaker worship look like in Belize?” In the end, it springs from who the people are in attendance, and it involves lots of teenage boys, music, Scripture, silence, and service to the neighborhood community.

Caption and photo by Emily Provance



STEPS TO SUMMER SESSIONS

- Decide if you will attend for the full week (July 21–27) or for fewer days.
- Determine who you will be rooming with, if possible.
- Choose your housing preferences. The table of room rates is available at nyym.org/content/summer-sessions-2019-lodging-rates. You can also camp or stay off-campus; visit nyym.org/session/summer-sessions-2019#roominfo
- Read the Participant Expectations and Agreements on the nyym.org/sessions-committee page. By registering, you indicate your agreement with them.
- Register online at www.nyym.org/summer-sessions-registration. If you need assistance, email office@nyym.org and provide your phone number and times someone can assist you. If you don't have email, please mail in the form on the back page.

AFTER YOU REGISTER

- You will receive a confirmation email, followed by an email with **Pay as Led** suggestions and a link to the online payment page. If you plan on receiving financial aid from your local or regional meeting you should request that now.

Parents of children under 18

- When registering, please note that children **must** room with parents/sponsors if possible, or in adjoining rooms if not.
- *Parents of children ages 3-18:* Your children will be part of the **Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM)** morning program, grouped by grade. JYM provides age-appropriate Quaker content in a community-building week of games, discussions, art projects, and more.
- *Parents of children under age 3:* Silver Bay offers **childcare** on Mon.–Fri. mornings. If you might use this, we will send you the NYYM–Silver Bay camp form.
- *Parents of children 10 and under:* JYM provides **afternoon and evening (PM) childcare** for children up to 10 years old, available during plenaries or committee meetings. Parents who use this service are asked to volunteer to support it.
- **Your child can go to Silver Bay without a parent** if they attend with a designated adult chaperone who is at least 10 years older than the child. See registration form.

AFTER REGISTRATION Parents will receive a follow-up email with any additional forms they may have to fill out, and will later receive information from their child's JYM group. At Silver Bay, register your child at JYM after you check in on Sunday; 4-6 p.m. and 8-9 p.m. in the Inn's Gullen Lounge.

For complete information and registration, visit nyym.org/session/summer-sessions-2019

NYYM SUMMER SESSIONS

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

Summer Sessions is the largest gathering of New York Yearly Meeting Friends each year. Meet, worship, discern, play, relax, and create a community with hundreds of people who share your Quaker values. New people are especially invited to attend this year, as we're using the Pay as Led method to pay for Sessions. Friends who can pay more will pay more so that people who have to pay less can pay less. Pay as Led is part of our path toward becoming more inclusive.

May 15 is an important registration date. If you register after May 15, the lower Pay as Led rates and your preferred room assignment may not be available. Please register ASAP. Our goal is to enable everyone who wants to attend to be able to attend. The community is better when you're part of it!

First Time Attenders

Sessions Committee has added a special opportunity for First Time Attenders to get all their questions answered and start the week off well informed. Come to the Auditorium at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday for orientation! Even if you've attended Summer Sessions many times, join us! Share your wisdom and perhaps learn something new.

Young Adult Friends

Friends who are young adults (ages 18-35ish), or Friends led to be in spiritual community with young adults, are invited to participate in community building and spiritual exploration activities throughout the week, including worship sharing, meet-ups, customized programs, and shared meals. For those interested, we will also help coordinate group attendance at business sessions and provide opportunities for one-on-one Spiritual Nurture. Look for details on our program to arrive in your email inbox in early July.

Friends are invited to a special celebration at Powell House immediately preceding Summer Sessions (July 20) focused on the query: What do young adults need? The event will culminate with a joyful caravan to Silver Bay on July 21.

For Seasoned Friends

Are you a NYYM committee clerk? If you'd like to meet during Summer Sessions, email office@nyym.org to reserve a space.

Do you have an agenda item? If you'd like to add an item to the business agenda, please contact the appropriate coordinating committee clerk. office@nyym.org can help.

Would you like some display space? If you'd like to put up a display for your organization, contact Martha Gurvich, margurvl@aol.com



Meeting for Discernment On the Meaning of Membership

Join us on Tuesday at Summer Sessions for Meeting for Discernment. As envisioned from their beginnings, Meetings for Discernment provide the space and the time to enter into deep listening and sharing. At this summer's Meeting for Discernment we will take extended time with each other to consider **what membership means** in our lives and meetings. Does your meeting have diverse views about the meaning of membership in the Religious Society of Friends? Perhaps your meeting has active attenders who haven't (or won't) become members. Perhaps your meeting has members who never participate. Are there non-members serving in roles that were historically reserved for members?

