



# **SOUTH MOUNTAIN FRIENDS MEETING**

## **THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)**

### **Third Month 2021**

543 South Mountain Avenue  
Ashland, Oregon 97520  
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[www.ashlandquakers.org](http://www.ashlandquakers.org)

(Near Southern Oregon University)

## **SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE**

### **First-Hour Activity**

**9 to 10 am (new earlier time)**

#### **Discussions via Zoom**

All are welcome. Full Zoom invitation in weekly e-news.

First-Hour Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85099502775?pwd=VmgxVFFzVkhYUkhRYkpNYmJ6TGZUdz09>

[Udz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85099502775?pwd=VmgxVFFzVkhYUkhRYkpNYmJ6TGZUdz09)

### **7 March**

Uprooting Racism: Worship Sharing on "What We Don't Know About Policing in the US" (beginning with brief informative video)

### **14 March: DAYLIGHT SAVINGS**

Spiritual Listening on "Beyond Polarities: Exploring Our Identity as a Quaker Meeting" (details on the bottom of page 5)

### **21 March**

Meeting for Business (9-10:30 am)

### **28 March**

Adult Ed: Tools for Fighting Injustice with Love; convened by K Hering (details on page 3)

### **Meeting for Worship**

**11 am to Noon**

At Quaker Meeting House (space is limited due to social distancing)

Or, join us by Zoom at:

<https://zoom.us/j/99810847118?pwd=R3poNVQxMFEyWFbMRVZFcTJYbDNYZz09>

[NYZz09](https://zoom.us/j/99810847118?pwd=R3poNVQxMFEyWFbMRVZFcTJYbDNYZz09)

## **How To Talk About Ending Incarceration And Detention**



Most of us know that incarceration does not keep us safe, but how do we talk about alternatives to our current criminal punishment system with folks who may not know what to do instead? Framing this issue in terms of shared values—instead of statistics—is critical, but how do we do that when we're talking to others?

**DO emphasize amount of money wasted on incarceration—and the many community investments that we could make instead.**

*It would make way more sense to spend money on things that reduce crime—like education and economic opportunities—than spending money locking people up.*

**DO emphasize that prisons, jails, and detention centers do not keep us safe.**

*Incarceration doesn't keep us safe. The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world and yet has incredibly high rates of gun violence.*

**DO frame the problem in terms of systemic racism.**

*In the US, Black people are imprisoned at five times the rate of white people. This level of racial disparity in the system is unacceptable and must be addressed. Racism has no place in our society.*

**DO describe what we think SHOULD happen in as much detail—and in the simplest language—as possible.**

*The person who experienced violence is given the resources they need to heal emotionally and physically. The person who perpetrated the violence is held accountable and required to make amends to those they harmed. That person is also offered support to address the underlying causes that led them to commit the violent act.*

**DO talk about “the toughest cases.”**

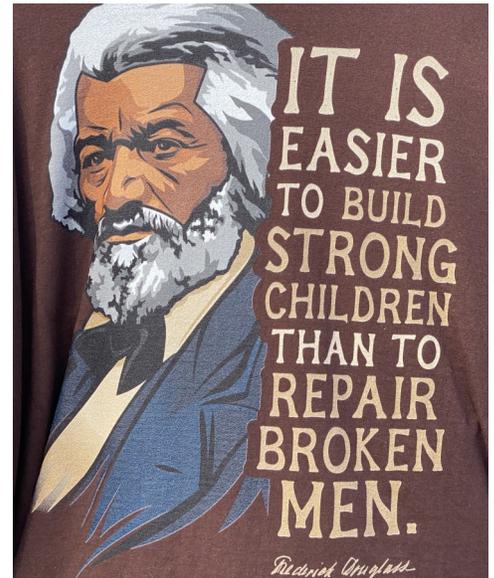
*Harsh sentencing laws need to be changed to give those serving long-term or lifetime sentences the opportunity to rejoin their families and communities. We should create systems of community-based reentry and support so that people can successfully come home.*

—Beth Hollowell, Director of Research and Analytics  
American Friends Service Committee

Talking Points Based on a National Study Conducted by AFSC

**“There is no social change fairy. There is only the change made by the hands of individuals.”**

–Winona LaDuke, Environmentalist, Economist, and Writer, who grew up in Ashland



“[We are challenged by] a parallel universe in which markets are ‘free and fair,’ poverty is a choice, and justice is equal and blind to race and class.”

