



Newsletter of the

# Ithaca Monthly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

January 2017

## IMM CONTACTS

[ithacamonthlymeeting.org](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:mlr17@cornell.edu)

## On Vocal Ministry

by Christopher Sammond, General Secretary of New York Yearly Meeting

Reprinted from the November 2016 issue of Spark

As I have worked with the Spiritual Nurture Working Group (SNWG), to offer workshops to monthly meetings on over ten topics which might nurture and support the Life of the Spirit in their meetings, what Friends have been asking for, more than all the other topics combined, is help and guidance on vocal ministry. Clearly, this central practice in our faith is an area where many of us have concerns, and where many of our meetings struggle. Some say there is not enough vocal ministry, and yearn for more in their meetings. Others experience vocal ministry in their meetings as being shallow, and even problematic. What we on the SNWG have emphasized, is the reality that vocal ministry is not an entity in itself, but arises out of the quality of the community of Friends gathered in worship. Here's a summary statement which for me encapsulates how I understand vocal ministry:

*Vocal ministry with depth and power comes though us from the Divine, and arises, by grace, through the communion of Friends in a gathered meeting.*

This is a very dense, compact statement. Let's unpack it one piece at a time.

Gathered worship occurs by grace. Gathered worship cannot be ordered up or made to happen. There are, however, conditions and efforts on our part which can make this treasured experience more likely to happen, or less so.

*Enlightenment is an accident. Practice makes us accident prone. — Zen proverb*

One condition which makes us more "accident prone" to receive the gift of a gathered meeting is a depth of community characterized by trust and knowing each other, of being able to be open in heart and spirit with each other. If it doesn't feel safe to open our hearts to the others in the room, it is difficult, if not nigh on impossible, to open them to God.

Another condition is that which arises from daily spiritual practice. Such practice allows us to "come to worship with hearts and minds prepared," an advice in almost all Friends Faith and Practices.

*Vocal ministry with depth and power arises out of community gathered together in worship.*

Spirit-led vocal ministry does not arise ex nihilo. Only in very rare occasions does a powerful message gather and deepen a body of Friends which had been scattered and un-centered. It is almost always the other way around; a gathered and centered body makes the occurrence of genuine vocal ministry possible. It is therefore something that we all create together. "Friends have never regarded this (Quaker meeting for worship) as an individual activity. People who regard Friends meetings as opportunities for meditation have failed to appreciate this corporate aspect. The waiting and listening are activities in which everybody is engaged and, as we shall see, produce spoken ministry which helps to articulate the common guidance which the Holy Spirit is believed to give the group as a whole.

*Vocal Ministry, continued on page 2*

So the waiting and listening is corporate also. This is why Friends emphasize the 'ministry of silence' and the importance of coming to meeting regularly and with heart and mind prepared." (John Punshon, Encounter with Silence)

*Vocal ministry with depth and power comes though us from the Divine.*

Friends' understanding of vocal ministry is that a message is something from the Divine, something from well beyond our own small selves, coming from God, the Inner Teacher, the Light Within, leading and guiding us as individuals and as a community. This may seem like an audacious claim, to put it mildly. Yet that has been the experience of our process in worship to which Friends have witnessed for over three hundred years. "The term prophetic indicates in a single word the basic theory of Quaker ministry...a ministry which waits until it becomes a vocal expression of the Divine Word spoken immediately in the heart." (Howard Brinton)

To act as a prophet is to give voice to the Divine. Thus, all authentic vocal ministry is, at its heart, prophetic. And while we can never get our small selves completely out of the way, the degree to which a message is vocal ministry, and not our own interesting thoughts, depends upon the degree to which we are able to let the Divine speak through us. Bill Tabor, renowned Quaker teacher, saw this capacity as something which we can even "catch" from each other. "Even so, many of the prophets act as if the willingness and the ability to be a prophet can at least be caught, and perhaps even taught, so long as we remember that the fact of prophecy remains with God alone."

We discern whether a message is merely our own interesting thoughts, or coming from our egocentric desire to speak or be heard, or whether it is a message from the Divine for the gathered meeting. Discernment is going to the place where God makes things clear. (Wade Wilson) Discernment, therefore, is key to our understanding of vocal ministry.