The manner in which Quakers handle membership hasn't changed much in generations. New York Yearly Meeting is considering a change that would allow individuals to become direct members of New York Yearly Meeting instead of requiring that membership be maintained exclusively by monthly meetings. This is important to people who feel like they are Quakers but haven't been able to connect with a monthly meeting, perhaps due to geography, culture, incarceration, etc. However, there are aspects of our Quaker practice that have been historically rooted in the monthly meeting. At Spring Sessions, we heard a report from the Alternative Membership Pathways Working Group and we heard a proposed revision to *Faith and Practice* that would provide the specific mechanism for such membership. We heard ministry that expressed unease and ministry that expressed enthusiasm.

Please come to the Summer 2019 Meeting for Discernment on Tuesday, July 23, at Silver Bay YMCA. Participants will be able to really

listen to each other on the topic of membership. Friends believe that when we gather together in waiting worship, the Spirit moves powerfully among us. Come be together to feel that power.

— Elaine Learnard and Caroline Lane, co-clerks of the Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee





Chris DeRoller and Mike Clark are this year's **plenary speakers**. Together, they wrote a shared history of their experiences together—including some thoughts on the theme of this year's Sessions.

Our Route to Powell House

Chris DeRoller and Mike Clark
Powell House Youth Directors

Our preparation for Powell House was, in hindsight, both linear and circuitous. It began 1000 miles apart when we had not yet met. Chris, the oldest of five in a liberal Rochester, NY, middle class Catholic family, and Mike, the second of five in a liberal Columbia, MO, middle class family with Universalist leanings and Southern Baptist roots.



For a brief period in our college years we were a mere 500 miles from one another while Mike was getting his degree in biology from Northeast Missouri State and Chris studied geology at Earlham College. Chris was thrilled to encounter Quakers at Earlham. While sitting in silence sorely tested her in the beginning, she loved the messages that arose from the gathered body and the intentionality with which many professors and students lived. She was hooked.

It was in Guatemala, living only 100 miles from each other that our paths crossed. Both of us were working with the Peace Corps fisheries program, Mike as a trainer and Chris as a volunteer. On our first date Mike suggested that we get dessert first since he wasn't sure how late the chocolate store would stay open. Chris was hooked, again.

A stint in Ithaca found Mike waking in the wee hours of the morning to feed baby tree swallows as part of a research team while Chris finished a degree in agronomy. We participated periodically in Ithaca Monthly Meeting although more of our time was spent volunteering at the Greenstar co-op and hiking the trails in the surrounding countryside.

We spent several months in South Carolina training farmers from Ecuador and El Salvador in fish culture. Then Chris landed a full time job working as a hydrogeologist in North Carolina. Mike became a stay at home dad with the arrival of Kayla. We were active attenders at the Davidson Worship Group, frequently working with the kids program. This is where Mike began to identify as a Quaker, drawn to the process and practices as he learned more about them and was hooked by the sense of Spirit-filled community.

Finally, it was Chris's turn to be the stay at home parent and we moved to Wauchula, Florida, where Mike got a job working with Head Start. In Florida, our Quaker connections deepened and spread as our family grew with the addition of Erin, our second daughter, and

Lisa, our first dog. We were active in Lake Wales Worship Group, a tiny quirky wonderful collection of people who met under a tree. We became members of St. Petersburg Friends Meeting. Both Lake Wales and St. Petersburg were distant from us, so Sundays became days of travel, worship and play. We would often have a picnic lunch and then explore the natural areas with other families from the worship group. When we visited St. Petersburg Meeting a trip to the beach afterwards was a given.

We also very much enjoyed Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM) gatherings, often at the insistence of Kayla who wanted to be around other Quaker kids. SEYM held a half yearly meeting at Wekiva Springs State Park over Thanksgiving, no business just fellowship. Their annual session was held over the Easter week at a Methodist conference center.

There was a campground attached to the conference facilities and a number of families with young children camped and ate together. Mornings found us beneath the Spanish moss having meeting for worship with a concern for coffee and afternoons on ground tarps holding meeting for worship with a concern for naps.

Florida was also where we realized our affinity for working with youth: Mike through his day-to-day work; Chris as the neighborhood mom, home schooler science field trip coordinator, public school classroom volunteer, and member of the Friends of the Library. We also ran programs for the youth at the SEYM gatherings and took turns leading first day school at Lake Wales Worship Group.

Wauchula was a small, rural yet diverse town where Catholic mass was said in English, Creole, and Spanish. Rich and poor neighborhoods were intermixed. Creationists outnumbered evolutionists. It was a Democratic town that voted overwhelmingly Republican in each election when we were there. We were the only Quaker family and a bit of an oddity in many ways. Yet we were embraced by a number of the different communities that made up Wauchula. Like our time in Guatemala, it was an opportunity to open ourselves to cultures and people different than those we had grown up with.

