



Newsletter of the

Ithaca Monthly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

November 2015

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Listserv:

To join our email list for solely for meeting-related announcements, send an email message addressed to:

IMMRSF-L-request@cornell.edu
with message body as simply: join

Marilyn's List:

To email Friends and others non-specifically Quaker messages that may be of interest to Friends, consider sending your message through Marilyn Ray. To join or contribute, email:
mlr17@cornell.edu

Laudato si' ("Praise be to you"): On Care for Our Common Home

A Discussion of the Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis

"...the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise." Earth is our common home, whose complexity and ability to support life as we know it are threatened by human actions and disregard. We are faced with social and environmental crises. "Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society."

The first discussion question in the Encyclical published by Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division (available at Buffalo Street Books and at Home Green Home) lists themes that unify the letter. These are:

- the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet;
- the conviction that everything in the world is connected;
- the critique of new forms of power derived from technology;
- the call to seek other ways of understanding the economy and progress;
- the "value proper to each creature" and the human meaning of ecology;
- the need for forthright and honest debate;
- the serious responsibility of international and local policy; and
- the throwaway culture and the proposal of a new life-style.

Much here may both inform and be supported by the Quaker testimonies. How might the Encyclical help us to better understand our testimonies? Do our testimonies diverge from the Pope's messages in some ways? Is there an "elephant in the room?"

The EarthCare Committee will lead a discussion to explore these questions in a session to be held at 9:00 a.m. on November 22 in the upstairs meeting room. Help to decide whether we want to continue this discussion in a study group.

We will not supply copies of the Encyclical, but it is available at local bookstores for about \$13, and is downloadable online.

— Pat Pingel, on behalf of the EarthCare Committee

The Pope and Aldo Leopold and a Quaker Statement

Aldo Leopold was a forester, philosopher, and an advocate of wilderness preservation. He wrote "The Sand County Almanac" which was published in 1949, shortly after his death. One of his most famous concepts - embraced again in the 60's - is his land ethic:

"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

In *Laudato si'*, the Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis subtitled "On care for our common home," there is something which - to me - seems to echo this thought. He writes that

The Pape and Aldo Leopold, cont. on page 2

The Pope and Aldo Leopold, cont. from page 1

we cannot “legitimize our present model of distribution ... where a minority believes that it has the right to consume in a way which can never be universalized, since the planet could not even contain the waste products of such consumption” (nor have the resources to produce it).

The Pope’s “land ethic” - to me - moves in some important ways from the simple (or not so simple) choice of “doing unto others as we would do unto ourselves” to another dimension. It is saying we have no choice, the land will not allow us. We cannot be greedy, we have to consider beyond ourselves. We have no choice. We have hit the limits. To do what is right we must “preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”

The Quaker United Nations office and Earthcare Witness and FCNL have put together a statement (see in October’s Newsletter) that the November Meeting for Business will consider. Among other things, it contains the following statement:

“We recognize the connections between climate change and global economic injustice as well as unprecedented levels of consumption, and question assumptions of unlimited material growth on a planet with limited resources.”

It ends with “We see this Earth as a stunning gift that supports life. It is our only home. Let us care for it together.”

— *Betsy Keokosky*

Considering Offsets for Greenhouse Gases We Have Not Eliminated

You may have heard about Sustainable Tompkins’s “Seal the Cracks” outreach campaign during October to promote their regional carbon offset fund. The Finger Lakes Climate Fund helps modest-income households reduce their energy bills while providing local jobs. These grants fund insulation, air sealing, energy efficient heating equipment, and other upgrades that reduce energy use and thus lower greenhouse gas emissions.

While the October campaign ended, the Climate Fund is an ongoing program that IMM’s Earthcare Committee is holding up as an important option during our accelerating transition away from fossil fuels. To offset your own carbon emissions (natural gas or propane for hot water, heat and/or cooking, fuel for car or plane trips), visit fingerlakesclimatefund.org

Purchasing Offsets has never been so easy—or so effective.

Three easy steps (and you only do the first two; your donation does the rest!):

1. Calculate your emissions: Use The Finger Lakes Climate Fund’s cal-

culator to estimate your emissions from home energy use and from vehicle and airplane travel. Or use their “quick offset” link to make payments based on average emissions.