## Checklist on Discernment as to Whether or Not to Give Vocal Ministry

### Basic

- |                                  |                             |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Am I in a deeply centered place? | If "no," return to center.  |
| Do I desire to speak?            | If "yes," return to center. |
| Do I desire not to speak?        | If "yes," return to center. |

### More Advanced

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Is this message only for me?                  | If "yes," return to center. |
| Is the meeting gathered enough to receive it? | If "no," return to center.  |
| Is now the time?                              | If "no," return to center.  |

### Queries

- If enlightenment (and Spirit-led vocal ministry) is an accident, how do we practice our faith daily so that we become more "accident prone?"
- Can prophetic ministry be "caught?" If so, how best to expose ourselves to the virus?

## Note from our CALM Committee

Greetings Ithaca Monthly Meeting Parents!

On behalf of the Children and the Life of the Meeting (CALM) committee, I am writing with some news for 2017.

We are excited to have offered the childcare position (formerly held by Cierra) to a young woman from the larger Ithaca community. We will let you know as soon as we know that she has accepted. She is available to start in February, so until then we will still have Sarah Saxon coordinating childcare, with Elsa Mohlke as a regular provider.

We've determined that since the childcare person's job ends at 12:15pm on Sundays, it's important that parents take over supervision at noon. This gives the staff person time to clean up and be truly finished by 12:15pm. Thanks for your attention to this detail. Please know where your children are at noon and make sure they are adequately supervised. If they choose to take out toys or materials after noon, please take responsibility for making sure things get cleaned up. We so appreciate the childcare provider's time, and we want to support them in ending on time.

We are excited to have seen our 5-7 year-old cohort grow in recent months! Sometimes there are now too many children in the under 8 group for the childcare person to manage, and often there are enough in the 5-7 group to warrant their own First Day School class. Ellie Rosenberg is enthusiastically going to begin offering a short (15 minute) organized activity or lesson for this age group. So if your child is between the ages of 5 and 7, they will now be spending from 10:30am-10:45am with Ellie. After that there will be play and craft options, as usual.

Children younger than 5 are also welcome to join Ellie's group, if it's a good fit. They can decide on a week-to-week basis which they prefer--to go with Ellie or stay with the childcare provider.

We are pleased to see our First Day School growing and changing. Please contact anyone on the committee with questions or suggestions. The 2017 committee membership is:

Ellie Rosenberg (clerk)  
Melissa Blake  
Sarah Saxon  
Joanne Sturgeon  
... and we could use one more member. Interested?

Peaceful New Year,

— *Melissa Blake*

## Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

### Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, December 11, 2016

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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.)

#### 2016 12.1 Gathering

Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met in Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on December 11, 2016. At 12:31pm, 25 Friends gathered and settled into worship. Clerk recognized Fell Cadwallader who was holding the Meeting in the Light.

*"May words of the Spirit be spoken, and words of the Spirit be heard."*

Clerk read a poem by Monk Gibbon (1896-1987), Irish poet and pacifist. (He was not a monk.)

##### ***The Last Thing***

*Who'd be afraid of death.*

*I think only fools*

*are. For it is not*

*as though this thing*

*were given to one man only, but all*

*receive it. The journey that my*

*friend makes, I can*

*make also. If I know*

*nothing else, I know*

*this, I go where he is.*

*O Fools, shrinking from this little door,*

*Through which so many kind and lovely souls have passed*

*Before you,*

*Will you hang back?*

*Harder in your case than another?*

*Not so.*

*And too much silence?*

*Has there not been enough stir here?*

*Go bravely, for where so much greatness and gentleness have been*

*Already, You should be glad to follow.*

#### 2016 12.2 Finance Committee

Nancy Hillegas reported comments and highlights that both informed and impacted the 2017 budget. The majority of the change in budget expense is related to forecast fees and maintenance for the Third Street Meeting House. In response to a request from New York Yearly Meeting, IMM chose to increase its annual donation. Nancy reviewed how these and other "cost-of-living" increases have resulted in various budget offsets as well as an 8.5% increase in our requests for donations. Nancy provided perspective on a variety of line items that will either increase, decrease, stay the same or be eliminated. Gina Varicchio, representing the TSMC committee, shared more specific detail about the budget increases related to the Third Street Meetinghouse, including the

necessity of supplemental cleaning and garbage fees. Mike Simkin, Treasurer, reminded all that the meeting has also witnessed an increase in income related to building usage. It is anticipated that this will continue and will likely increase.

A variety of questions and concerns were raised and addressed.

Friends acknowledged the concern and deep thought that went into the construction of the budget, the stewardship of funds throughout the year, as well as the financial realities that are reflected at the end of each year.

