



Newsletter of the
Ithaca Monthly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

November 2017

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 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

Newsletter

Submit contributions to clarkberg@cornell.edu. See the IMM Calendar, back page, for the next deadline.

Let's Talk About the Quality of Our Worship Together

When we enter into worship together, are we sinking into the deep well that Spirit invites us into?

Are the words or song that are offered during worship ministering to us?

Our book of discipline, New York Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice*, offers the following guidance:

In gathered or covered meetings individual separateness recedes, and we become more of a community under divine guidance. Words offered by different speakers may relate to a common theme and echo the unspoken worship without seeming to break the silence...

...Vocal ministry in the meeting for worship should arise from inward prompting, an experience that may come at times to all earnest worshippers...

When one rises to speak in [a gathered] meeting one has a sense of being used, of being played upon, of being spoken through. It is as amazing an experience as that of being prayed through, when we, the praying ones, are no longer the initiators of the supplication, but seem to be transmitters, who second an impulse welling up from the depths of the soul. In such an experience the brittle bounds of our selfhood seem softened and instead of saying, "I pray" or "He prays," it becomes better to say, "Prayer is taking place."

— Thomas R. Kelly, *The Eternal Promise*, 1966

At the rise of worship on November 19, all are invited to reflect on these queries and ideas. Please join in the conversation.

— Shirley Way

An Invitation Back To Silence

I seem to remember a time when IMM was concerned about a lack of vocal ministry in Meeting for Worship. I'm wondering if the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction, especially in times of challenging societal events. I'd like to make a heartfelt case for Silence. It's pretty under-rated these days, even within the Society of Friends.

There are many expressions of the Spirit! But I want to start by saying that for some of us (perhaps many), our lives are rooted in glimpses of inner Silence we find within a deeply contemplative and outwardly silent practice, both alone and joyfully with others. We need this. I'm convinced that the power of George Fox's original message and our lives as Quakers comes from direct experience of the simplicity and silence of the inner Presence...right...now.

Inspired by Fox's writings, I find a healing and guiding power emerging through open-hearted attempts to simply stop and stand still in the Light just as it reveals my surging thoughts, emotions, and intentions. Over and over again. The Light calls us to what we already are, ever still in That of God within ourselves. Brief moments of resting in this

An Invitation, continued on page 2

An Invitation, cont. from page 1

radical heart-felt Stillness sustain me in my stumbling attempts at a more authentic life, at times offering the only still point amidst my particularly tumultuous inner experience. Insights arising in receptive Silence stay with me throughout daily life like a fleeting glimpse of a lighthouse flash through stormy weather.

Beyond personal preferences, I sense there is something truly unique and transformative about the silence of Quaker Meeting for Worship that we don't want to miss. Meeting can be a peculiarly creative and powerful sanctuary for contemplative searching and yielding to the Presence, mainly in outward silence with Friends yet allowing Truths that might speak to others to rise up out of that inward Silence. Fox is clear about staying "above the words," yet Meeting is not always silent. Messages that are brief, somehow deeply authentic from a Friend's experience, and yet clearly speaking from a larger Truth cut through my emotional and mental noise despite the words. I fear we lose Meeting's transformative power when we mistake vocal ministry for the contemporary practice of simply sharing compelling personal feelings and experiences and reflections. Many powerful insights are meant for just one, not all in Meeting.

Of course, social justice issues and Friends' personal revelations and concerns are important to us and sometimes rise up in Meeting. But there are other Quaker gatherings well serving any need to share these at length. I would be sad if our Meetings for Worship drifted further away from exploring inward Silence together as our first priority, as our primary source of anything we can ever hope to do for ourselves and others. Making this our priority together may be what sustains us in ever more troubling times. We all need a loving space to rest a bit before re-engaging with our life joys and struggles.

So here every spirit comes to have a particular satisfaction and quietness in his own mind...In one half hour they have more peace and satisfaction than they have had from all the other teachers of the world all their lifetime. — George Fox

— Tom Ruscitti

Monthly Meeting Partners Project

Ithaca Meeting is now part of the New York Yearly Meeting Monthly Meeting Partners Project! A small group of Friends worked diligently to put together an application in September, and we have been accepted. As part of the project, our meeting will be able to work with Children and Youth Field Secretary Melinda Wenner Bradley and other NYYM staff members to discern how we can enhance a multi-generational worship experience, and make ourselves a more welcoming spiritual community. This is an exciting opportunity for our meeting, which will help us move forward in our individual and collective spiritual journeys.

