

543 South Mountain Avenue

Ashland, Oregon 97520

(541) 482-0814

[communications@ashlandquakers.org](mailto:communications@ashlandquakers.org)

[www.ashlandquakers.org](http://www.ashlandquakers.org)

## SUNDAY AM SCHEDULE

### First-Hour Activity

9 to 10 am

**Spirit-Based Discussions  
Hybrid: Both In-Person and  
via Zoom (link below)**

**7 Jun Circle of Light** Now 9-10 am  
(see discussion on Page 5)

**14 Jun Rise of Meeting** "Welcome to Summer" **Pot Luck Lunch.**  
Please label ingredients and honor such food sensitivities as gluten-free, onions, vinegar, tomatoes, bay leaf, and vegan/vegetarian.

**21 Jun Business Meeting**  
**new time 9-10:30 am**  
**IN PERSON ONLY** (for hybrid, contact Rochelle in a timely fashion)

**28 Jun** First-Hour Activity To Be Determined

**Outdoor Worship on the Back Deck 11-11:45 am Sundays**

### Meeting for Worship

**11 am to Noon EVERY Sunday**  
**Hybrid: Both at the Quaker Meeting House and by Zoom**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7477317797pwd=SW1sd3pTZjhIbGRmUWpOY3pZaUFDdz09>

# SOUTH MOUNTAIN FRIENDS MEETING

## THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

Unprogrammed Worship in Ashland, Oregon

### Sixth Month 2026

## Advices and Queries on Creativity

The creative impulse is part of being human, a gift from the Holy Spirit, and a way of finding a deep connection with our Creator.

Friends exercise our creative gifts as spiritual disciplines that require time, focus, patience, trust, love, and openness to the Spirit. We are encouraged to develop and exercise them with awe and gratitude under the leading of that Spirit.

We acknowledge and cherish the creativity found in our meetings.

We remain aware of the spiritual danger of idolizing or belittling artistic gifts or accomplishments, whether our own or others'.

We acknowledge that the searching heart can express itself in many forms. Spirit-led creative activity is a path into the Light, not a distraction from or an obstruction to a centered life. Creativity can be a form of worship and witness, a ministry and a calling, a way of speaking out of the silence. Like other spiritual disciplines, creative expression carries the potential for spiritual transformation.



***Creativity has become a spiritual practice, and my spiritual practice has become the creative process. These have become one. My work is about preparing the ground and then receiving and amplifying what comes. There is a transformation for us spiritually as we receive it.***

**—Anna Fritz, 2016**

*Do we exercise our creativity in humility and gratitude to the Creator who makes our work possible?*

*Do we recognize creation as a sacred act and creative ability as a gift from God?*

*Do we use our creative gifts to bring beauty, healing, and joy into others' lives and to reflect the glory of creation?*

*Within our meeting communities, do we recognize and encourage each other in the exercise of creative gifts?*

*In a culture that glorifies individual achievements, do we hold our own creations lightly?*

# Local Young Adults Learn Lobbying Skills

It was Initially called Spring Lobby Weekend. Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) annually hosted over 300 students, recent grads, Quakers, and young adults in Washington, DC, to learn and lobby Congress.

It was in the Spring 2023 that South Mountain Friends Meeting via our Peace & Social Concerns committee first sponsored two Southern Oregon University students to attend this special lobbying event. One of them was Celia Rodriguez. Ceila subsequently became a part of the FCNL's Young Advocates Program.



Ceila (2<sup>nd</sup> from left in above photo), now a local special education teacher, gathered five Southern Oregon friends to join her at the 2026 Changemakers, two of whom were sponsored by South Mountain Friends Meeting: Veronica Ascención (3<sup>rd</sup> from left) and Anna Palermino (far right). Ceila organized and facilitated one of the Changemakers' three affinity groups, hers focusing on immigrants and their offspring.