2. Purchase Carbon Offsets: The calculator links to their secure website for online payments. Or you can mail a check (payable to Social Ventures) to Sustainable Tompkins, 309 N. Aurora St., Ithaca, NY 14850. Carbon offsets are deductible through Social Ventures’ 501(c)3 status. Please write Sustainable Tompkins Climate Fund in the memo line.
3. Your offsets help people locally while reducing climate disruption globally: Your donations help community members with limited incomes make their homes more energy efficient while creating local jobs.

As an example, it only cost me \$4.10 to offset my trip to NYYM’s summer sessions on Lake George this past summer.

— *Margaret McCasland*

Compost is Great But Sadly Does Not Take Itself Out

IMM offers the opportunity to people using the building to compost their food waste. We make two plastic tubs on the counter available for emptying scraps during cleanup and two (though we will likely be moving to one) tumbler outdoors for composting. In order for this system to work, the food emptied into the counter receptacle needs to make its way to the outdoor tumbler.

Much as we’ve hoped they would, the bins have not walked themselves to the tumblers. Third Street Meetinghouse Committee (TSMC) is asking everyone to keep an eye on the food waste tubs and to escort them to the outdoor tumblers regularly. In the winter, the hatches in the tumblers can be hard to open, but usually they can be coerced with enough oomph. Please contact anyone on TSMC with questions or concerns.

— *Third Street Meetinghouse Committee*

Mentoring Changes Lives

Do you want to make a difference? Be a mentor! It is a volunteer opportunity that will change you life.

- Be a 1-on-1 Mentor with a middle school student needing support; students are waiting!
- Join a team committed to change
- Receive in-depth mentorship training & on-going support
- Meet with your Student 3:25 to 4:40 two times per week
- Commit for at least one year
- A college degree is not needed

The Mentor-Student Program of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County 4-H. For more information contact Susie Kossack, mskossack@yahoo.com; 607-277-1236.

— *Susan Wolf*

Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP)

The team of facilitators that brings AVP to Elmira Correctional Facility will be holding our last workshop of the year the weekend of December 4th-6th. In 2015 we trained 14 new inside facilitators, which has helped make our facilitator team strong. This year, for the first time, the men at Elmira were invited to contribute to the AVP/NY newsletter. Many of the men wrote articles and are eagerly waiting for this issue to come to print. The men were so inspired and thrilled to be able to do this.

We would welcome anyone who would like to join our AVP workshops. You can take the workshops with us in the prison, and prison workshops are truly inspiring. If you are interested, you will need to be processed by the prison and receive a prison volunteer ID. Contact Kathleen Gale, Gina Varrichio or Susan Wolf if you would like to join us.

November in IMM History

A look back at our history through the minutes of our monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

5 Years Ago (November 14, 2010)

Lynn and Anneliese Truame were welcomed into membership of IMM.

10 Years Ago (November 13, 2005)

The Design Committee for a new meetinghouse on land formerly owned by IMM adjacent to Route 79 East presented five alternative plans for a new building on the site. Meanwhile, it was announced that the old Waldorf School at the intersection of Route 13 South and 13A may be available again and a few Friends planned to look into that possibility.

20 Years Ago (November 13, 1995)

Cynthia Hill was welcomed into membership of IMM.

— Tom Brown, Meeting Historian

What Does AVP Mean to You?

The Alternatives to Violence Program facilitators for Elmira Correctional Facility in our meeting (Kathleen Gale, Gina Varrichio, and Susan Wolf) recently did a presentation about the AVP program for Area Congregations Together (ACT). We asked some of our “inside facilitators,” or members of our facilitation team that are presently incarcerated, to write up what they wanted to say to the community about AVP, since they were unable to join us for the presentation. This is the second in our series of shared testimonials to better introduce you to the people IMM helps to support, fiscally and spiritually.

An Invitation from Warm Warren

I'd like to invite all of you to come to prison. Now, I'm not saying you should do anything drastic, like rob a bank or anything. No, don't come for years...just a weekend. A weekend of personal growth and development, a weekend learning about alternatives. Yes, with the convicts. I'm invited all of you to participate in an Alternatives to Violence Project Workshop.

AVP started in New York's prisons, and was the idea of prisoners who wanted to do something about the violence in their world. It must be something good, because it spread around the world in just 40 years—first from prison to prison, and then out into our communities, to every continent except Antarctica. AVP is all about Transforming Power. Not our ability to change power. No, no. A Power than can and does transform each of us, if we let it.