—Emma Jordan-Simpson, Director, Fellowship of Reconciliation

## Who is White?

An amazing historical perspective on which groups gained inclusion into the concept of “white race”—and which ones never did—written by David Zarembka, retired director of the Quaker African Great Lakes Initiative and an American residing in Kenya who has visited South Mountain Friends Meeting: [groups.google.com/g/reports-from-Kenya/c/jLzX21ca0jY](https://groups.google.com/g/reports-from-Kenya/c/jLzX21ca0jY)

### Equality



The assumption is that **everyone benefits from the same supports**. This is equal treatment.

### Equity



**Everyone gets the supports they need** (this is the concept of “affirmative action”), thus producing equity.

### Justice



All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because **the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed**. The systemic barrier has been removed.

# The Path Toward Fighting Injustice With Love

First Hour Discussion: 28 March 2021

“Wonder is the wellspring of love. The practice of wonder . . . can transform us and our nation.” So begins Valarie Kaur’s book *See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love*. Wonder is the portal to sensing others to be as complex to themselves as we are to ourselves. Wonder is looking into another’s face and silently saying *You are a part of me I do not yet know*.

South Mountain Friend K Hering has been stirred by Kaur’s call to wonder and reliance on community, values instilled in Hering early in her life, reinforced by her family. As an activist, Hering has always been curious about others. Inspired by this gripping autobiography which is filled with emotion and is much broader than a personal story, Hering wishes to introduce Friends to Revolutionary Love during first hour on Sunday 28 March.

Wondering about others opens the door for wondering about ourselves, the stereotypes we have absorbed, the assumptions we have made. According to Kaur, “Stories that expand the collective have the power to return us to one another . . . When we are brave enough to sit with our pain, it deepens our ability to sit with the pain of others. It shows us how to love them . . . Loving someone means grieving with them . . . It’s an act of surrendering” to grief.



The most respectful response to someone in grief is listening. When we’re at a loss of words, it is most comforting to simply say, *You are in grief, my friend, and you are not alone in your grief*. Grieving collectively and in community gives us the information to build solidarity, to fight for justice, and even to share in one another’s joy.

Reading Kaur brought back memories for Hering of how she’s always seen injustice. She joined many groups to fight against the injustices in America and those caused by America worldwide. Hering learned from Kaur that “When you love someone, you fight to protect them when they are in harm’s way. If you ‘see no stranger’ and choose to love all people, then you must fight for *anyone* who is in harm’s way. To fight with revolutionary love is to fight against injustice alongside those most impacted by harm—in a way that preserves our opponents’ humanity as well as our own. When we fight for those outside our immediate circle, our love becomes revolutionary.” Kaur challenges us to wonder, “How do [we] channel the fight impulse into something that gives life?”

Hering invites Friends to join her on 28 March to self-reflect on the tools Kaur describes as effective for being a *Warrior for Love*.

What is your **sword**? What do you have that you can bring to life, to fight on behalf of others?

Your pen, your pocketbook, your presence, your voice, your art?

What is your **shield**? What can you use to create protection for yourself and others when the fight becomes dangerous? Your camera, legal counsel (Kaur became a lawyer), public witness?

What is your **instrument**? According to Kaur’s spiritual tradition, warriors would carry instruments to play before they faced the fire. What are your spiritual practices? What brings you joy, lifts your spirits, helps you breathe? Dancing, yoga, singing?

Who is your sacred **community**? According to Kaur, you need at least three people in your community: The person who sees you; the person who fights along at your side; the person who fights for you when you cannot.

—K Hering, contributor, and Bob Morse, writer

(A good intro to Valarie Kaur is her well-viewed 2017 TED Talk: [TED - Valarie Kaur](#) –Ed.)