Friends approved the 2017 budget.@

#### 2016 12.3 Nominating Committee

Nancy Riffer presented the slate of proposed candidates for IMM's committees and recommended that the Pastoral Care Committee be divided into two functions—one to offer meals and rides, name yet to be determined, and one to offer spiritual nurture, as follows:

- a. Meals and Wheels (tentative name) will have a coordinator. Friends will let that person know when someone in the meeting is in need of help. The coordinator will contact a list of Friends who have volunteered to be available to assist others with food or transportation and then facilitate communication between the volunteer and the person needing assistance. When the needs are complex, a facilitator will be found for that particular situation.
- b. Spiritual Nurture: At this time, interest to focus energy and attention on spiritual nurture has matured to the level of a working group, not a committee. Nancy Gabriel, Dreia Spies and Annalisa Raymer have agreed to serve on a working group. They will explore the idea of spiritual nurture and develop a charge and recommendation for a committee. Others who would like to join should contact Nancy Gabriel.

Nancy described the committee's distinction between an assistant clerk and a rising clerk. The assistant clerk will work with the clerk to accomplish tasks of the Meeting. One year before the end of the clerk's term, Nominating Committee will propose a person to be rising clerk who will become clerk the following year.

Nominating Committee continues to look for one more member for CALM and one more member for the Burt House Committee.

Concerns and questions were raised and addressed.

Friends approved the nominations.@

Friends approved Nomination's recommendations for changes to the Pastoral Care Committee.@

#### 2016 12.4 Naming Committee

Marilyn Ray reported for the Naming Committee on its efforts to fill vacancies on the Nominating Committee. Carl Peterson and Karen Reixach have been nominated to fill open positions.

Friends approved the nominations.@

*Minutes, continued on page 4*

### 2016 12.5a Ministry and Worship – membership transfer

Ministry and Worship reports the transfer of Nathan and Tobias Kennedy to Ithaca Monthly Meeting from Binghamton Monthly Meeting.

Friends received the report and welcomed both.@

### 2016 12.5b Ministry and Worship – community request

Ministry and Worship has received a request from Matthew Sanaker of St. John's Episcopal Church asking if IMM would like to participate in a group of services to be held in various houses of worship in Ithaca on the weekend of the Presidential Inauguration. The intent is to join together "in a common prayer for peace." One of the requests made to IMM is that we provide physical space for other spiritual groups that do not have a house of worship of their own – Native American spirituality or Wicca were two possibilities. Ministry and Worship recommends that we approve this use of the building.

Questions and concerns were raised and addressed.

Friends approved the use of the building for a community-wide offering of prayers for peace, including services held by other spiritual communities.@

### 2016 12.6 Ad Hoc Working Group for Immigrant Support

Garry Thomas reported that the Ad Hoc Working Group for Immigrant Support seeks the Meeting's approval to hang a banner on the Meetinghouse building welcoming immigrants and refugees. The Ad Hoc Working Group for Immigrant Support proposes that IMM purchase a 3' x 8' banner from Faithful America with the message "Immigrants & Refugees Welcome." The banner includes an image of the holy family forced to flee from violence and take refuge in a foreign land. The Ad Hoc Working Group further proposes that this banner be hung on an appropriate exterior wall of the meetinghouse.

Questions and concerns about Quakers' history and identity, as evidenced by our broad support of inclusivity for all immigrants, as well as the size of the banner were raised. Continued discussion about IMM's consideration of a long-term, appropriately-sized, permanent welcome banner reflecting this broad, inclusive support was recommended.

Friends did not feel unity around approving the purchase and display of the banner at this time. The matter will be taken up again at February's Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.@

### 2016 12.7 Earthcare

Margaret McCasland reporting on behalf of the Earthcare Committee recommended the following donations that by process require meeting's approval:

- **Cayuga Lake Floating Classroom:** \$100. The Floating Classroom is a land and water-based program that offers hands-on environmental education via eco-cruises and their Trout in the Classroom program.

- **Quaker Institute of the Future:** \$100. The Quaker Institute for the Future researches topics relating to Earthcare via Meetings for Business with Attention to Research. IMM's Earthcare committee has formed a Circle of Discernment to work with QIF on the query, "What Are the Common Roots of Social and Environmental Injustice?"
- **Indigenous Environmental Network:** \$167. The Indigenous Environmental Network is an alliance of North American First Nations protecting Earth based on indigenous teachings.
- **Finger Lakes Climate Fund:** \$133. The Finger Lakes Climate Fund is a voluntary carbon offset program run by Sustainable Tompkins. This year Earthcare will pay for offsetting the amount of CO2 released when we use natural gas for heating, cooking and hot water at the Third Street Meeting House. While we spent over \$4,000 this year for gas and electric at TSMH, the offset is only \$133: this amount reflects the cost of helping low and moderate income families in the area reduce their use of fossil fuels enough to balance CO2 emissions here at TSMH. A related proposal for IMM offsetting subsequent years' use of natural gas at the TSMH will be forthcoming in 2017, along with more information on how offsets work.

