

543 South Mountain Avenue

Ashland, Oregon 97520

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SUNDAY AM SCHEDULE

First-Hour Activity

9 to 10 am

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

4 Oct Circle of Light Now 9-10 am

11 Oct No First-Hour Activity

18 Oct Business Meeting

9-10:30 am IN PERSON ONLY

(for hybrid, contact Rochelle or Ann
in a timely fashion)

25 Oct How To Quaker

Structure of Quakerism worldwide,
as well as why we meet in silence
and what we do in the silence.

Friend Steve Radcliffe co-chairs the
Oregon Rural Urban Project that seeks
Oregonians' views of the problems/
solutions of this divide. Upcoming local
townhalls: 6 pm Oct 26 and 27 at the
Medford Library and the Grants Pass
Baxter Auditorium, respectively.
Details and registration on page 5.

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=SW1sd3pTZjhIb
GRmUWpOY3pZaUFDdz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7477317797pwd=SW1sd3pTZjhIbGRmUWpOY3pZaUFDdz09)

SOUTH MOUNTAIN FRIENDS MEETING

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)
Unprogrammed Worship in Ashland, Oregon
Tenth Month 2026

A Window and a Door: A Prayer



Beloved,
grant that my soul,
the workplace of Spirit within,
have the grace of possessing
both a window and a door.

Windows let in light and air from
outside
and bring hope and wisdom,
when it is needed within.

And when the lights of my soul
shine through clear, window glass,
the radiance can be perceived,
and can sometimes bring insight
to perplexities that enthrall others.

Yet a window makes but part of
the connection required for wholeness.

for Spirit moves out
through the door of my soul,
with the grounding of Love
and a feathery flight,
and brings joy when it alights
upon its kindred—
For, is any not its kin?

And when the stranger knocks at the door,
spirit can fling it wide open,
inviting the stranger to sup
and become friend,
giving succor, new learning, and
renewal to both me and thee.

Beloved, may my soul—and my
community—have the grace of both
a window and a door.



—LVM, La Verne Maria Shelton, lived in Montpelier, VT, until
her death in 2025. A mystic, she was deeply involved in Quaker
circles, mentoring many Friends. LVM's above poem was
selected as the theme of this year's Friends General
Conference (FGC) Gathering, an honoring that was visceral
throughout the week.

Friends Turn Inward and Speak From Source

In early July, I experienced the most spirit-filled and deeply meaningful Quaker experience I've known. I attended the 2026 Friends General Conference (FGC) Gathering, which took place this year in Burlington, Vermont. From the first to the last moments of our time together, Quakers reached out to each other, greeting old friends and making new ones. Families who had attended the gathering for generations didn't sequester themselves amid familiar faces but instead used those connections to introduce new Friends into their conversations.

Opening evening worship quickly deepened when a Friend of color revealed her current anxiety remembering having been racially wounded at last year's FGC Gathering, a microcosm of Quakers' sordid history of foregoing our testimonies in our interactions with Native and African Americans. Sitting near the front of a large hall filled with 700 attendees all facing forward, I received her and all other vocal ministry with closed eyes and an open heart, never knowing whose voice had arisen. I felt the uplifting magnificence of words emerging spontaneously from Source, messages inviting collective healing. Often, a Friend would break out in song—solo, solemn, soulful, sweet. The second evening plenary invited inner reflection to integrate such healing. I appreciated the times with the co-clerks would lead us into silent worship, requesting no vocal ministry—allowing us to be nurtured by spirit, more in our hearts than our minds. This second evening ended with the suggestion to gather in pairs to share our current emotional state. The stranger next to me and I fell into such intimate sharing that we soon were shedding tears and barely noticed that eventually the hall had emptied. Each of such (frequent) interpersonal encounters knitted us into a communal tapestry.

As an outcome of FGC's exploring ways to address Friends' historic racism, Bryan Stevenson, the African American attorney who advocates for death-row inmates, and Kazu Haga, the Japanese American trainer specializing in Kingian nonviolence provided the keynote addresses.

Bryan Stevenson: We of faith are being called to change the narratives of our society. Bryan had created the legacy sites in Montgomery, AL, to counter all the statues and reminders of war and the Confederacy. God is calling us to be truth-tellers, amplifying the voices of victims. We need to help ourselves and others not yield to the politics of fear and anger. Faith must be hopeful; hope is our superpower.

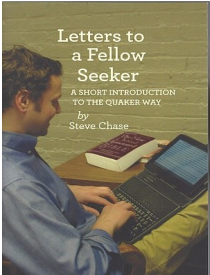
Kazu Haga: Our work is not to change the world but to change our perception of it. Quakers know about listening to silence and to the truth that we are *interdependent*. Believing we're *independent* is exhausting and leads to when "peace becomes obnoxious" (in the words of MLK Jr). When violence becomes the norm, the work of nonviolence is to disturb this norm. In the work for justice, we need to first let the Light into us so that we don't lead with our own trauma. Injustice is the result of our collective trauma. These times are so urgent that we need to slow down and not add to the urgency. Instead of asking "Why do you believe ____?" Ask with love and curiosity: "How did you come to believe ____?"

