



Newsletter of the

Ithaca Monthly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

January 2014

IMM CONTACTS

ithacamonthlymeeting.org

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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 about events in the Ithaca community, broader social causes or other 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

New GRIST Groups Forming

Are you interested in meeting regularly with a small group of people to share what is happening (or not happening) for you spiritually? GrIST (Growing In the Spirit Together) may be for you.

We are organizing another round of groups of 4-5 people to meet and share. Most of the people who have participated in previous rounds found it to be a very rewarding experience. We will be asking people to sign up for a particular group based on a specified day and time that group will meet. A registration form may be found online:

<https://ithacafriends.wufoo.com/forms/grist-registration/>

Please register by the end of the third week in January.

The groups will begin meeting in February and will meet through May. The expectation is that participants will be able to attend all 8 sessions. Childcare will be provided if requested.

The underlying questions for each meeting are “What are the spiritual qualities of the everyday events in your life?” and “How has the Spirit been at work in your life since the last time we met?” Since these questions can be difficult to answer, material has been prepared to help make it easier.

Groups generally start with opening silence and brief check-ins followed by reading the material prepared for that week. Then each person is given up to 10-15 minutes to share their responses to the material. Most groups then share more informally before closing.

The groups can use the prepared material and agenda or adjust to their liking – with one caveat. If left unchecked, groups tend to drift toward ordinary conversation, which is often more comfortable than the kind of spiritual sharing we hope these groups will nurture. To help with this, each group will be assigned a facilitator who will take primary responsibility for helping the group decide on a direction and to stay true to its intent. Care will be taken to avoid the common pitfalls of group dynamics: domination of a group by a single individual, the offering of advice, over-thinking, and so on.

Questions? Contact Carolyn Kenyon (clkenyon09@gmail.com) or Karen Friedeborn (kar-en.friedeborn@gmail.com) from the Program Committee.

Spirit-Led Changes

Knitting ourselves into the neighborhood was part of the vision guiding Friends when we selected Third Street as the location for our meetinghouse. Activities since then have increased our involvement in the neighborhood and the diverse community around us.

Members of our Meeting participated in Healing Ithaca in response to the tensions surrounding the shooting of Shawn Greenwood in 2011. We joined in interfaith prayer services that were held at that time. Also, those involved with the Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP) in our Meeting held three workshops in the community to increase the

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Spirit-Led, continued from page 1

ability of members of the Ithaca community to approach potentially violent situations in a new way.

Friends used the meetinghouse to show the three-part PBS series, "Race: The Power of an Illusion." Members of the community joined members of our Meeting for this program that showed race as a social construct rather than a biological reality. Persons of color shared their experiences of current racism in Ithaca. IMM also co-sponsored the showing of this series with Calvary Baptist Church, Neighborhood Pride, and St. Paul's Church.

The suggestion was made after one of the viewings that this series be shown throughout the Ithaca area. One member of our Meeting obtained a grant from NYYM to contribute to funding these community showings.

Community leaders who have been working on social justice issues for decades now see our meetinghouse as a place this work happens. By using our building for meetings, workshops, and celebratory dinners, members of the community who might not otherwise come into the meetinghouse are learning about Quaker testimonies that relate to social justice. We have hosted a variety of meetings of groups from the community: Natural Leaders Initiative, Women's Healing Circles, Talking Circles, Paul Schreurs Memorial Program dinners, and Undoing Racism workshops.

A member of our meeting began a bike clinic at the meetinghouse to help people in the neighborhood, and from across Ithaca, learn about maintaining and repairing their bicycles. He applied for a NYYM grant and received funds to expand the services he offers.

In recent months a new attender has joined our Meeting in worship. She has expressed her sense that this is the place she feels most at home spiritually. Periodically she rises to ask us, "Why are there no other people who look like me?" Gently and straightforwardly she continues to call us to examine ourselves as a meeting.

The Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business held November 10th, 2013 considered, "The right use of our meetinghouse." It was a Meeting in which we were guided by the Spirit to speak from the heart and listen from the heart. Friends spoke of a number of concerns which we as a group considered. We reached unity, without dissension, on a minute to change the way we share our meetinghouse. Instead of charging a flat rental fee, we minuted our intention to let groups know about our rental fee structure, but to offer them the opportunity to consider their resources and donate as they are led. We decided to begin the policy with a six-month trial in order to make sure that the time and resources of the Meeting can be balanced with our desire to share our facilities with organizations whose work is close to Quaker testimonies.