We have already benefited from the project. Friends put a lot of consideration and discernment into the process of applying, and the final written application reveals a number of interesting insights into our meeting community and where Spirit is leading us. Friends are encouraged to read our application as we will use

Power Quakers

The Power Quakers First Day School group includes grades 8-12. We meet upstairs at 10:30 am on the first and third Sundays of each month.

PQs are encouraged to attend Meeting for Worship on the other weeks. This year we are diving into the question, "Who is my neighbor?" We began with study of some key Bible passages from Leviticus, Isaiah, and the Gospel of John. We did a close analysis of the Good Samaritan story. We have studied examples of Friends relief projects during the Irish Potato Famine, the First World War, the Second World War, and during the internment of Japanese-Americans during WWII. This included discussion of a passage from George Fox's journal and the passage in Micah regarding what God requires of us: to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

Later this year we will be meeting with people of other faith communities in our area. We will also spend some time learning about Conscientious Objector status and drafting personal statements of belief for the IMMF files.

Members of the PQs are active in youth gatherings at Powell House, New York Yearly Meeting, and Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting. We also visit other Friends Meetings, encourage PQs to attend Friends General Conference Summer Gathering, and can help find sponsors and funding for all of these gatherings. For more information, contact me, JanisCKelly@gmail.com, (607)592-1238.

— Janis Kelly

it in the future to reflect upon the life of our meeting. A copy of this document has been shared with Friends through our meeting listserve. If you did not receive it and would like to see one, please contact John Lewis at clerk@ithacamonthlymeeting.org.

One of the next steps is to create a Partnership Circle, an ad hoc, fluid group of Friends who might "serve for a season" and then rotate off. Like spokes on a wheel, the Partnership Circle facilitates communication between the children and youth field secretary and the meeting, sometimes with individual committees, but also with the whole community. If you would like to participate in such a group or help with the initial discernment of moving the Partners Project forward, please let our clerk, John Lewis or assistant clerk, Bronwyn Molhke.

Let us be grateful for this gift to our meeting.

— John Lewis

November in IMM History

5 Years Ago (November 11, 2012)

A memorial minute for Marjorie Baines was read. The Clerk will forward to NYYM.

10 Years Ago (November 11, 2007)

IMM minuted the welcoming of a new immigrant family from Iraq to Ithaca and encouraged Friends to provide support and companionship to the family. An ad hoc committee on immigrant support was established under the Peace Witness and Social Justice Committees to take the lead in providing support for this family.

30 Years Ago (November 9, 1987)

Jean Klune reported that sixteen Friends had looked at a two-story house for sale on North Triphammer Road as a possible new meetinghouse. There was considerable discussion as to whether the Meeting wants a meetinghouse and if so, if this is the right property. [Meeting later decided not to purchase the property.]

65 Years Ago (November 10, 1952)

IMM was welcomed into membership of Scipio Quarterly Meeting. Ithaca Friends were invited to attend Quarterly meetings and also the two yearly meetings Scipio Quarterly was a member of (Canada and Genesee Yearly Meetings). [In 1955 Scipio Quarterly Meeting became part of a reunited New York Yearly Meeting.]

70 Years Ago (November 10, 1947)

Meeting began by affirming answers to two queries discussed the previous month concerning refusal to take oaths and participate in any form of gambling, no matter how trivial the situation might seem.

Many members encouraged Friends to do all within their power to persuade Congressmen to vote against universal military training when it is brought before the approaching session of Congress.

75 Years Ago (November 9, 1942)

IMM decided to remember absent members who were at Civilian Public Service (CPS) camps with Christmas boxes. Five young men from the CPS camp at Big Flats attended Ithaca Meeting by invitation and gave a well-rounded description of the camp and camp life.