Friends approved the donations.@

### 2016 12.8 Closing worship

Fifteen Friends settled into silent worship at 2:52pm before adjourning. Our next regular Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business and the corporation's Annual Meeting will be held at the rise of Meeting on January 8, 2016.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Blair Jennings*

## January in IMM History

*Note: IMM has used a calendar fiscal year since Jan. 1982. Thus January business meetings since 1983 have been annual meetings when little if any business was conducted. Prior to 1982, annual meetings were usually held in May, and January was a month for normal business. However, older minutes for January in years ending in two and seven contained little that was historically noteworthy.*

### 50 Years Ago (January 9, 1967)

A letter from Dorothy Gorley in Rhodesia was read expressing the need for help for African students. A pamphlet about the work of Rodney and Joan Morris in Kenya was also presented. IMM decided to make a contribution toward the work in Kenya.

Notices of the anti-Vietnam War vigils each Wednesday were approved to be forwarded to newspaper and radio outlets. A Selective Service counselling committee was set up in the Unitarian church, for which contributions of Friends might be requested in the future.

— Tom Brown, IMM Historian

## Opportunities to Discuss Racial Justice

IMM's Ad Hoc Racial Justice Committee invites you to several events to deepen our understanding of the struggle for racial justice. There are events on page 6 that are sponsored by the Meeting, (see January 10, 15 and 29) but of course you are welcome to bring others. Events below (such as January 16 and 26) are broader community events. These follow on our reading of *Waking Up White*, and will enrich our reading of *The New Jim Crow*. Copies of *The New Jim Crow* are still available at the Multicultural Resource Center to own, and at the Tompkins County Public Library.

## What is Meeting for Healing?

Meeting for Healing will be January 15 (see page 6). The format is adapted from a similar event led by Marcelle Martin at Pendle Hill. Out of the silence, individuals ask for prayers or holding in the light for themselves, friends or relatives, or others who are ill or who might otherwise need help. In one area of the room is a chair for those who would like hands-on healing. The Meeting for Healing concludes with participants joining hands in the center to murmur additional names of people who could benefit from attention, but who didn't rise to the level of a message.

— Dreia Spies

# January 2017 Community Calendar

## 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. Laughter likely. No experience or equipment needed. Just come, or if you have questions ask Nancy Gabriel (339-7123; ntg2@cornell.edu.) We offer a donation to the teacher.

## Ithaca Community Chorus January 14, 7:30p

The Ithaca Community Chorus will be joined by the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra in a performance of the Vivaldi "Gloria" and the Rejcha "Te Deum." St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 402 North Aurora Street. Tickets available from Chorus members and at <http://www.ithacacommunitychoruses.org/groups/iccs/tickets-for-vivaldis-gloria/>

This is glorious music; you will be uplifted and energized when you hear it. Connie Thomas, Pat Pingel, Kathleen Gale, Dreia Spies, Melody Johnson and many others will be singing.

## Community Reading Event: *The New Jim Crow* Monday January 16, 5:30 pm

IMM's Ad Hoc Racial Justice Committee encourages you to join the *The New Jim Crow* community reading event on re-entry: "Felons Need Not Apply," at the Beverly J Martin elementary school gym.

## 2017 Winter Gathering of Farmington Scipio Region Meeting Saturday, January 21, 8:30a-4p

Our region's Winter Gathering will be held at Rochester Friends Meeting, 84 Scio St., Rochester, NY.

## Community Film: *The House I Live In* Thursday, January 26, 6pm

IMM's Ad Hoc Racial Justice Committee encourages you to join the *The House I Live In* viewing at the Tompkins County Public Library.

## Marin is Celebrating 50 Years Friday, January 27, 6-10p



Marin Clarkberg invites Friends to join in a celebration of the last fifty years in the third floor ballroom at the Community School of Music and Arts. There will be some food and *Cold Stone Miracle*, a local soul band, will be performing. Bring along a beverage of your choice to share. Come on and dance.

## Richie Sing Saturday, January 28, 6:30 or 7:30

Come to the next Richie Sing at the Ithaca Friends Meetinghouse. Dish to pass at 6:30, singing at 7:30. All are welcome to sing or listen, bring your voices and instruments and we'll sing your favourite songs. There is a no-alcohol policy at the Meetinghouse.