—Herb Rothschild and Bob Morse

This year the weekend was reconfigured and renamed. During the inaugural Friends Changemaker Weekend, 11-14 April 2026, over 300 advocates from across the country and *across generations* came together for a weekend of education and action. The Changemakers began with three days of building intergenerational community, learning from each other and policy experts, and preparing to take to Congress to lobby. Then together they called for no more funding for war on Iran. In the above photo, they were lobbying with Senator Wyden, in the below photo with Senator Merkley.



# A Letter Of Literary Gratitude

Dear South Mountaineers,

As some of you may remember, I started writing early in my time in Ashland. After some previous wild swings in my career plans (geologist! translator!), I finally had a clear vision of what I wanted: write books for kids. But publication wasn't an easy track. It took fourteen years of pigheaded perseverance.

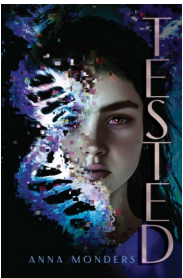
Since moving to New England in 2020, there's been movement. I completed an MFA program in writing for children. I signed with a literary agent. I celebrated two book contracts. And my first book just came out this spring.



But before all that...there were those ten years in Ashland where I was feeling my way forward on a path that was new, daunting, and — for some reason — absolutely necessary for me to follow. At the current moment, when I can hold the physical evidence of all the effort in my hands — a 336 page book with a gleamy cover and fancy sprayed edges — I have not forgotten the important (but less flashy) Ashland years. That was a time of root growth. Strength building. Developing who I was as a writer.

South Mountain Friends Meeting was certainly part of that journey. I found space for discernment in loving clearness and support committees. I found renewal in the silence of Meeting. I found stability in the community of caring individuals. I appreciate those gifts immensely.

The Free Writing Friends group cheered me on as I found my way into my first novel manuscript — a dragon fantasy inspired by my time in the Peace Corps. That manuscript remains unpublished, but I needed to write it, and I learned from it.



In 2018, I started a new middle-grade novel, *Tested*. This one would become my debut, published by Simon & Schuster in March 2026. It is the story of 14-year-old Mikayla, a genetic Elite in a world ruthlessly divided by genetic class. As I was working on the manuscript, there was a phrase that kept coming back to me. It was something that Lucy Edwards and Jim Phillips said at an SMFM adult education program on their work in Honduras. “We don’t resist because we’re resilient; we are resilient because we resist.” That line stayed with me and fed me as I worked on a novel about one girl finding her voice and the courage to take a stand against a broken system.

Thank you for being with me.

Anna Monders, a South Mountain Friend now living in Vermont

A copy of *Tested* lives in our South Mountain Friends library. I recommend reading it. —Ed.

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## Quaker Events Open to the Greater Community

**Free Writing Friends:** every MONDAY afternoon

**Song Circle:** 6:30 pm 2nd TUESDAYS

**Meditation on Peace & Love:** 5-6 pm every THURSDAY

**Applied Improv Open Studio:** Occurs QUARTERLY

**Details:**

[OUR SCHEDULE |](#)  
[AshlandQuakers](#)

# One Good Movie Recommendation Deserves Another

During a recent segment of the “How to Quaker” series, convener Bill Ashworth, spoke about the testimony on Equality. It was a very rich and abundant sharing of both the very interesting and sometimes unexpected history, as well as this Meeting’s participants’ current life experiences.

Bill recommended a favorite palatable movie to lift up some of society’s dichotomous mores for reflection. The film is called *Something New*.

Similarly, I would like to offer my own favorite movie, *The Brand New Testament*. The story line is that Jesus apparently had a sister, and she is alive and well and living in Brussels with her father, “God,” who’s a bit of a malevolent personage in that he wreaks havoc on everyone’s life. Despite the religious-sounding title, the movie is primarily about relations—all kinds of diverse and unconventional relationships—told in a very heartwarming, humorous, and encouraging way.

In the words of film critic, Sonia Cerca, “It’s been a while since I last saw such a humorous film that manages to be also touching, but most of all thought-provoking. What I wasn’t expecting, however, was the depth to which the plot would get as soon as the story progresses. Because the story really isn’t about religion, it is about life.”