These experiences have proved invaluable in laying the foundation for our work in the Powell House youth program for the last two decades. In collaboration with the youth participants we continually strive to create a space that is inclusive and whole. Over the years our understanding of what that means has both broadened and deepened. When we began our work here we had a lot of experience living and working with people of different ages, economic and ethnic backgrounds, and perspectives on faith and politics. Non-binary gender identity was not on our radar. We had not heard the term "white privilege." We did not actively consider the First Nations' connection to the land we now live on.

As our definition of inclusion has expanded, our vision of Quakerism has become more clearly focused. We experience it as a practice of presence and transformative love. We see the youth program as imbued with that. It is playful and serious. It is open and inclusive but does not tolerate bullying or apathy. It accepts us where we are yet challenges each of us to stretch and grow. It is strong enough and loving enough to reject fear and embrace what is real. We believe it is possible to create these nurturing spaces in our monthly meetings, other Quaker bodies and beyond. We have some ideas for how to do that. 

NEWLY ANNOUNCED! Bible Study Leader Lucy Price



Lucy Price was born and raised in New York City, the daughter of an interracial marriage — a marriage that was illegal in most states at the time. Lucy's parents had no use for organized religion, but they held beliefs similar to those held by Quakers; for

example, the family attended anti-war demonstrations together. Lucy now describes herself as "strongly but not narrowly Christian." She first encountered Friends in the Pacific Northwest almost 30 years ago, and was recorded as a minister by Midwest Friends. Lucy studied Quaker history under the late John Punshon at Earlham School of Religion. She has an MA in theological studies, with a concentration in biblical languages and literature (New Testament), from George Fox Evangelical Seminary. Since 2017, Lucy has been the pastor at Adirondacks Meeting. She loves the Adirondacks, and enjoys reading, gardening, cooking, listening to classical music, and playing with her dogs and cats.

Lucy believes that "the Bible is a collection of histories, poetry, songs, pithy sayings, and individual accounts of personal spiritual experiences. Understanding the cultural context of these writings helps us to appreciate their meanings."

Bible Study takes place at 6:45-7:30 p.m., Monday-Thursday, at Summer Sessions. 





Volunteer Opportunities

You can help increase accessibility and enrich our community during Summer Sessions in the following ways:

- **Help lead a Junior Yearly Meeting group or be a resource person** to share your gifts and stories with JYM groups
- **Drive a golf cart** to help Friends get around the hilly campus
- **Volunteer in the Healing Center** if you are skilled in the healing arts
- **Carry a microphone** so Friends can hear each other in meetings for business and worship
- **Facilitate a 12-Step meeting** Email Roseann Press at rpress123@gmail.com.
- **Lead an interest group** to share your gifts and expertise with interested Friends

Please email your interest to office@nyym.org and your email will be forwarded to the appropriate person. Thank you!

Worship Sharing Leaders Needed

David Herendeen, Roger Dreisbach-Williams, and Robert Kazmayer (Sunfire) are helping the Committee on Worship at Yearly Meeting by organizing this summer's worship sharing at Silver Bay. They are looking for Friends willing to facilitate the worship sharing sessions that we

have every morning. Please consider whether you are led to be one of the facilitators. We need them for both the general groups and special interest groups. If you are led to step into this role, either by facilitating a group alone or with a co-facilitator, please send an email to nyymworshipshare@earthlink.net. Suggested guidelines and queries will be provided for the sessions.

TRAVEL

The address for Silver Bay YMCA is **87 Silver Bay Rd., Silver Bay, NY 12874**
 Driving times: approximately 90 minutes north of Albany; 4-5 hours north of New York City; 6-7 hours north east of Buffalo. See nyym.org/session/summer-sessions-2019 for carpooling information and public transit options.

REGISTRATION

This year, registration is entirely online at www.nyym.org/summer-sessions-registration. If you are unable to register online, please ask for assistance. Email office@nyym.org or call 212-673-5750 and provide your phone number and times you can be called. If you don't have email, please mail us the form below. We have volunteers ready to provide online registration assistance.

After we receive your registration and place you in a room, we will send you your **Pay as Led** rate suggestions. Lower rates may not be available for registrations received after May 15.

Payments can then be made online or can mailed to the NYYM office. Please submit payments by June 15.