Report on the "Poor People's Campaign Mass Meeting and Faith for a Fair NY Conference"

Several of us from Meeting and the larger Ithaca area attended this meeting, held on October 18-19 in the United Presbyterian Church, Binghamton. The Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State, led by Rev. Emily McNeill, presented the conference with support from Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice; Food Bank of the Southern Tier; Focus Churches of Albany; New York State Council of Churches; and several churches. Conferences like this are happening across the nation to establish grassroots leadership of this movement. Its goals include addressing the massive, systemic inequalities of our society that lead to poverty, homelessness, racial and gender inequalities, and environmental degradation. This is a revival of the Campaign for the Poor, a movement started by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. who recognized the complexities involved, and need for a different and unfamiliar vision for its success.

The Presbyterian church was packed for the keynote speaker, Rev. William Barber. A powerful and moving preacher, he laid out the national issues, and underscored the obvious: they are all related. Those who bear their brunt must lead the change. Political and other leaders unaffected directly by poverty and injustice have often enacted laws, policies and actions that have been ineffective or worse. Actions even by well-meaning people of privilege have often had unintended negative consequences. He called for coordinated, peaceful, civil actions to begin next summer. The take-away for me was that at the least, I need to continue learning about the problems and supporting those who courageously take the lead.

The Food Bank of the Southern Tier (FBST) is an example of change. "In the past, FBST identified its priorities and strategized in the same way many non-profit organizations do: behind closed doors with a consultant and the board of directors. In recent years, the Food Bank has been making major shifts to include people from all walks of life in our work as we answer the call to join a movement to end poverty led by the poor. Perhaps the most significant of these shifts is the Speakers Bureau program, a public speaking and leadership development training for people with lived experience in poverty and food insecurity... [T]o end poverty, we need people from all class backgrounds working together..." (from the description of a conference workshop).

The Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State is fighting for: adequate food, housing, healthcare, and a safe environment for all New Yorkers; high quality public education and living wage jobs, the right to organize in the workplace, and the right to equal pay for equal work; and equal protection under the law, regardless of race, religious belief, country of origin, immigration status, gender identity, or sexual orientation. To find out more about its work, the Poor People's Campaign, and for a link to the United Way's recent study on poverty in NY, go to www.laborreligion.org. The United Way study showed that poverty is much more widespread in NY than the outdated national indicators show. The work towards change is just beginning.

— Pat Pingel

Greetings from Ramallah

Hello Ithaca Friends! I live most of the time in Cortland and attend Third Street and Hector Meetings. This year I am in Occupied Palestine as a Fulbright Scholar at Birzeit University. I arrived 8 weeks ago and have joined in with the Ramallah Friends Meeting for worship and community service. Perhaps some of you have visited here? On many Sundays we have visiting groups of international Friends, as well as individuals who are traveling or sojourning in the Holy Land, both Quakers and others who wish to sit together to contemplate peace and non-violence.

The Ramallah Friends School nearby has been here since 1886, when it was started by American Friends as a girls' school. It now consists of grades 1-12 in the "upper and lower schools" and offers the International Baccalaureate degree. I have begun doing some volunteering with students and families in the community gardens, which feature organic growing and a new Palestinian heirloom seed bed.

Ramallah Friends Meetinghouse was built in 1910 and refurbished in the last decade—a beautiful and peaceful historic stone building with a shady garden in the front. Jean Zaru is the Clerk of Court and has been for 30 years. She holds together this unique small group of Palestinian and international members—plus the many guests!—and is turning over clerking duties to Saleem Zaru this year.

Warm greetings from this wayward Friend from the Finger Lakes and from the Ramallah Friends Meeting!

Salaam/Shalom/Peace,

—*Julia Ganson*

Invitation to Join a Class at FCRJ

Classes on Community are continuing at Friends Center for Racial Justice. We will be discussing *Deep Denial: The Persistence of White Supremacy in United States History and Life* by David Billings. If you have read the book or are interested in this topic, please join us in one of the classes.

The Community classes meet twice a month, on the first and third:

- Wednesdays from 10 am - noon for worship and discussion followed by lunch
- Thursday afternoons from 2:15 - 4:15 for worship and discussion.
- Thursday evenings from 5:30 - 8 pm for supper followed by worship and discussion.

For the classes with meals, we take turns bringing food.