Even though it’s in French with English subtitles, the film is very easy to follow. It’s a treat that *The Brand New Testament* finishes with an incredible feeling of satisfaction at the realization of poetic justice. —Karen Maleski



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## Anima Mundi Productions Presents Spanish Piano Virtuoso

3 pm Sunday 31 May at SOU Music Recital Hall, Ashland

This unique solo recital features pianist Daniel del Pino’s Flamenco-infused Spanish salon music with touches of French impressionism. In keeping with the theme for the 2025-26 season, *For Love of Nature*, Daniel del Pino’s landscape-rich music will be interspersed with original poetry by resident poet Tiziana DellaRovere, weaving a beautiful thematic tapestry that celebrates the beauty of our world.



Del Pino specializes in the music of turn-of-the-century Spain, featuring composers like Albéniz, Granados, Turina, and de Falla, a musical world rich in flamenco influences. While some audiences may be less familiar with Spanish classical music than with the French composers Del Pino will perform (Debussy and Ravel), they will certainly recognize many of the guitar-inspired melodies that have made their way into popular imagination over the past century.

Del Pino was born in Lebanon to Spanish parents, and later studied in Morocco and Madrid, and at Yale University, where he was singled out with multiple awards. He has performed on every continent except Antarctica, captivating audiences worldwide from New York’s Carnegie Hall to Madrid’s Auditorio Nacional.

Watch samples of del Pino’s piano excellence:

[https://youtu.be/QCnAH0uqxZ8?si=V72ikMyVFvO7qI\\_D&t=9](https://youtu.be/QCnAH0uqxZ8?si=V72ikMyVFvO7qI_D&t=9)  
[https://youtu.be/-tnvbk\\_v2Xk?si=TrZKjXNMxmQbiD1S&t=7](https://youtu.be/-tnvbk_v2Xk?si=TrZKjXNMxmQbiD1S&t=7)

**Tickets and information** online at [www.HumanityTickets.com](http://www.HumanityTickets.com) or by calling 541-833-3066 ext.1 or emailing [tickets@animamundiproductions.com](mailto:tickets@animamundiproductions.com)

# Meeting for Worship for Business 17 May 2026

**Friends Present:** Bill Ashworth, Melody Ashworth, Crystal Bosbach, Ken Deveney, Lori Fleuter, Ann Gaffney, Jamie McLeod-Skinner, Bob Morse, Josephine Olson, Jean Semrau, Nancy Spear, Adam Thompson, Mary Ward, Rochelle Webster.

**First People Acknowledgement:** We honor Takelma, Latgawa, Shasta, and other original caretakers of the land upon which South Mountain Friends gather. We acknowledge our Quaker forebears' complicity in the systems of oppression that drove these people from these lands. We commit to the work of dismantling the remains of those systems. We pledge to act in solidarity with these First Peoples as they seek redress for the damages those systems have caused, as we together steward and protect our shared home.

**Quote & Reflection:** *"Many Friends describe the experience of their first visit to meeting as "coming home." It is only with God's Spirit that such a diverse group of individuals can realize and embody the kind of unity, belonging, and community that answers to that of God within us.*

*The Quaker meeting is meant to be a blessed community – a living testimony to a social order that embodies God's peace, justice, love, compassion, and joy, and an example and invitation to a better way of life. Like our other testimonies, community can be a prophetic call to the rest of Society" ~Southeastern Yearly Meeting, 2007*

## **Discussion and Actions:**

**2026.05.1 Friends approved the State of the Society report as amended (see Page 7).**

**Ministry & Counsel (M&C):** M&C would like to host a fall retreat.

**2026.05.2 Friends approved the development of an ad hoc committee to plan a fall retreat.**

In order to support attenders' desire for more support in understanding Quakerism, M&C suggested we begin sharing, on a trial basis, a Query from Faith & Practice in Meeting for Worship one time per month. This query would be read on Second Sunday shortly after the start of Meeting for Worship, at a time discerned by the reader, in order to offer an opportunity for reflection. After a few months of the trial, M&C will host a threshing session to determine if this practice should continue.