So, what is it we are doing so right? If AVP's magic works during those three days, what we do is build: people, friendships communities—and bridges that last forever. AVP does that by shared experience. AVP workshops are just that, a series

of shared experiences. But, the real idea is for people to share about those experiences, and to make the connections to each person's real life experiences. People talk—talk like a lot of people realize they had never talked before. AVPeople talk, learn, and grow. We are Transformed.

AVPeople are all volunteers. Our workshops are facilitated by “inside” and “outside” volunteers, and we inside AVPeople love the outside AVPeople. Why? Because they volunteer to come to prison and be with us to transform that weekend. Many reluctant inside participants start their AVP journey with arms folded across their chests on Friday. By Sunday, they are asking how to become facilitators.

Just as importantly, the AVPeople from “the world” tell us our Workshops inside the prisons are deeper experiences, that our inside Workshops seem more real. From those outside AVPeople who decide to become facilitators in their communities, we consistently hear that the training we offer inside is the best. And so the AVP journey continues.

A group of inside facilitators was leaving a Workshop, and the Workshop materials were being searched by an obnoxious corrections officer. He asked, his voice dripping with sarcasm, “Do any of you really believe these programs change anyone?” He was silenced with a simple, truthful answer:

“It worked for me.”

So, come and meet a few convicts. Transform with us. Then transform your community and maybe help transform the world. And, hey, if you don't like it in prison, you can always leave.

Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, October 11, 2015

Clerk: Antonia Saxon

Assistant Clerks: Marilyn Ray, John Lewis

Recording Clerks: Marin Clarkberg, Blair Jennings

(The @ signifies that the minute has been read and approved during Meeting. Copies of all written reports are on file with and available from the Clerk or Recording Clerk.)

2015 10.1 Gathering

“May words of the Spirit be spoken, and words of the Spirit be heard.”

Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met in Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on October 11, 2015. At 12:37 P.M. Seventeen Friends gathered and settled into worship. Clerk recognized Nancy Riffer who was holding the Meeting in the Light.

Clerk read from *Memoirs of the Life of Isaac Pennington*:

At last, after all my distresses, wanderings, and sore travails, I met with some writings of this people called Quakers, which I cast a slight eye upon and disdained, as falling very short of that wisdom, life, light, and power, which I had been longing for, and searching after. I had likewise, some pretty distance of time after this, opportunity of meeting with some of them; and divers of them were by the Lord moved (I know it to be so since) to come to me.

As I remember, at the very first, they reached to the life of God in me; which life answered their voice, and caused a great love in me to spring to them; but still in my reasonings with them, and disputes alone (in my mind) concerning them, I was very far off from knowing them as so owning the Lord, or so appearing in his life and power, as my condition needed, and as my soul waited for. Yea, the more I conversed with them, the more I seemed in my understanding and reason to get over them, and to trample them under my feet, as a poor, weak, silly, contemptible generation, who had some smatterings of Truth in them, and some honest desires toward God; but very far off in the clear understanding of his way and will.

And this was the effect of almost every discourse with them: they still reached my heart, and I felt them in the secrets of my soul; which caused the love in me always to continue, yea, sometimes to increase towards them; but daily my understanding got more and more over them, and therein daily I more and more despised them. After a long time I was invited to hear one of them (as I had been often, as they in tender love pitying me, and feeling my want of that which they possessed); and there was an answer in my heart, and I went with fear and trembling, with desires to the Most High who was over all and knew all, that I might not receive any thing for truth which was not of him, nor withstand any thing which was of him; but might bow before the appearance of the Lord my God, and none other.

And indeed, when I came, I felt the presence and power of the Most High among them, and words of truth from the Spirit of truth reaching to my heart and conscience, opening my state as in the presence of the Lord. Yea, I did not only feel words and

demonstrations from without; but I felt the dead quickened, the Seed raised; insomuch that my heart (in the certainty of light, and clearness of true sense) said This is he, this is he, there is no other; this is he whom I have waited for and sought after from my childhood; who was near me, and often begotten light in my heart; but I knew him not distinctly, nor how to receive him or dwell with him.

2015 10.2 New York Yearly Meeting Relationships

Last month, in anticipation of a request from New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM), we began to explore our relationship (through NYYM) to Friends United Meeting (FUM). We learned about FUM’s personnel policy that forbids the hiring of sexually active LGBT persons and Brooklyn Monthly Meeting’s minute recommending an action in protest of that policy. We heard about the issue from the perspective of our NYYM and FUM representatives. We used our time together to gather information. This month, we received the anticipated request. Deb Wood, of NYYM’s Nurture Coordinating Committee, asked us to consider Brooklyn’s minute, which has also been approved by New York Quarterly Meeting.