Our conversations will prepare us for an upcoming FCRJ workshop on "Steps towards Justice, Freedom and Authentic Community," designed to help us discover ways to dismantle white supremacy and "undo" racism. It will be led by Mary Pugh Clark from the FCRJ Coordinating Committee who is the author of the Study Guide for Deep Denial.

Please contact Angela Hopkins at angelaforestglenn@yahoo.com to let her know you plan to attend so that we can plan for hand-outs and food.

—*Nancy Riffer*

December PoHo Retreats with Mary Kay Glazer

For more information, visit powellhouse.org.

What Are You Waiting For? An Advent Retreat

December 15-17, 2017 Friday 7:00pm – Sunday lunch

During this retreat, we will have the gift of time to reflect on the season of Advent, the season of life unseen, the season of dawning light. The season where our faith and hope can be tested as we hold fast to the belief in that which we cannot see. Advent is a spiritual adventure. Anne Pomeroy will be elder for this retreat.

Solstice: The Birth Within

December 21, 2017 2:00pm to 8:00pm

What is the interplay of dark and light in your life, and in the life of the world? What are the spiritual gifts of the dark? Of the light? What is the full spectrum of spiritual light? Join us for a time of spiritual seeking and renewal that includes time outdoors, supper, snacks, and a place for you to take a breath during this busy season. Joe Garren will be elder for this retreat.

Spiritual Direction

I will be available for spiritual direction Monday December 18 – Wednesday December 20. Contact me directly to set up a time. mkgglazer@me.com or 952-905-4847

I'm looking forward to be at Powell House and I hope to see you there.

Love and abiding peace,

—*Mary Kay*

Mary Kay Glazer, a long-time member of NYYM, now lives in Greenville, NC with her husband Mark Moss. She has a passion for spiritual formation: the many ways we are shaped by God, and how we respond. Find out more at www.mkgglazer.com

ACT Thanksgiving, Sunday Nov 19, 3pm

You are invited to attend the Area Congregations Together (ACT) Annual Multi-faith Thanksgiving Service on Nov. 19, 2017, 3 pm, at St. Catherine of Siena Church. The guest speakers, Judge John Rowley and Rev. Santosh Ninan, will share with us very important information, gratitude and hope, for dealing with the heroin overdose crisis our community/country now faces. Snacks provided!

Gary Edward Rith Open Pottery Studio

Visit November 24th or 25th between 11am and 4pm. See pottery making and fun pots! We are on Route 366 at 540 Main St, Etna, NY, a light green house about 3/4 mile north of Route 13

— Gary Rith, garyrith@yahoo.com, 607 347 6444

Announcements from ARCH – Aging Resources, Consultation and Help

ARCH is a program of New York Yearly Meeting

Through individual consultations, workshops, and trainings, ARCH provides resources to help us all cultivate a community of well-supported aging friends.

ARCH staff primarily support the work of our network of regional Coordinators and volunteer ARCH Visitors, f/Friends from all corners of NYYM who have attended a weekend training retreat where they learn how to:

- vigil at the end of life,
- sharpen active listening skills,
- complete advanced care directives,
- locate local aging resources,
- make a spiritual assessment,
- set up a care team,
- and much more.

ARCH is a program of NYYM with oversight from the Committee on Aging Concerns, under Nurture Coordinating Committee.

Ithaca & Perry City Friends who have taken the ARCH training are: Molly Ames, Bronwyn Mohlke, Betsy Root, Susan Ruff, Elizabeth Schneider, Rebekah Tanner, and Susan Wolf.

On Medicare

“Medicare Basics” Presentation

On Tuesday, November 7, 1:45–4:00 pm there is a talk on “Medicare Basics” at Lifelong, 119 W. Court Street. Sarah Jane Blake gives this popular presentation. It is designed for those approaching 65 and/or new to Medicare. But if you have been on Medicare for a while and still find it confusing, this presentation may be just what you have been looking for. Please call Lifelong to register so that there will be sufficient materials available: 607-273-1511.