**Nominating Committee:** Jamie McLeod-Skinner has expressed an interest in joining M&C. In order to alleviate the short-staffing of this group, Nominating Committee suggests we accept this appointment without seasoning.

**2026.05.3 Friends joyfully approved the appointment of Jamie McLeod-Skinner to Ministry and Counsel with gratitude.**

**Technology Committee (TC):** TC has agreed to purchase a lockable cabinet for electronics in the Meeting room in order to keep items both handy and neat. Nominating Committee will find a Friend to coordinate a rotating schedule for weekly tech assistance.

**Treasurer Report:** We did not have many expenses in April, but we do have some larger expenses coming up, including the annual payment to North Pacific Yearly Meeting, as well as the parking lot rental from Southern Oregon University. Donations are lagging a bit behind this year. Finance Committee will soon send out a letter asking for donations. We have opened a money market account where we will keep much of our accrued finances earning a higher interest rate while the abundance committee does its work.

**Finance Committee (FC):** FC put a quick budget together, but did not go through the typical process of surveying committees for their needs. There are few changes, except for a Mailchimp upgrade (which is used for our newsletter and bulletin) and ensuring funds for the fall retreat.

**2026.05.4 Friends approved the proposed 2026-'27 Budget for seasoning (see Page 6).**

**Circle of Light (C of L):** C of L currently meets monthly every first Sunday from 10:15 to 10:55 in the library. Various times and locations have been used over time, but downstairs is not an option because of mobility. C of L reports that other activities happening concurrently creates a noisy kitchen, which is distracting, and suggests that C of L is a good monthly First-Hour activity because it deepens worship. Friends discussed options and agreed to experiment with C of L being the First-Hour activity for the summer.

For reference, typical current First Hour uses are now as follows. First Hour is from 9am - 10am.

First Sunday, Circle of Light

Second Sunday, Winnowing or Threshing Session (as needed)

Third Sunday, Business Meeting

Fourth Sunday, How to Quaker

Fifth Sunday, Peace and Social Concerns

**Business Meeting Minutes  
Continued on Page 6**

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Something need correcting? Inform our clerk before next business meeting ([clerk@ashlandquakers.org](mailto:clerk@ashlandquakers.org))

# Business Meeting Minutes Continued from Page 5

## Information and Announcements:



- At 12:45 on 24 May, after Meeting for Worship and a refreshment break, we are welcoming new member Josephine Olson into our Meeting. Playback Theatre will assist with a Let-Your-Life-Speak-like presentation.

- Friends interested in helping to plan the fall retreat should share their interest with a member of Ministry & Counsel.

- The use of savings & abundance in joy ad hoc committee encourages Friends to request a clearness committee for leadings from M&C so that these leadings can be funded via the typical process for M&C to support Friends' leadings (as opposed to that being part of the role of this committee).

- If Friends would like to air out the Meeting Room, this is a recommended procedure: (1) close the room door, (2) open windows wide for 5-10 minutes (3) reverse the steps. This airs the room while minimizing strain and energy use by the HVAC system.

- Peace & Social Concerns described their recent First-Hour discussion (details on Page 2)

- Sunday 14 June will be a Welcome to Summer Potluck gathering after Meeting for worship in the kitchen and on porches (see Page 1).

- Friendship and Hospitality is supporting Friends' autonomy in making coffee as needed. Brewed coffee-making instructions and supply locations are posted. Fair trade organic instant coffee that tastes "quite good" is also available.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rochelle Webster, Interim Clerk  
Ann Gaffney, Recording Clerk