My morning workshop wasn't explicitly focused on such racial issues. We sought "Moral clarity on Israel/Palestine" by applying the testimonies of peace, justice, and equality for all the people of the Levant and holding a Kingian nonviolence perspective that the system of apartheid, not any of the people, was the problem. Viewing Middle East conflicts as a quintessential current challenge to all Quakers hold dear, we reflected upon analogous challenges in Quaker history. We reviewed Quakers' lengthy and circuitous route from enslavement-support to abolition to highlight how change comes slowly yet builds upon many small, poignant actions over time. We conducted a zoom interview with the director of the nearly 160-year-old Ramallah Friends School, a K-12 institute in the West Bank rooted in Quaker-based educational excellence. We heard first-hand how Quaker values have helped guide the school through years of war and changing geopolitical governance while continuing to create graduating classes where 95% of the students go on to college, often Ivy League, even as current border walls and checkpoints hinder both student and faculty daily travel. Through silence and worship sharing we assessed such Quaker responses to Israel/Palestine as the [Apartheid-Free Communities | American Friends Service Committee](#), a pledge that Quaker Meetings can affirm. Spirit-led ministry found words capturing our collective movement from despair to hope.

—Bob Morse

Letters to a Fellow Seeker: A Short Introduction to the Quaker Way

In seven letters to a fictional correspondent, Steve Chase describes his spiritual journey among Friends. The author, a Quaker activist and educator, introduces the Quaker way to a newcomer in language that is personal and gentle, while offering powerful inspiration through stories. Written as an invitation to inquirers, *Letters to a Fellow Seeker* will also stimulate discussion among longtime Friends about how we experience and remain true to our Quaker faith.



I first read Steve's book when it was freshly published a decade ago and was amazed by its readability. When I signed up for the workshop on Israel/Palestine at this summer's FGC Gathering, I was delighted to learn that Steve was the facilitator and that he'd expanded upon his firm foundation of Quaker faith to explore with Friends how we practice our faith out in a world full of violence and complexity, history and politics. I purchased Steve's book at the FGC Gathering to replace our South Mountain's copy that was so loved by a borrower that it was never returned. Now our Meeting's library has its own autographed copy.

No discussions at our workshop informed me of Steve's being a Christocentric Friend, but as I recently re-read his book, I noticed how he tended to reference the Bible and Jesus. However, in his book, Steve frequently explains how unique is each Friend's path, and I, a longtime, non-Christ-centered, universalist Quaker, found that Steve's descriptions of Quaker practices helped me better understand how and why I express my faith as I do. I daresay that I got more out of Steve's book having read it a second time. —Bob Morse

Advices & Queries on Simplicity

Simplicity is one of the fruits of a faithful life centered on a commitment to the Spirit of God. A simple life need not be cloistered and may even be a busy life. Its activities and expressions are correlated and directed toward the purpose of keeping our communication with God open and unencumbered.

Friends strive for simplicity in the use of our earnings and property, in our speech, and in our manner of living, choosing that which is clear and useful.

All that leads to fullness of life and aids in the service of Truth is to be accepted with thanksgiving. We each determine by the Light we are given what helps and what hinders our search for inner peace.

Do we center our lives in the awareness of God so that all things take their rightful place?

Do we clutter our lives with things and activities? What are the ways out?

What helps us avoid commitments beyond our strength and light?

How does our Meeting help us simplify our lives?

How do we order our individual lives to nourish our spiritual growth?

Do we keep to simplicity, moderation, and honesty in our speech, our manner of living, and our daily work?

Called Business Meeting: Sunday 30 August 2026

Attendees: Andra Hollenbeck, Ann Gaffney, Rochelle Webster, Adam Thompson, Eric Miller, JoAnn Sustrick, Lori Fleuter, Jean Semrau, Nancy Spear, Bill Ashworth, Melody Ashworth, Josephine Olson, Crystal Bosbach, Kitty Cable, Althea Godfrey, Jamie McLoed-Skinner, Ka Hering, Brittany Fagin, Kody Kirby, Anya Lawrence, Norman Pasche, Morgan Kaura, Samantha Archer, Eryn Joyce, Susan Morrow, Richard Spencer

Agenda: Nominating Slate for 2026-2027.

2026.08.01 Friends accepted the presented and adjusted slate of for seasoning until the September Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

Kitty Cable and Bill Ashworth asked to be added to Zoom Support.