If you cannot register online, mail this form to NYYM, 15 Rutherford Pl., NY, NY 10003

PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____ Meeting: _____

Day phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Best time for someone to call and help you register (days of the week, times of day): _____

2019 NYYM Summer Sessions Week-at-a-Glance								
Friends Come in All Ages, Sizes, and Colors: Our Path Toward Being Inclusive								
SUNDAY, JULY 21	TIME	MONDAY, JULY 22	TUESDAY, JULY 23	WEDNESDAY, JULY 24	THURSDAY, JULY 25	FRIDAY, JULY 26	SATURDAY, JULY 27	
		<i>Early Morning Swim / Coffee, Communion & Conversation</i>						
		<i>JYM Volunteers Meet / Early Worship at the Boathouse / Hymn Singing at Hughes Chapel</i>						
Safe Travels to Summer Sessions!	6AM-6AM							
	7AM-7AM							
	7:30-7:45							
	7:45-8:00							
	8:00-8:15	Breakfast, 7:30-8:30am	Breakfast, 7:30-8:30am	Breakfast, 7:30-8:30am	Breakfast, 7:30-8:30am	Breakfast, 7:30-8:30am	Breakfast, 7:30-8:30am	Breakfast, 7:30-8:30am
	8:15-8:30							
	8:30-8:45	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	
	8:45-9:00	Community Worship 8:45-9:15am	Community Worship 8:45-9:15am	Community Worship 8:45-9:15am	Community Worship 8:45-9:15am	Community Worship 8:45-9:15am	Community Worship 8:45-9:15am	Clean Up & Pack Up 8:30-9:30am
	9:00-9:15							
	9:15-9:30	<i>JYM Program Begins / travel time</i>						
	9:30-9:45							
	9:45-10:00	Worship Sharing 9:30-10:30am	Worship Sharing 9:30-10:30am	Worship Sharing 9:30-10:30am	Worship Sharing 9:30-10:30am	Worship Sharing 9:30-10:30am	Worship Sharing 9:30-10:30am	Closing Worship 9:30-11:00am
	10:00-10:15	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	
	10:15-10:30							
	10:30-10:45							
10:45-11:00								
11:00-11:15	Meeting for Business 10:45am - 12:15pm	Meeting for Discernment 10:45am - 12:15pm	Meeting for Business 10:45am - 12:15pm	Meeting for Business 10:45am - 12:15pm	Meeting for Business 10:45am - 12:15pm	Meeting for Business 10:45am - 12:15pm		
11:15-11:30								
11:30-11:45								
11:45-12:00	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>		
12:00-12:15								
12:15-12:30								
12:30-12:45								
12:45-1:00								
1:00-1:15	Lunch, 12:30-1:30pm	Lunch, 12:30-1:30pm	Lunch, 12:30-1:30pm	Lunch, 12:30-1:30pm	Lunch, 12:30-1:30pm	Lunch, 12:30-1:30pm		
1:15-1:30								
1:30-1:45								
1:45-2:00	Rest & Relaxation Afternoon Worship 1:30-2:30pm	Rest & Relaxation Afternoon Worship 1:30-2:30pm	Fun(d) Fair & Tagless Tag Sale & Quaker Crafts & R&R! 1:30 - 3:00pm	Rest & Relaxation Afternoon Worship 1:30-2:30pm	Rest & Relaxation Afternoon Worship 1:30-2:30pm	Rest & Relaxation Afternoon Worship 1:30-2:30pm		
2:00-2:15								
2:15-2:30	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>		<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>		
2:30-2:45								
2:45-3:00								
3:00-3:15	Committee Meetings 2:45 - 5:15pm	Meeting for Discernment 2:45 - 5:15pm	Coordinating Committees 3:00 - 5:15pm	Meeting for Business 2:45 - 5:15pm	Committee Meetings 2:45 - 4:00pm	Committee Meetings 2:45 - 4:00pm		
3:15-3:30								
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5:00-5:15								
5:15-5:30	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>		
5:30-5:45								
5:45-6:00								
6:00-6:15	Dinner, 5:30-6:30pm	Dinner, 5:30-6:30pm	Dinner, 5:30-6:30pm	Dinner, 5:30-6:30pm	Dinner, 5:30-6:30pm	Dinner, 5:30-6:30pm		
6:15-6:30	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>		
6:30-6:45								
6:45-7:00								
7:00-7:15	Bible Study, 6:45-7:30pm	Bible Study, 6:45-7:30pm	Bible Study, 6:45-7:30pm	Bible Study, 6:45-7:30pm	Bible Study, 6:45-7:30pm	Bible Study, 6:45-7:30pm		
7:15-7:30	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>	<i>travel time</i>		
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10:15-10:30								
10:30-10:45								
10:45-11:00								
11PM = QUIET TIME								

Safe Travels Home!