2026-27 SMFM Proposed Budget		
	'25-'26	'26-'27
<b>Income:</b>		
Donations	17,500	18,000
<b>Total income</b>	<b>17,500</b>	<b>18,000</b>
<b>Fixed expenses:</b>		
Joint Committee Contribution	8,400	8,400
NPYM Dues	2,160	2,160
Parking Lot	963	963
Quarterly Meeting Dues	180	180
Oregon Registration Fee	50	50
Communications (Zoom)	160	170
<b>Total fixed expenses</b>	<b>11,913</b>	<b>11,923</b>
<b>Discretionary expenses:</b>		
Adult Education	0	100
Equipment maintenance	100	100
FCNL Lobby Day spons	1,750	1,750
Friendship & Hospitality	450	500
Library	200	200
Mailchimp upgrade		240
Ministry & Counsel	750	750
Misc/office supplies	150	150
Newsletter	150	150
Outreach	200	200
Peace & Social Concerns	1,400	1,400
Racial concerns	1,200	1,200
Tech support	1,200	1,200
Travel	400	400
Website	221	221
Young adult Friends	200	200
<b>Total discretionary expenses:</b>	<b>8,371</b>	<b>8,761</b>
<b>Total expenses:</b>	<b>20,284</b>	<b>20,684</b>
<b>Surplus (deficit)</b>	<b>(2,784)</b>	<b>(2,684)</b>

**“History is not just facts and events. History is also a pain in the heart, and we repeat history until we are able to make another’s pain in the heart our own.”**

**—Julius Lester**

# South Mountain Friends Meeting's March 2026 State of the Society Report

In the midst of national and international troubles, we are grateful to say that South Mountain Friends Meeting is thriving. We are a consistent Meeting of approximately 40 local regular participants and about 25 attending Meeting for Worship each week. We have had one new member joining us here and one member passed away this past year. We have arranged several clearness and care committees throughout the year.

We now have five neighborhood groups meeting monthly, and they continue to be a gift to our members and attenders. The groups usually include some worship sharing, food, and drinks plus a joy of getting to know each other better. They are frequently mentioned as a favorite part of our Meeting community.

We now have a thriving calendar including weekly Free Writing Friends and Meditation on Peace and Love plus a monthly Song Circle, Circle of Light, Women's group, and Men's group, and a quarterly Applied Improv Open Studio. Our Friendship and Hospitality committee supplies quarterly potlucks and hosts many events, nourishing our bodies with food while we nourish our spirits.

We had our first annual gathering in October of all of our neighborhood groups, and our many other affiliated groups were invited to enjoy a potluck with fun community building play exercises included.

Our meeting for worship continues to be hybrid, while we experimented this past year with business meetings only on Zoom. About 10-20% of our weekly worship attendees are on Zoom. We are planning to shift to in-person business meetings in the future to strengthen our worshipful decision-making.

"How to Quaker" series continued this year. This is a monthly, hour-long class which a local, seasoned Quaker has adapted from Quakerism 101. It has been very popular both in attendance and in viewing the recordings available on our website.

Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee continues to work on legislative concerns and to produce Braver Angels ([braverangels.org](http://braverangels.org)) workshops. The committee has guided our Meeting to again this year help send two people to FCNL Friends Changemaker Weekend; supporting young people to learn how to be effective advocates. The Peace and Social Concerns Committee has done a Gaza vigil weekly in Medford. Our newest initiative is to better understand our neighbor Quaker churches through dialogue with them.

In October 2025, we once again marched in the Southern Oregon Pride Parade with our banner, individual printed signs about our testimonies, and matching t-shirts. We have participated since its inception in 2010.

We created an ad hoc group to discuss our financial abundance from a bequest of a participant who passed last year (and years of donations greater than expenses). Their request was that it be a joyful process of discernment. We are working to create a vision for our future and opportunities before making any decisions.

We hosted traveling Friend, Dann Pell, in March, 2026. Two members spoke about "Being a Friend: Quaker Faith and Practice" in March for our local Unitarian Universalist Fellowship ([www.rvuuf.org/services/quaker-faith-spirit-and-practice](http://www.rvuuf.org/services/quaker-faith-spirit-and-practice)).

Our meeting changed our Land Acknowledgement to one of First People Acknowledgement in September of 2025. This was the result of a recommendation by our Toward Right Relationships Interest Group.