Medicare Annual Election Period

If you are currently on Medicare and have a Medicare Advantage Plan or a stand-alone Part D drug plan, you can make a change in your coverage for 2018 during the Medicare Open Enrollment/Annual Election Period, October 15–December 7. Lifelong holds Open Enrollment Clinics where Certified Volunteer Counselors offer free one-to-one health insurance counseling. For information on the dates and times of the Clinics, call Lifelong at 607-273-1511.

Sitting Vigil: Being a compassionate presence at the bedside

On Saturday November 18, ARCH will host a vigiling workshop at the Burt House (see calendar, page 6).

In this training we will delve into what it means to sit vigil—to be present in the last hours of life for another person—offering support and a comforting presence. This may mean being present with someone who is dying without family members or friends available or providing support to family members who need a break from the bedside of their loved one.

Those who sit vigil do not give hands-on care or offer advice, but they do offer companionship, support, and comfort. They are a calming, peaceful presence for the patient and the family.

The workshop will focus on:

- being comfortable with silence;
- how to recognize and be comfortable with the signs and symptoms of impending death;
- how to create a peaceful environment for the dying; and
- how best to be present with a dying patient and their family.

“Extending our compassionate presence to a fellow human being is a simple act. There is nothing special about it. It requires a willingness to be aware, open and loving. This is not always easy. We are required to drop our habitual ways of doing things and any agendas we may have... We may think that we can do “compassionate presence” by assuming the right outer appearance, ... The truth is, we cannot do ‘compassionate presence,’ we can only be compassionate presence.”

—Kirsten DeLeo, *Contemplative End of Life Care Program Instructor*

No Meeting for Business Occurred in October

Because Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business was canceled last month, there are no Minutes in this newsletter.

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

Women of all ages are welcome to gather for gentle, yet powerful restoration of heart, mind, soul, strength. No experience or equipment needed. Please check with Nancy Gabriel the day before: 339-7123; ntg2@cornell.edu. We offer a donation to the teacher.

Tai Ji Quan, Tuesdays 7:30-8:30p

Peaceful. Although being a martial art, this class is a welcoming and warm retreat focused on well being and health. The most likely self defense situation that we hope our class helps prepare for is avoiding slips and falls. Contact Chris Dunham for more information. Donations to cover costs.

November 2017 Calendar of Ithaca Monthly Meeting

Men's Fellowship Lunch Thursday, November 2, noon

The \$10 lunch buffet at Diamond's Indian restaurant provides a great opportunity to get together! For more information, contact Lynn Podhaski at lynnpodhaski@yahoo.com or Liam Murphy at liamgbmurphy@verizon.net.

Welcome Youth Visitors Sunday, November 5, 10:30a

Youth visitors from Genesee Valley Monthly Meeting will join us for Meeting for Worship and a lunch afterward. Help us welcome them.

Women's Fellowship Friday, November 10, 7p

Join for casual conversation, no agenda, with or without knitting. We will be at Ten Forward, a vegan cafe above Autumn Leaves bookstore on the Commons. There is plenty of room!

Movie Night at FCRJ Friday, November 10, 7:00 p

Come enjoy a movie, thoughtful discussion, popcorn and lemonade at the Friends Center for Racial Justice. Our first movie will be *Fences*, an American drama starring Denzel Washington.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Sunday, November 12, Rise of Meeting

Join the Quaker decision-making process. Proposed agenda items should be sent to our clerk, John Lewis, by the preceding Monday.

Sitting Vigil: A Compassionate Beside Presence Saturday, November 18, 10a-4p

Join us at the Burt House, 227 North Willard Way, for this exploration of what it means to sit vigil. See page 5 for more information.

Let's Talk About the Quality of our Worship Sunday, November 19, Rise of Meeting

Join in considering queries around our experience of worship. See page 1 for additional context.

Vegetarian Thanksgiving Thursday, November 24, 4p

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

Dish-to-Pass Brunch Sunday, November 26, Rise of Meeting

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

Newsletter submissions due Thursday, November 30, 5p

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

On Sundays

10:30a **Meeting for Worship** at the Third Street Meetinghouse

11:15a **Children in childcare** enter the meetingroom for inter-generational Meeting for Worship.

Other Weekly IMM Events

Mid-week Meeting at the Burt House
Wednesdays at 7:30p

The Burt House is at 227 North Willard Way, Ithaca.