## Visit the NYYM Children and Youth Field Secretary Saturday and Sunday, January 28 and 29

Melinda Wenner Bradley, the NYYM Children and Youth Field Secretary, will be hosted at Poplar Ridge Friends Meeting at 1868 Poplar Ridge Road, just a few miles east of downtown Aurora. Melinda has extensive experience in both leading worship and retreats for adults interested in Quaker spiritual formation, and creating programs for children and youth. Her work weaves together interests in children's spiritual lives, program development, and how to support families in local meeting communities.

## Saturday, 6pm Family Night

Covered dish dinner followed by multigenerational program, "Patterns and Examples: Games with Friends." All ages are invited to participate in a playful exploration of what we share in common with one another and with "famous Friends" in history and today. We'll play games that help us learn more about our community and the different ways Friends have let their lives speak.

## Sunday, 10am Meeting for Worship

Semi-programmed, multigenerational worship will include Melinda sharing a Godly Play story and the gathered community wondering together about the message.

There will be a light lunch following worship, and then Melinda will lead a discussion about her work for NYYM.

# January 2017 Calendar of Ithaca Monthly Meeting

## **Women's Fellowship Friday, January 6, 7pm**

Join for casual conversation, no agenda, with or without knitting.

## **Death Cafe Saturday, January 7, 2-4p**

Please join us in a relaxed setting to discuss death, drink tea, and eat cake. Death Cafes are gatherings to share thought-provoking, engaging and respectful conversations on death. They are not intended as a bereavement support group, counseling or therapy. This event is open to all. However space is limited, so RSVPs are required. The event is free, but donations are welcome. To RSVP or for more information, please contact Angela Mennitto at [deathcafeithaca@gmail.com](mailto:deathcafeithaca@gmail.com). See more at: <http://deathcafe.com/deathcafe/4117/#sthash.eahBmO9c.dpuf>

## **Annual Meeting of the Corporation and Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Sunday, January 8, Rise of Meeting**

Join in the Quaker decision-making process. Agenda items should be sent to our clerk, Antonia Saxon, by the preceding Wednesday.

## **View and Discuss *Slavery by Another Name* Tuesday Jan. 10, 5:30**

IMM's Ad Hoc Racial Justice Committee invites you to view and discuss the PBS documentary *Slavery by Another Name* at the Third Street Meetinghouse. Soup at 5:30, viewing at 6.

## **Discussion of *The New Jim Crow* Sunday, January 15, 9-10:20am**

IMM's Ad Hoc Racial Justice Committee invites you to discuss pages 178-220 of *The New Jim Crow* at our Meetinghouse.

## **Meeting for Healing Sunday, January 15, 9:15a**

Led by Dreia Spies. Out of the silence, individuals ask for prayers or holding in the light. See page 5 (top right) for more.

## **Dish-to-Pass Brunch Sunday, January 22, Rise of Meeting**

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

## **Young Adult Friends Gathering Sunday, January 22, Rise of Meeting**

Young Adult Friends (ages 18 to 35ish), please join us for a snack or light lunch. We'll gather to eat, chat, and talk a bit about our spiritual journeys. What draws you to Friends? To Ithaca Meeting? Emily Provance, Co-Young Adult Field Secretary for New York Yearly Meeting, will be visiting and looks forward to meeting you. Parents with small children are welcome to join.

## **ARCH Discussion Sunday, January 22, After Brunch**

Please join us in planning for upcoming ARCH (Aging Resources Consultation & Help) presentations. We need your input! Lend us your ideas, inspirations, creativity, and leadings in helping us plan for the coming year. We will meet for this discussion on January 22nd following brunch. ARCH visitors include Molly Ames, Bronwyn Mohlke, Betsy Root, Elizabeth Schneider, Susan Wolf.

## **Newsletter submissions due Thursday, January 26, 5p**

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

## **Last Friday Night Supper Friday, January 27, 6p**

We will gather again for supper on the last Friday of each month January through April. All are welcome. Soup and bread will be provided. Side dishes or desserts are welcome, but it is OK to arrive without bringing food to share. There is no agenda, just a chance to enjoy some non-rushed time together.

## **Discussion of *The New Jim Crow* Sunday, January 29, 9-10:20am**

IMM's Ad Hoc Racial Justice Committee invites you to discuss pages 221-261 of *The New Jim Crow* at our Meetinghouse.

### **On Sundays**

- 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**

- Mid-week Meeting at the Burt House  
Wednesdays at 7:30p  
The Burt House is at 227 North Willard Way, Ithaca.