At the same Meeting, some Friends proposed the formation of an ad hoc committee for Neighborhood Outreach and volunteered to be its first members. The initial core group has rapidly attracted more members.

Three members of our Meeting attended a workshop on, "Managing and Supporting an Inclusive Multicultural Organization." What they learned has been brought back to the Meeting as a resource for us as we continue our discovery of where Spirit is leading us.

— Nancy Riffer

December in Ithaca Monthly Meeting History

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

Historian's note: Since 1981, IMM has operated on a calendar fiscal year and the January Meeting has been primarily an annual meeting limited to reports of committees. On two occasions in years ending in 4 and 9, January Meetings were cancelled due to inclement weather, and in two others it was noted that attendance was light due to the weather, so no weighty decisions were attempted. Thus, this month's history column is very brief.

55 Years Ago (January 12, 1959)

It was noted Douglas Steere, well-known Quaker speaker and writer, would be in town this month. On Jan. 18, he will have supper with the Young Friends at the International Friendship Center. Following this, he will meet with the whole Meeting in the Student Lounge of Anabel Taylor Hall.

65 Years Ago (January 10, 1949)

Joshua Cope reported for the Program Committee that 35 Friends attended the Called Meeting last month to discuss the declaration of the Richmond Conference on conscription for war. The [IMM] discussion showed considerable differences in attitudes of people in this Meeting toward conscription and registration for the military; therefore a committee was established to prepare a further declaration for consideration by the Meeting.

— Tom Brown, Historian

Peace Witness and War Tax Resistance

At its December 14 meeting, the Peace Witness Committee invited Tom Joyce to speak on the topic of war tax resistance. Tom is a long time member of Perry City Friends Meeting as well as a war tax resister.

Tom brought to our attention an upcoming two-day gathering in Rochester for people who want to explore war tax witness/resistance, as well as for those who want to be able to counsel others. The gathering is sponsored by the Conscience And War Committee, a Western/Central New York regional Quaker committee.

War Tax Witness/Resistance Gathering and Counselor's Training
M.K. Gandhi Institute For Nonviolence
929 South Plymouth Avenue, Rochester, NY
Friday, February 7, 2014, 7-9:30pm
Saturday, February 8, 2014, 10am-6pm

There will be a number of people attending who will share their stories of war tax resistance and have decided to redirect their taxes away from the military. Many others will be exploring these issues for the first time. People are encouraged to attend the full gathering. Lunch will be provided on Saturday. There is childcare.

Contact Tom Joyce - 607-277-7426 or tomjoyce51@aim.com (please put War Tax Witness in the subject line) - to register, for overnight housing in Rochester, directions to the Gandhi House, or further information. People should register by January 24.

— Connie Thomas, on behalf of Peace Witness

Using a Microphone

When we moved into our new meetinghouse, accessibility was a central concern. Several members and attenders of the Meeting have experienced hearing loss. Our Ministry and Worship Committee investigated over a period of many months ways to make it possible for everybody in the Meeting room to hear messages and announcements.

We considered installing a high-end induction loop system. Then we learned that such systems are best suited to venues in which the speaker stands in a fixed location—a podium, or a pulpit. Clearly, an induction loop system would not be satisfactory for Quaker worship. (We discovered later that other meetings that have installed induction loop systems have not always been delighted with the results.)

After consulting with a local sound system specialist, we realized that we would not do well with a formal sound system, either. This would require someone to monitor a sound board throughout the meeting, adjusting the sound levels for each speaker and making allowances for external sources of noise.

The expert suggested the simplest of systems; a portable amplifier and a single, wireless microphone. We realized that we were going to have to learn more about how to pass the microphone around and how to speak into it properly. We decided to try using the set-up first during Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. Folks who had had difficulty hearing in previous meetings reported that the microphone and speakers made a significant difference.

We plan to move next toward using the microphone and the speakers during announcements after Meeting for Worship. Once we learn how to more smoothly pass the mike from person to person and how to speak into it properly, we can start using it during Meeting for Worship.

Ministry and Worship has tried throughout the process to balance the need for everyone in the room to hear everything that is said with the need to keep movement, fuss, and flurry to a minimum. We are very interested in your feedback and invite you to get in touch with anyone on Ministry and Worship to offer comments.

— *On behalf of Ministry and Worship:*
Chuck Mohler, Nancy Gabriel, Antonia Saxon, Marilyn Ray

I abandon all that I think I am, all that I hope to be, all that I believe I possess. I let go of the past, I withdraw my grasping hand from the future, and in the great silence of this moment, I alertly rest my soul.