**First People Acknowledgement:** *We honor Takelma, Latgawa, Shasta, and other original caretakers of the land upon which South Mountain Friends gather. We acknowledge our Quaker forebears' complicity in the systems of oppression that drove these people from these lands. We commit to the work of dismantling the remains of those systems. We pledge to act in solidarity with these First Peoples as they seek redress for the damages those systems have caused, as we together steward and protect our shared home.*

—Valeria Breiten, Clerk, and Rochelle Webster, Assistant Clerk, South Mountain Friends Meeting

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**"Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well,  
but a certainty that something makes sense regardless of how it turns out."  
– Václav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace*, 1986**

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## **Officers**

**Presiding Clerk:** Rochelle Webster 646-5186  
**Treasurer:** Adam Thompson 201-8255  
**Recording Clerk:** Ann Gaffney 603-490-7193  
**Communications Clerk:** Jean Semrau 646-8225 with Kitty Cable (tech support)  
**Joint Committee Delegates:** Richard Spencer 707-543-6330; Merlin McDaniel 301-6054

## **Standing Committees**

**Ministry and Counsel:** Andra Hollenbeck 601-6421, David Runkel 210-0031, Jean Semrau 646-8225, Jim Lobsenz 206-399-2782, Jamie McLeod-Skinner 777-7797, Rochelle Webster (*ex officio*)

**Nominating Committee:** Adam Thompson 201-8255, Lori Fleuter, Kathleen Donham, JoAnn Sustrick

**\*Peace and Social Concerns:** Herb Rothschild 531-2848, Ken Deveney, Jim Lobsenz, Steve Radcliffe, Fernando Gapasin

**\*Finance:** Ann Gaffney, Jean Semrau, Adam Thompson (*ex officio*)

**\*Friendship and Hospitality:** Ká Hering 778-5206, Crystal Bosbach, Cathy McDaniel, JoAnn Sustrick

**Welcomers:** Andra Hollenbeck, Brittany Fagin/Kody Kirby, Richard Spencer, Fernando Gapasin

*All area codes are 541 unless otherwise noted*

*Newsletter submissions are due to Bob Morse [morse@mind.net](mailto:morse@mind.net) Tuesday after Business Meeting*

South Mountain Friends Meeting

543 South Mountain Avenue

Ashland, Oregon 97520

## **\*Interest Group Contact Persons**

**\*Adult Education:** Bill Ashworth 778-9470  
**\*Applied Improv:** Rochelle Webster 646-5186  
**\*Art Displays:** Becky Hale 601-3084, Marian Spadone 503-252-1624  
**\*Building & Grounds:** Merlin McDaniel 301-6054  
**\*Circle of Light:** Crystal Bosbach 930-4222, Nancy Spear 626-4377-8913  
**\*Free Writing Friends:** Becky Hale 601-3084  
**\*Friends Men's Group:** Ken Deveney 482-2173  
**\*Friends Women's Group:** Althea Godfrey 261-5329  
**\*Meditation on Peace/Love:** Ká Hering 778-5206, Fernando Gapasin 503-917-1286  
**\*Outdoor Worship:** Ká Hering 778-5206  
**\*Racial Concerns:** Bob Morse 482-8449  
**\*Song Circle:** Rochelle Webster 646-5186  
**\*Unhoused Neighbors:** Alex Reid 707-499-9146  
**\*Young Adult Friends:** Hazel Jordan 360-229-5498  
**\*Zoom Support:** Samantha Archer 385-645-1546, Rochelle Webster 646-5186

## **Other Contact Persons**

**Librarian:** Tara Jones 817-471-5120

**Newsletter:** Bob Morse 482-8449

**NPYM Coordinating Committee:** Bill Ashworth 778-9470

**Web Site Administration:** Bob Morse 482-8449

## **Monthly Neighborhood Gatherings**

**\*Dancing Bears group:** Herb Rothschild 531-2848

**\*Outliers group:** Becky Hale 601-3084

**\*Quaker Neighbors:** Jean Semrau 646-8225

**\*Sunday Afternoon group:** Lucy Edwards 941-7539

**\*Quaker Kin:** Bob Morse 482-8449

*\*All new and longtime participants welcome*