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

Meeting for Worship for Business 20 September 2026

Friends Present: Ann Gaffney, Bob Morse, Kitty Cable, Ken Deveney, Andra Hollenbeck, Josephine Olson, Melody Ashworth, Bill Ashworth, Ká Hering, Crystal Bosbach

First People Acknowledgement:
See [South Mountain Friends Meeting](#)

Quote & Reflection: *"The meeting for business is a meeting for worship during which Friends attend to our corporate Business. It takes place in the same expectant waiting for the guidance of the Spirit as does any meeting for worship.... Friends conduct business together in the faith that there is one Divine Spirit which is accessible to all people, and that when Friends wait upon, heed, and follow the Light of Truth within them, that Spirit will lead to unity... on decisions, directions, and concerns."* ~FAITH & PRACTICE, North Pacific Yearly Meeting, excerpts from the sections on Meeting for Business and Friends Method of Reaching Decisions

Action Items

Slate of Officers: Last month, Nominating Committee proposed a slate of officers to be seasoned.

Changes: Nancy Spear will no longer be on adult ed, Becky Hale will solely display art in our Meeting House, Samantha Archer will head up Young Adult Friends; Kitty Cable and Bill Ashworth will join the others providing zoom support, and Bob Morse will be a permanent substitute Recording Clerk (with co-clerks typically being recording clerk for each other). It was noted, without complaint, the similarity of this slate with those of recent years, and Friends wondered about more diversity in the future. Friends recognized that our Young Adult Friends are worthy and deserving of our care and support, especially as they take on leadership roles in our Meeting.

2026.09.1 Friends approved the

nominating slate as amended.
See *slate on page 5*.

First Hour Time Change: Pre-pandemic, our First Hour activities began at 9:30 am. During the pandemic, the time was moved to 9 to accommodate Friends' ability to attend First Hour on Zoom and then drive to the Meeting House before worship. Since we are primarily in-person now, Ministry & Counsel (M&C) recommends that we again start first hour activities at 9:30 (with business meeting still commencing at 9). Friends voiced cons and pros—the benefit of keeping an hour for socializing before worship vs the benefit of most socializing occurring after worship, especially because newcomers typically arrive just in time for worship and respond to a full-community welcome afterwards

Friends are encouraged to observe and ponder, over the next few months, the overall impact on Meeting regulars and Meeting newcomers of our current time schedule vs a prospective later-morning-start schedule—and share observations with M&C.

Retreat: Last Spring Friends began discussing a fall retreat on our Meeting's values and how we live those values. A threshing session was held to gather ideas and an ad hoc committee was formed to pursue the planning. The ad hoc committee has not found a clear path forward on a date, location, or a major organizing theme. M&C is asking whether a fall retreat is still important. The retreat survey determined that Friends prefer Friday evening/Saturday daytime retreats, especially on community-building and specific concerns. It was posited that the diminished retreat interest may be due to the

upcoming midterms elections (perhaps a spring retreat?). Friends have enjoyed retreats held in our Meeting House or learning skills or deepening spirituality together, as well as silent retreats held in a retreat center. Another topic could be exploring our moving beyond inclusivity to nurturing a sense of belonging. For now, we're laying down the ad hoc planning committee.

Separately, it was suggested that we propose to Peace & Social Concerns committee to host a post-election discussion during a first hour in November.

How to Quaker this year will be compressed into 3 sessions. See *page 1 for the date and the multiple topics of the first session*.

Informational Items

Treasurer Report: All is well with Meeting's finances; there'll be a full financial update next month, as our treasurer is currently out of town.

Peace & Social Concerns (P&SC): A pollinator garden has been planted on our grounds. Thanks to all who planned, planted, and held the garden in the Light.



Tech Committee (TC): Only good comments have been received about the new cabinet in the Meeting Room. The top part would hold all the cords, etc. for all users, including renters. The bottom part will be locked to house such Meeting items as the OWL. Merlin will be advised to attach the lock.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Gaffney, Interim Clerk
Bob Morse, Interim Recorder

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

Mending the Rural Urban Divide

Rural Oregonians often feel their voices are not heard in Salem; new policies are seemingly enacted by a legislature dominated by urban influences without adequate consideration for how they will impact rural areas. This “divide” poses a serious challenge to Oregonians’ sense of participating in a fair, respectful political process.

The Oregon Rural Urban Project (ORUP), which I co-chair, seeks to learn about this divide and its underlying causes from both rural and urban perspectives, acknowledging all with respect.

Please learn more about our work at <https://oregon-rural-urban-project.braverangels.org/>

ORUP consists of a series of townhall meetings across Oregon, at least one in each County, followed by a shorter series of Common Ground Discussions (CGD). The town hall meetings have three goals: 1) To learn how Oregonians see this divide and how it affects their lives; 2) To explain ORUP, how we are approaching the issue and hope to improve the situation; 3) To coordinate the collective effort to engage the State Legislature.