— *Deep Is The Hunger* by Howard Thurman

Regional Meeting Winter Gathering

Farmington Scipio Regional Meeting gathers three times a year, in January, May, and September (called Winter Gathering, Spring Gathering, and Fall Gathering). Winter Gathering always takes place in Rochester, and is on January 18th this year. The morning session will focus on plans for Spring Gathering (May 16-18), and the afternoon will be meeting for worship with attention to business for Regional Meeting work and ministry. Marilyn Ray and Bronwyn Mohlke are Ithaca Meeting's liaisons with Regional Meeting, and will be going to Winter Gathering. You are welcome to contact either of them for more information, or to see about carpooling to the gathering.

Change in Peace Vigil Time

Please note that the weekly Peace Vigil will be changing its time. Starting in January, the vigil will take place from 4:00 to 4:30 pm (it has previously been from 5:00 to 5:30). The location is the same: the foot of East State Street. Vigil participants are in two spots: (1) on the corner in front of the Community School of Music and the Arts, or (2) on the island where Green Street joins East State Street. Bring your own sign; or share with someone who is at the vigil; or go into Mayers' Smoke Shop and ask for the peace signs carryall that they hold for us, then return the carryall to them after the vigil. All are welcome.

NYYM's Apology to Afro-Descendants

At New York Yearly Meeting's Fall Sessions (Nov. 15-17, 2013), the body offered this formal apology:

We the New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) of the Religious Society of Friends apologize to Afro-Descendants* everywhere for Quaker participation in the terrible acts of enslaving your ancestors and for the destructive effects that those acts have had on succeeding generations.

Slavery is an abomination. We regret that Friends participated in or benefited from slavery. This included trafficking of human beings from Africa, capitalizing on the products of their labor and suffering, and being enriched by an economy based on chattel slavery. We apologize that NYYM allowed its members to hold Africans and their descendants in bondage up until 1777, when Friends were directed by the Yearly Meeting to manumit the people they held in slavery.

We abhor the decades of terror and legalized racial segregation that followed the abolition of slavery declared in the 13th amendment, which was ratified in 1865. The amendment reads: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." This exception gave rise to a justice system that disproportionately targeted and incarcerated Afro-Descendants, a practice that continues today.

We acknowledge in sorrow that those of us who enjoy a high standard of living today are still benefiting from the unpaid and underpaid labor of enslaved peoples and their descendants. We deeply regret that even after emancipation, despite the Quaker

testimony of equality, Friends schools denied admission to Afro-Descendants and many Friends meetings enforced segregated seating. We regret the effects that those policies had and continue to have on all of us.

Over the centuries, some individual Quakers and Quaker groups have joined efforts to end slavery and eradicate racism and have supported African Americans in their struggle for civil and human rights. We honor the work of these Quakers and are moved to follow their example. Thus we recommit ourselves to the testimony of equality as regards Afro-Descendants. This work will include challenging existing racist assumptions, and educating ourselves about the direct relationships between the past enslavement of Afro-Descendants and current conditions in the United States.

We recognize that this apology is a step towards healing and trust, and that more openings will follow as we strive with divine assistance to discern what we as Quakers are called to do to bring about justice and reconciliation in our beloved community.

* Afro-Descendants is a term now officially in use by the United Nations to identify the more than 250 million descendants of enslaved Africans dwelling in North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Slavery Diaspora.

About New York Yearly Meeting

First established in 1695, New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is the denominational organization comprising the Quaker meetings (congregations) in New York State, northern New Jersey, and southwestern Connecticut. For more information about the Yearly Meeting, visit www.nnym.org.

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Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, December 8, 2013

2013 12.08 Other Concerns

A Friend reminded us that a budget of \$60,000 divided by 100 individual Friends would imply an average of donation of \$600 per individual per year.

A Friend shared that the piano in the storage closet is tuned and is ready to play.

A Friend shared that a new ad hoc committee, the Neighborhood Outreach Committee, has begun meeting. Contact Karen Friedeborn for further information about this group.

Tony Serviente invited Friends who were present to provide feedback about the use of the microphone during this meeting. A Friend expressed appreciation for a single microphone as an aid to reminding us to speak one at a time. A Friend articulated a desire to have a microphone in Meeting for Worship. Ministry &

Worship expects to further discuss how amplification might be incorporated into Meeting for Worship. Friends expressed a desire that there be a meeting-wide discussion of this issue.