# Meeting for Business 21 February 21

**Friends Present:** Bill Ashworth, Melody Ashworth, Beth Aspedon, Valeria Breiten, Ken Deveney, K Hering, Andra Hollenbeck, Gizelle Luccio, Bob Morse, Alex Reid, Herb Rothschild, Adam Thompson, Mary Ward

**Centering Worship** “One of the most calming and powerful actions you can do to intervene in a stormy world is to stand up and show your soul.” —Clarissa Pinkola Estes

## Minutes

**2021.2.1 Friends approved minutes for the 17 January 2021 Meeting for Business.**

**Treasurer** Expenses exceed revenues in January and for the year to date. Two small adjustments were made from prior years. Almost \$23,000 is held in our Friends Fiduciary Account, currently in the fossil-free Quaker Growth & Income Fund.

**Ministry & Counsel** continues its review of the Mutual Care Survey to determine Pastoral Care needs of the Meeting. The Caring Friends gathering will most likely be laid down because of low attendance. M&C leadership has reached out to the Bismarck Mandan Religious Society of Friends Meeting in North Dakota. We will be sending them our mid-week announcements and newsletters and will be discussing becoming sister Meetings. As follow-up to the recent spiritual listening on “How is our Nation’s Polarity affecting our Meeting?” M&C recommends another spiritual listening in March on “Evolving Beyond Polarity to Clarify Our Identity as a Quaker Meeting”

and a subsequent half-day retreat on the question “Who are We as a Quaker Meeting?” M&C endorses the recommendation from Jaime McLeod-Skinner’s Care Committee to accept Jaime’s transfer of membership from her Meeting in San Jose.

**2021.2.2 Friends approve Jamie McLeod-Skinner’s Transfer of Membership.**

Her Care Committee also recommended that the Meeting continue hybrid meetings, both in-person and by zoom, in perpetuity for members and other participants who live out of the area.

## Uprooting Racism

Friends began a discussion about sponsoring BASE, Black Alliance and Social Empowerment, that will be continued next month after more information is gathered.

**2021.2.3 SMFM wishes to support and ally with BASE and will investigate means by which to participate more fully.**

The Uprooting Racism Action Team has now received a fourth positive response to its letter to the Ashland Tidings Editor expressing grief at the death of Aidan Ellison and the presence of white supremacy in our community. The Team purchased copies of *Why We Can’t Wait*, by Martin Luther King, Jr. and reached out to 14 other local faith groups this month to encourage participation in BASE’s challenge to read and discuss the book. 5 congregations accepted copies of the book. Three congregations are discussing it already. Four members of SMFM have convened their first discussion group meeting with a member from Grace Lutheran and

two members from the Center for Spiritual Living in attendance. The Action Team will be meeting soon with Mayor Julie Akins to discuss how Quakers might help Ashland become a more inclusive and safer city. The Team will be sending letters to the County Sheriff and the three local Police Chiefs, who are attending the law enforcement forums hosted by BASE, to express appreciation for their participation and interest in the new antiracism policies we hope they will be developing as a result.

## Circle of Friends/Homeless

**Outreach Committee** The three established circles for those grieving the loss of their homes and community continue to meet successfully. Representative Pam Marsh heard about them and called in to refer a fire victim in grief who was promptly welcomed by the circle organizers.

## Friendship & Hospitality A

Celebration of Welcome for our newest member Valeria Breiten was held Sunday 14 February, with attendees both in person and by zoom. F&C has restocked the kitchen snack cabinet. They will be planning outdoor social activities when the weather warms.

**Adult Education** has prepared presentations for the 4th Sundays of the next three months that will be included in the Newsletter calendar.