Common Ground Discussions (CGD) are the heart of the project. We are inviting townhall attendees to serve as delegates to the CGD’s where they will be tasked with identifying mutually agreeable recommendations for what to do about the divide. We will assemble these recommendations into a report that will be publicly available and presented to the Governor and the State Legislature.

At the same time, we are working in Salem to inform legislators of our work and prepare them to receive our report constructively. We have met with all of our Legislators and initiated an effort to establish bipartisan caucuses in each house of the State Legislature that will work collaboratively to bridge the rural/urban divide.

We will be presenting town hall meetings locally on Monday 26 October at the Medford Library at 6 pm, and on Tuesday 27 October at the Anne Baxter Auditorium in Grants Pass, also at 6.

Friends are invited and encouraged to attend one of these town hall meetings which will be hybrid. Please contact me for details on how to register.

—Steve Radcliffe

541-391-0692

sradcliffe@braverangels.org

Slate of Officers, Committees, and Contact Persons

Presented by Nominating Committee 30 Aug 2026; seasoned & approved 20 Sep 2026

Officers

Presiding Co-Clerks: Rochelle Webster and Ann Gaffney

Treasurer: Adam Thompson

Recording Clerk: Co-clerks/Bob Morse, substitute

Communications Clerk: Jean Semrau

Tech Support for Comm Clerk: Kitty Cable

Administrative Support for Comm Clerk: Lori Fleuter

Joint Committee Delegates: Richard Spencer, Merlin McDaniel

Standing Committees

Ministry and Counsel: Andra Hollenbeck, Adam Thompson, Jim Lobsenz, Jamie McLeod Skinner, Josephine Olson

Peace and Social Concerns: Herb Rothschild, Ken Deveney, Jim Lobsenz, Steve Radcliffe, Fernando Gapasin

Finance: Ann Gaffney, Jean Semrau

Friendship and Hospitality: Ká Hering, Crystal Bosbach, JoAnn Sustrick, Cathy McDaniel

Welcoming Committee: Bob Morse, Brittany Fagin/Kody Kirby, Fernando Gapasin, Richard Spencer

Adult Education: JoAnn Sustrick, Lori Fleuter, Josephine Olson

Interest Group Contact Persons

Applied Improv Open Studio: Rochelle Webster

Art Displays: Becky Hale

Circle of Light: Crystal Bosbach

Free Writing Friends: Becky Hale

Friends Men’s Group: Ken Deveney

Friends Women’s Group: Althea Godfrey

Racial Concerns: Bob Morse

Song Circle: Rochelle Webster

Young Adult Friends: Samantha Archer

Zoom Support: Kitty Cable, Samantha Archer, Brittany Fagin, Kody Kirby, Adam Thompson, Bill Ashworth

Other Contact Persons

Librarian: Tara Jones

Newsletter: Bob Morse

NPYM Coordinating Committee: Bill Ashworth

Website Administration: Bob Morse

Technology Coordinator: Kitty Cable

Officers

Presiding Co-Clerks: Rochelle Webster 646-5186 & Ann Gaffney 603-490-7193

Treasurer: Adam Thompson 201-8255

Recording Clerks: Co-Clerks/Bob Morse, substitute

Communications Clerk: Jean Semrau 646-8225 with Kitty Cable (tech support) & Lori Fleuter (admin support)

Joint Committee Delegates: Richard Spencer 707-543-6330; Merlin McDaniel 301-6054

Standing Committees

Ministry and Counsel: Adam Thompson 201-8255, Andra Hollenbeck 601-6421, Jim Lobsenz 206-399-2782, Jamie McLeod-Skinner 777-7797, Josephine Olson 505-608-8254, Rochelle Webster & Ann Gaffney (*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:** Bob Morse, Brittany Fagin/Kody Kirby, Fernando Gapasin, Richard Spencer

***Adult Ed:** JoAnn Sustrick, Lori Fleuter, Josephine Olson

***Interest Group Contact Persons**

***Applied Improv:** Rochelle Webster 646-5186

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

***Circle of Light:** Crystal Bosbach 930-4222

***Free Writing Friends:** Becky Hale 601-3084

***Friends Men's Group:** Ken Deveney 482-2173

***Friends Women's Group:** Althea Godfrey 261-5329

***Racial Concerns:** Bob Morse 482-8449

***Song Circle:** Rochelle Webster 646-5186

***Young Adult Friends:** Samantha Archer 385-645-1546

***Zoom Support:** Adam Thompson, Bill Ashworth, Brittany Fagin, Kitty Cable, Kody Kirby, Samantha Archer

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*

All area codes are 541 unless otherwise noted

*Newsletter submissions are due to Bob Morse
morse@mind.net Monday after Business Meeting*

South Mountain Friends Meeting

543 South Mountain Avenue

Ashland, Oregon 97520