A Friend reminded us that offering our Meetinghouse for use by others entails costs to the meeting membership. @

Twenty-six Friends settled into worship at 2:10pm before adjourning. Our next regular Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business will be held at the rise of Meeting on January 14, 2014.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marin Clarkberg, Recording Clerk

Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, December 8, 2013

Clerk: Antonia Saxon
Assistant Clerk: Marilyn Ray
Recording Clerks: Nancy Gabriel, Marin Clarkberg & Susan Ruff
(*The @ signifies that the minute has been read and approved during Meeting. Please note that copies of all annual reports provided during this Meeting are on file with and available from the Clerk or Recording Clerk.*)

2013 12.01 Opening. Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met in Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on December 8, 2013. At 12:25pm, 25 Friends gathered in opening worship.

The Clerk shared a reading from “The Mind of Christ: Bill Taber On Meeting for Business,” Pendle Hill Pamphlet 406.

It is well to note that almost all religions and almost all other Christian denominations devote a great deal of attention to the opening moments of worship. We remember the rituals tested by centuries, the beautiful words, the music, the candles, the colors, the incense used to help people move from the ordinary mental state into that altered state of consciousness which is worship. Thus, we Friends, whether programmed or unprogrammed, need to bring to our entrance into the worship before a business meeting a strong inward intentionality, a depth of intention which at least matches the care that the traditional church lavishes on the rituals and the outward words of these opening moments. If there is any skill that is fundamental to a good business meeting it is this disciplined and committed skill of attention to the Great Friend, to the Inward Teacher, to the Universal Light of Jesus Christ.

As we rest in that Presence, with the intention of giving total attention, we find ourselves moving into the altered state of consciousness...as we move from joy to assurance. Ideally, at this point, we feel ourselves cradled, supported, held up by those everlasting arms. We may feel ourselves loved, bathed in light, dwelling timelessly in the Light, baptized into a living, healing Presence. It is the deep assurance of being filled with the water of life of which Jesus spoke. At this point there may be no words, only a sense of unity, unity, unity...It is as if we are entering into a stream, which I am calling the Stream of the Quaker Process, which is as real as stepping into a stream of water; just as there is no doubt when we enter or leave a stream of water, so there is no doubt when we are surrounded by that Stream of Living Unity. It is so real that you can feel it.

The Clerk acknowledged Nancy Gabriel who was holding the Meeting in the Light.

2013 12.02 Consent Agenda: Nominations. Following New York Yearly Meeting procedure, items that have been seasoned by committee and are felt to be relatively straightforward are placed on the Consent Agenda and are approved without discussion.

Tom Brown presented the report from Nominating Committee that included new nominations to committees for 2014. The consent agenda was approved. @

2013 12.03 Third Street Meetinghouse Committee: Elevelte. Garry Thomas read a report from the TSMC regarding issues related to adding an elevette to our meetinghouse and including a brief history of our considerations relating to such an elevette. The TSMC recommends that the Meeting accept a gift from the Walbridge Family Foundation that fully funds the installation of an elevette, and to approve the installation itself as described in the report. Meeting approved proceeding with the project. Details of the installation timeline and the specific contractor will be resolved through the TSMC.

This project also includes the addition of a ramp connecting the two levels of the second floor. This will impact one of the spaces frequently used by children during First Day School. Friends suggested that the TSMC work with Children and the Life of the Meeting committee on the design of the ramp.

Friends expressed gratitude for the gift and all that went into the development of this project. @

2013 12.04 Report from the Finance Committee. Will White presented the proposed 2014 budget for Ithaca Monthly Meeting on behalf of the Finance Committee and reviewed some of the differences—mostly minor—between the 2013 and 2014 budgets. Friends approved the budget for 2014.