Respectfully submitted,

Andra Hollenbeck, Co-Presiding Clerk  
Alex Reid, Recording Clerk

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**Dear Friends,**

***I am grateful and my heart is touched by the beautiful cards, flowers and notes I received at my welcome party on Sunday 14 February. It was great to see you there and then to go home and read the lovely wishes in the cards.***

***I appreciate this community and being a part of it.***

***With love and well wishes to you, Valeria Breiten***

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# **(How) Is Our Meeting Impacted by Our Country's Polarities?**

Report on the Spiritual Listening Held on 14 February 2021

## **What does polarity look like? Why is it so extreme and so decisive?**

Polarity arises from disparity in world view and spiritual beliefs; current increase in transparency shines the light on myths which have shielded us from noticing our centuries-long history of catering to the haves and disrespecting the have-nots; it's easy to become enraged when your cupboards are bare and your take-home pay doesn't even take you home; polarity is not between two extremes but between one extreme and everyone else; elimination of the FCC's Fairness Doctrine has allowed TV newscasts to only present one side of the story; internet is an echo chamber in which most of us hear only voices reflecting our biases; polarity is a fear-based, many-headed beast engendered by a reduction in thinking, disenfranchisement of the voiceless, increased censorship, and declining free-expression; there's a tension between viewing God as master or as source.



## **How are you personally affected by polarity?**

### **Consider your relationships with family, with friends, spirituality, Quakerism, etc.**

Many news sources try to move us in a certain direction; truth is the essential quality of Quakerism; exploring truth and searching for facts provides a shield against manipulations and seduction; it is both more difficult and more urgent that I hold center; I rely more on worship; I hold purple and have friends who hold purple; being a Quaker provides a structure to which I can anchor in order to navigate my way; I find it fearful that our rights are being managed; I use regular meditation to focus on my perceptions of the outer world in an effort to keep the outer world from permeating my inner life; there's a historic, perpetual struggle between individual's rights and the group's good that remains unresolved due to never addressing deep-seated issues; at times the good of others has been ignored for the expansion of (political) power; I appreciate that Meeting encourages the expression of diverse views; I examine views with which I disagree for the kernel of truth that speaks to my condition.

## **What is the Quaker response? Are both sides of the polarity welcome in our Meeting? How do we see that of God in EVERYONE?**

We would welcome hate and fix hate by rising in love; in the past our Meeting welcomed someone not aligned with Quaker nonviolence, but he didn't feel welcome; we need to discuss and own our biases because they are being expressed implicitly; we need to explore who we truly are as a Meeting; faith organizations often lose sight of their purpose when they embrace politics; folks may not stick around if they come for Quaker faith and practice and instead find too much politics or politics with which they're not aligned; I question whether our embrace of diversity is driven by our comfort level or limited to times when it relates to the underdog; our biases and our livability are both challenged by the Quaker tradition of carrying our beliefs out into the world; Howard Brinton: "The most important consideration is not the right action in itself but a right inward state out of which right action will arise"; it's a question of how we define the right inward state; continuing revelation is a most important aspect of Quakerism—not being attached but be open to the next message; this discussion is only the beginning; it's time to define who we are. —Bob Morse

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***By the close of the above Spiritual Listening, the sense of those present and of M&C was to continue to explore this question of polarity's impact while evolving the discussion toward identifying who we are as a Meeting/Community. Thus, we are holding a follow-up Spiritual Listening to clarify for ourselves what we offer seekers: —Gizelle Luccio***

## ***Beyond Polarities: Exploring our Identity as a Quaker Meeting?***

***9 am Sunday 14 March 2021 (First Day of Daylight Savings)***

***What is the quality of our community (as a gathering of Friends)?***

***How would we define ourselves as a Quaker Meeting?***

***How do we see our joint journey as Friends?***

# Let America Be America Again

Let America be America again.  
Let it be the dream it used to be.  
Let it be the pioneer on the plain  
Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—  
Let it be that great strong land of love  
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme  
That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty  
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,  
But opportunity is real, and life is free,  
Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,  
Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")

*Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark?  
And who are you that draws your veil across the  
stars?*

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,  
I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.  
I am the red man driven from the land,  
I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek—  
And finding only the same old stupid plan  
Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.

I am the young man, full of strength and hope,  
Tangled in that ancient endless chain  
Of profit, power, gain, of grab the land!  
Of grab the gold! Of grab the ways of satisfying need!  
Of work the men! Of take the pay!  
Of owning everything for one's own greed!