Clerk shared a graphic chart to help us further understand the configuration and relationship between the parties involved in the discussion. To begin the discussion, Steve Mohlke read four (of six) queries from Christopher Sammond. Clerk clarified the particulars of the situation, including what is done with our monetary support to NYYM. Clerk read aloud Brooklyn Monthly Meeting’s recent Minute regarding Friends United Meeting’s Personnel Policy. Friends shared a variety of perspectives, thoughts and questions about and beyond the issue of uniting with Brooklyn Monthly Meeting.

Clerk clarified the following question: Are we called to respond only to the withholding of funds and unite (or not) with Brooklyn Monthly Meeting’s Minute or are we called to respond to the larger issues raised by FUM’s policy?

Clerk recognized the need to make a safe space within our meeting for the larger discussion about FUM and the implications of its policy with a wish that this larger discussion can and will take place. We answered the question asked by Deb Wood of NYYM’s Nurture Coordinating Committee as follows:

Ithaca Monthly Meeting appreciates Brooklyn Meeting for highlighting this important issue. IMM supports LGBTQ_F(f)riends; LGBTQ members are an integral part of our meeting and we marry couples under the meeting’s care. Despite FUM’s having a personnel policy we believe to be hurtful and discriminatory, we also value our relationship with and the work of FUM. Therefore, Friends did not feel called to unite with Brooklyn Monthly Meeting’s Minute. @

2015 10.3 New York Yearly Meeting Covenant Donation

This year, New York Yearly Meeting has asked for a 3.75% increase to our covenant donation. Steve Mohlke described the NYYM budget process and the rationale for this request. A 4.75% increase

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is proposed. This amount of \$750. will change our covenant donation from \$15,750. to \$16,500.

A Friend clarified the historical timing and current position of IMM's finance committee process in response to this request.

IMM finance committee is seriously considering an increase in our covenant donation that may exceed NYYM's request for a 3.75% increase. It is not yet approved. @

2015 10.4 Treasurer's Report

In his absence, clerk read the treasurer's comments that accompanied the report. Friends received the report. @

ACT Multi-Faith Thanksgiving Service, Nov 22nd

Join the Area Congregations Together (ACT) Multi-Faith Thanksgiving Service with the theme, "What Do I Bring to the Table?"

Thanksgiving is an opportunity to reflect on the gifts or needs that each person brings to this ACT Multi-faith Thanksgiving Service. Each of us has the human need to share together, in times of plenty or happiness and in times of trouble. We are blessed both by giving and in receiving. At various times in life, one will probably experience both sides of this condition. Together we create community by developing friendships in which we can trust each other, share our lives and build more meaningful, deeper lives. Our community grows stronger through our inter-connectedness and working together to solve problems.

Speakers will include:

- Pastor Calvin Christian, Our Lord's Temple of God Church of Christ
- Tim Dean, Chaplain, Cayuga Medical Center
- Eric Clay, Shared Journeys

The service will be at our own Third Street Meetinghouse on Sunday, November 22nd at 3 p.m.

There will be a table for anyone to bring information or cards about their gifts/needs, both individually, or as part of a congregation/group.

2015 10.5 Other concerns

A Friend shared a concern related to assuring members know about financial support for their attendance at the White Privilege conference to be held in Philadelphia in January 2016. Need and attendance figures should be communicated to both finance and scholarship committees before the 2016 budget process commences. @

Eight Friends settled into worship at 2:46 P.M. before adjourning. Our next regular Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business is to be held at the rise of Meeting on November 8, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Blair Jennings, Recording Clerk



*Have you sought to measure
the worth of your whole person
by the quality of your work?
How differently God sees you!
Each of you has infinite worth before God.
Cease judging your life
by all that is outward.
Simply being, here as you sit in your chair
or lie on your bed or pace the floor,
can be eloquent with love.
There are many tools for the uncovering
of love
within your life. Seek them out.
Learn to use them.
Enter into Presence.
The weakness you may more greatly know
in age
can give to your life a transparency
through which more love shines.
Rejoice that this is so!*

— Sparrow

The Cornell Elves Program

The Elves Program was founded in 1989 to benefit needy children in Tompkins County and the surrounding area. Thanks to hundreds of volunteers, the program has provided clothing, school supplies, and toys to thousands of students from dozens of area schools. We will be coordinating funding and donations for IMM to the program. Participants have the option of sponsoring a child themselves by selecting a profile and purchasing all the items on the form (usually a \$100-150 endeavor), donating money towards the sponsorship of a child or children in the program, or helping with the procurement of items with funds collected.