The Finance Committee further noted that donations for this year are at about half of the total request for 2013, which is not unusual for this time of year. Friends are encouraged to make financial contributions as they are led. @

2013 12.05 Report from Ministry & Worship. Marilyn Ray presented on behalf of Ministry and Worship recommending Holly White for membership in Ithaca Monthly Meeting. Friends joyfully approved the committee’s recommendation. @

2013 12.06 Report from Social Justice. Sue Ruff reported on behalf of Social Justice Committee. Social Justice spent its \$500 discretionary budget as follows: \$100 AVP, \$100 to Larry Bratton, \$200 to Afghan Women’s Fund and \$100 to the Fistula Foundation. Social Justice committee requests Meeting’s approval to spend the \$500 remaining in their budget as follows: \$200 for the Elves Project (including Christmas presents for children in need), \$100 for Paul Schreurs Memorial Program to support their after school tutoring program, \$100 for the OAR bail fund, \$100 for the Natural Leaders Initiative. Friends approved this request. @

2013 12.07 Report from Peace Witness. Connie Thomas reported on behalf of the Peace Witness Committee. Peace Witness has a budget of \$1000 to allocate, and \$500 must be approved by Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. Peace Witness proposes allocating \$100 to the local Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP), \$300 to AVP International to support a scholarship for someone in a developing country to attend a gathering in Ireland, \$200 to the Christian Peacemaker Teams, \$200 to Peter De Mott Catholic Worker House, and \$200 to the Veterans’ Sanctuary. Friends approved this request. @

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Women's Chair Yoga

This gentle yoga class will continue at least through February. Consider joining us Mondays and Fridays at Third St Meetinghouse, 11a.m. to noon. For more information, please contact Nancy Gabriel at 277-8930 or ntg2@cornell.edu.

Richie Sing

All are welcome at the Richie Sing on Saturday, January 11th at the Third Street Meetinghouse corner of Third St and Madison. Dish-to-pass at 6:30, singing at 7:30. Come and listen, sing along, lead a song and/or play an instrument.

— *Melody Johnson and Dick Crepeau*

January 2014 Calendar of Ithaca Monthly Meeting

Social Justice Committee

Sunday, January 5, Rise of Meeting

All are welcome to join us in the library.

Carmen Guidi of Second Wind Cottages

Thursday, January 9, 7p

You may have heard of Carmen Guidi going to "The Jungle" encampment in Ithaca and befriending the people who live there before initiating the "Second Wind Cottages" housing project. He is currently building six small cabins, on his own land, to provide housing for some of the men. Please join us at the Meetinghouse to hear Carmen's story. His accomplishments are an inspiration and a great way to start the New Year. Check out his web site, secondwindcottages.org.

Annual Meeting of the Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Sunday, January 12, Rise of Meeting

Friends will gather for two annual meetings. The first, quite brief meeting, will be the Annual Meeting of the IMMRSOF Corporation. Since IMM is a nonprofit, we are required to have at least one annual meeting attended by many people who are part of our Meeting community, whether an official member or not. Those in attendance will be asked to sign in and it is important that we have as many people attending as possible. This part of the Annual Meeting will take about 15-20 minutes.

The second part will be a meeting during which we hear reports from all our committees on their activities, successes and challenges during 2013. Hearing about all our activities is a really good way to learn more about all the activities in which is involved.

Please plan to attend both meetings.

Website Update Meeting

Tuesday, January 14, 7:30p

Steve Mohlke invites all to attend a meeting (at the meetinghouse) about updating the Meeting website. We'll look at the major functions of the site, discuss layouts for the various types of pages and identify what else needs to happen before presenting this to the rest of Meeting. If you think you will attend, it would be helpful (but not required) if you could send Steve Mohlke an email, smohlke@gmail.com so he can send you something before the meeting.

Meeting for Beading

Sunday, January 19, Rise of Meeting

Join us for another crafting opportunity. Work on your next masterpiece, or just hang out and knit. We will have some beading supplies and tools. Bring works in progress, snacks to share and/or craft supplies of your own. Contact Kris at kris.altucher@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Peace Witness Committee

Saturday, January 25, 1p

Join us at our Meeting's Burt House, 227 Willard Way (near Cornell and overlooking Ithaca Falls). All are welcome.

Newsletter submissions due

Thursday, January 23, 5p

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

Coming in February

Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (CAIC) will discuss their work to end solitary confinement and local groups will share their efforts to resist mass incarceration on Saturday, February 1, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. Meeting followed by potluck dinner.

Every Sunday

- 9:30a **Coffee and fellowship** in the library of the Third Street Meetinghouse; entering silence by 10:15.
- 10:30a **Meeting for Worship** for all ages at the Third Street Meetinghouse
- 10:45a **First Day School**: attenders exit the meetingroom.

Other Weekly IMM Events

- Wed 5:30-6:30p **Meeting for worship** at the Third Street Meetinghouse
- Wed 7:30p **Midweek meeting** for worship at the Burt House (227 N. Willard Way)
- Thurs 4-4:30p **Peace Vigil** at the bottom of East State Street near the Community School for Music and Arts