I am the farmer, bondsman to the soil.  
I am the worker sold to the machine.  
I am the Negro, servant to you all.  
I am the people, humble, hungry, mean—  
Hungry yet today despite the dream.  
Beaten yet today—O, Pioneers!  
I am the man who never got ahead,  
The poorest worker bartered through the years.

Yet I'm the one who dreamt our basic dream  
In the Old World while still a serf of kings,  
Who dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true,  
That even yet its mighty daring sings  
In every brick and stone, in every furrow turned  
That's made America the land it has become.  
O, I'm the man who sailed those early seas  
In search of what I meant to be my home—

For I'm the one who left dark Ireland's shore,  
And Poland's plain, and England's grassy lea,  
And torn from Black Africa's strand I came  
To build a "homeland of the free."

The free?

Who said the free? Not me?  
Surely not me? The millions on relief today?  
The millions shot down when we strike?  
The millions who have nothing for our pay?  
For all the dreams we've dreamed  
And all the songs we've sung  
And all the hopes we've held  
And all the flags we've hung,  
The millions who have nothing for our pay—  
Except the dream that's almost dead today.

O, let America be America again—  
The land that never has been yet—  
And yet must be—the land where every man is free.  
The land that's mine—the poor man's, Indian's, Negro's,  
ME—  
Who made America,  
Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,  
Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,  
Must bring back our mighty dream again.

Sure, call me any ugly name you choose—  
The steel of freedom does not stain.  
From those who live like leeches on the people's  
lives,  
We must take back our land again,  
America!

O, yes,  
I say it plain,  
America never was America to me,  
And yet I swear this oath—  
America will be!

Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death,  
The rape and rot of graft, and  
stealth, and lies,  
We, the people, must  
redeem  
The land, the mines, the  
plants, the rivers.  
The mountains and the  
endless plain—  
All, all the stretch of these  
great green states—  
And make America again!

—Langston Hughes, poet of  
the Harlem Renaissance,  
1935





# MEETING OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

**Co-Clerk:** Andra Hollenbeck 601-6421

**Co-Clerk:** Bill Ashworth 778-9470

**Recording Clerk:** Alex Reid 707-499-9146

**Corresponding Clerk:** Beth Aspedon 778-1564

**Treasurer:** Adam Thompson 201-8255

**Weekly e-Bulletin Editor:** Adam Thompson 201-8255

**Newsletter Editor:** Bob Morse 482-8449, Sylvie Weaver

**Web Administrator:** Bob Morse 482-8449

**NPYM Coordinating Committee Contact:** Sylvie Weaver 717-475-6940

**Art Coordinator:** Becky Hale 601-3084

**Uprooting Racism Coordinator:** Bob Morse 482-8449

**Children's Education & Spirituality:** Ken Deveney 488-5506, Cathy McDaniel

**Joint Committee Representatives:** Herb Rothschild, Valeria Breiten

*Please direct all Meeting-related electronic correspondence to [ashlandquakers@gmail.com](mailto:ashlandquakers@gmail.com)*

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

**Finance Committee:** Jean Semrau, Fran Curtis, Treasurer *ex officio*

**Buildings & Grounds:** Merlin McDaniel, Raymond Scully, Hazel Ward, Terri Brain, Steve Wells

**Nominating Committee:** Valeria Breiten. Beth Aspedon, Maureen Graham, Terri Brain

**Friendship & Hospitality Committee:** Crystal Bosbach, Cathy McDaniel, K Hering

**Greeters:** Steve Radcliffe, Alex Reid, Javan Reid, Rochelle Webster, Karen Maleski, Terri Brain

**Peace & Social Concerns Committee:** Herb Rothschild, Ken Deveney, Javan Reid, Pam Allister, Elizabeth Hallett

**Library:** Fran Curtis, Melody Ashworth, Steve Wells

**Adult Education Committee:** Jim Lobsenz, K Hering, Melody Ashworth

**Homeless Outreach:** Bob Morse, Alex Reid, Becky Hale, Terri Brain

**Ministry & Counsel Committee:** Gizelle Luccio 897-4458, Jim Phillips 482-2388, Steve Radcliffe 479-3487, Linda Spencer 865-3682, Co-Clerk *ex officio*

South Mountain Friends Meeting

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