As of this email, I have not received the child profiles. If you know you would like one, let me know and I will email a profile to you as soon as I receive it. Any donations can be handed to me in person or can be dropped in the mail to:

Gina Varrichio
166 Crescent Place
Ithaca, NY 14850

Checks can be made out to Gina Varrichio to streamline the process or, if you're more comfortable, Ithaca Monthly Meeting with "Cornell Elves" in the memo line.

Thank you again for your generosity!

— Gina Varrichio

Olive Branch Film Series at Cinemapolis

Film and discussion, November 28

This fall Cinemapolis is holding an Olive Branch Film Series regarding the Palestine/Israel issue. The movie for November will be "Private", the story of a Palestinian family trapped inside a house commandeered by Israeli soldiers. The film will be shown on Wednesday, November 18 at 7:15 2015. The trailer for the film can be viewed at www.olivebranchfilmsithaca.net. Afterwards, folks are encouraged to meet up at Sarah's Patisserie for further discussion on the Palestine/Israel issue.

— Pat Sewell

Women's Chair Yoga Mondays and Thursdays 11a-noon

Gentle, cheerful, centered movement to restore ourselves. Questions to Nancy Gabriel 339-7123, call or text OK.

Alternative Gift Fair, December 5

The 2015 Alternative Gift Fair will be held Saturday, December 5 from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM in "The Space" @ Greenstar, located on the corner of Fulton Street and Buffalo Street in Ithaca.

This will be our 12th Annual Alternative Gift Fair, offering holiday shoppers a choice of holiday "gifts" to honor family and friends while supporting local charities and non-profit organizations in a festive atmosphere. Since its start in 2004, the event has brought in over \$480,000 that has gone directly to participating organizations.

"Gifts", in the past, have ranged from \$5 to give a compact fluorescent light bulb to a local, rural household or \$10 for a week of school, clothing and two meals a day for an orphan in Zambia to \$100 for a "Golden Opportunity" scholarship fund to help students remain successful in area schools. With hundreds of offerings to choose from, the Fair provides a something for everyone on a giving list. For each donation, the giver receives a holiday card with a description of the organization and the "gift".

For more information go to: <http://www.ithacaaltgiftfair.org/>

— Bronwyn Mohlke

November 2015 Calendar of Ithaca Monthly Meeting

Social Justice & Peace Witness Committee Sunday, November 1, Rise of Meeting

All are welcome to join upstairs.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Sunday, November 8, Rise of Meeting

Join in the Quaker decision-making process. Our clerk is traveling this month, so agenda items should be sent to our assistant clerk, John Lewis, by the preceding Wednesday.

Discussion of Racism Sunday, November 15, 9a

Angela Hopkins, a black Quaker, and Irma Guthrie, a white Quaker, both from the New York Yearly Meeting Task Group on Racism, will lead us in a discussion of racial justice, white privilege, and our next steps as a Meeting.

Discussion of the Pope's Encyclical Sunday, November 22, 9a

Discussion of the Pope's encyclical on climate change. See page 1 for more information.

Dish-to-Pass Brunch Sunday, November 22, Rise of Meeting

Bring something tasty to share if you can. All are welcome.

Vegetarian Thanksgiving Thursday, November 26, 4p

Join Friends for a dish-to-pass, casual Thanksgiving dinner with fellowship at the Third Street Meetinghouse. All dishes should be vegetarian.

Newsletter submissions due Friday, November 27, 4p

Please provide your newsletter contributions to Marin Clarkberg: 150 Giles St., 14850, 607-279-4722, clarkberg@cornell.edu.

On Sundays

- 10:00a **Meeting for Worship** at Hector Meetinghouse
- 10:20a **First Day School** gathers upstairs at Third Street.
- 10:30a **Meeting for Worship** at the Third Street Meetinghouse
- 11:15a **First Day School** attenders enter the meetingroom for intergenerational Meeting for Worship.

Other Weekly IMM Events

- Wed 7:30p **Meeting for worship** at the Burt House, 227 N. Willard Way