



SOUTH MOUNTAIN FRIENDS MEETING

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

(QUAKERS)

Unprogrammed Worship in Ashland, Oregon

Ninth Month 2019

543 South Mountain Avenue
Ashland, Oregon 97520
(541) 482-0814
ashlandquakers@gmail.com
www.ashlandquakers.org
(Near Southern Oregon University)

1st HOUR: Discussions & Meetings

2nd HOUR: Worship

Meeting for Worship:

11 am Sundays

Childcare During Worship

First Hour & Rise of Meeting:

1 September

9:30 am: Committee Meetings

10:30 am: Circle of Light

8 September

9:30 am: Spiritual Listening on Meeting Membership (See Page 4)

15 September

8:30-10:30 am: Business Meeting

22 September

9:30 am: No First-Hour Activity

(Culmination of weekend of hosting *Western Friend* Board Members (See Page 4))

29 September

9:30 am: Peace & Social Concerns (Specific topic to be announced)

North Pacific Yearly Meeting Approves Uprooting Racism Minute

THE MINUTE READS: North Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, an organization of unprogrammed Quaker meetings and worship groups in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana affirm our commitment to live the intertwined testimonies of Integrity, Equality, and Community as we look to the transformative power of love to guide us in uprooting racism.

Friends recognize the detrimental impact of racism on all people and the injustice of substantial racial disparities. Under Divine guidance, we are led to dismantle the system of white supremacy which rewards white people with unearned advantages while often punishing people of color with pervasive disadvantages. We seek a deepening awareness of how these privileges and barriers have manifested in each of our lives. We endeavor to use this awareness to act against racial injustice.

We acknowledge that white Friends have erected barriers to Friends of color and continue to perpetuate systemic racism in Quaker systems. We commit to examining Friends' traditions and actions for barriers that exclude people of color and altering them accordingly. We seek guidance in how to remedy continued injustices perpetuated by systemic racism and in the creation of improved alternatives. Important roles for white Friends include listening directly to and supporting Friends of color, educating other white Friends about racism, and holding each other accountable.

We commit individually and as meetings to take action that dismantles oppressive societal attitudes and institutions, creates equity, and constructs multiracial movements to solve the pressing problems of our times. We accept the challenge to co-create Beloved Community with equality of opportunity, respect, and spiritual and economic well-being for all people everywhere.

We will create a team of Friends who outreach to quarterly meetings, monthly meetings, and worship groups to assess what assistance they would like in uprooting racism and offer resources and/or provide experiential workshops that allow for deep listening and work toward removing barriers.

Resources supporting these actions can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/yyo4sctn>



Marybeth's Living Wake

Marybeth Webster held a Memorial Meeting for herself on her ninetieth birthday to hear her loved ones' reflections while she could still listen. Although held in Quaker-style, the Friends comprised only one-sixth of the "circles" of Marybeth's current, engaged, and inspirational life.

This photo captured all the Quakers in attendance (from left to right): Grace Pettygrove (originally from Davis Meeting; now living in Grants Pass), Steve Radcliffe, Nancy Nanna (Lake County Worship Group; lives in Redwood Valley, CA), Bob Morse, Marybeth Webster, Melody Ashworth, Bill Ashworth, Colleen Graham, Colombe Leinaw

What Does an African American Man Bring to the Religious Society of Friends? Baggage and Blessings

By Rev. Chester Freeman

Like many of us, I came to the Quaker faith community broken. With baggage. Burdensome spiritual, emotional, and psychological baggage that stifled my soul. But hidden beneath, within and among those heavy bags were blessings that lightened the load.

These sacks were filled, in part, with the indelible effects of racism. I grew up in a small Jim Crow town in North Carolina that was dominated by the Ku Klux Klan. Like much of the baggage we carry, there was a blessing in that bag. The blessing was that this small town was integrated and survived mandatory desegregation of the schools and other public facilities.

Another burdensome pack on my back was my fundamentalist Baptist upbringing. But I was blessed that it didn't define my faith. A college year spent in Japan living in a Zen Buddhist Monastery broadened and deepened my religious sensibilities.

I was further borne down by the weight of being gay and feeling isolated. Through therapy, I have struggled to accept myself and connect with others. My blessing was finding a life partner of 38 years.

On this journey, I found comfort in the words of Iyanla Vanzant's book *Acts of Faith: Daily Meditations for People of Color*. She writes that "being broken does not mean you are unequipped...There are enough pieces left for you to grab onto and hold onto.... More importantly there are the pieces that well up from deep inside your being that will guide you surely and safely." As a Quaker, I believe it is "that of God within me and every person" that will help me put my soul back together.

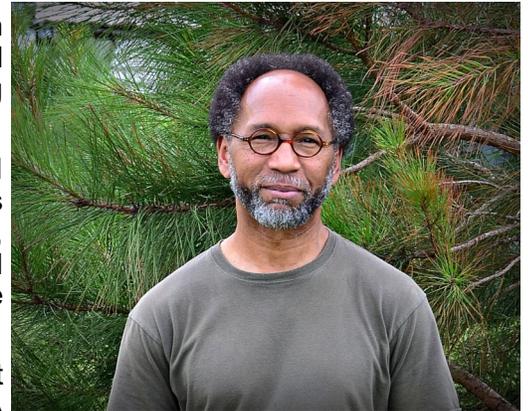
I came to the Quaker community with many assumptions. First, I assumed that Quakers never owned slaves and always protested against slavery. That is not the case. It was the effort of one small man, Benjamin Lay, who forced the issue of abolition onto the wealthy Quakers who desired to ignore the horrific realities of slavery.

Second, I assumed that slaves and freed Black people were always welcome as Friends. But it was not until 1793 that Joseph Drinkwater wrote "A Plea for Admission of Colored People to the Society of Friends."

Third, I assumed Friends kept good records of their community, but according to Cadbury, "the earliest Quaker of African descent has no name and only sketchy information that he belonged to a meeting in New England. Sarah Grimke says "they would not affirm his gift in the ministry."

Fourth, I assumed all Quakers would look for the divinity within each person regardless of skin color. However, African Americans admitted to Quaker colleges experienced blatant racism during the 1920s. Friends Meetings were slower to integrate than schools because of their bias against African Americans. It appears that even in the 1970s African Americans in Quaker communities were still feeling isolated and marginalized.

Continued on Page 3



What Does an African American Man Bring to the Religious Society of Friends? Baggage and Blessings

(Continued from Page 2) I also expected all Quaker communities to accept gay, lesbian, and transgender people, but I was saddened to learn the Farmington Friends Meeting lost part of its congregation when they sought the sense of the meeting to become a welcoming community. It shows that Quaker communities are struggling with the same issues as mainline Protestant denominations--which adds a bit more baggage for me to carry in my psychological backpack.

Dr. James Cone once said that "being Black in America has little to do with skin color. To be Black means that your heart, your soul, your mind, and your body are where the dispossessed are." The dispossessed are those souls broken, like myself by waves of life, whether born into poverty or struggling with subtle racism in the workplace. By embracing our brokenness, we find pieces that make us unique and talented. We discover our gifts. So, what are the gifts or blessings I can bring to this community?

First of all, music. We all know that early Quakers eschewed music as part of the worship experience. I believe, as Hans Christian Anderson stated so beautifully: "Where words fail, music speaks." I bring music from the Black religious experience of spirituals and gospel songs. I am thankful that this unprogrammed community welcomes my sharing songs when the spirit leads. I try not to abuse this privilege because I know the value of quiet contemplation.

Secondly, spoken ministry. As a former chaplain, I enjoy sharing meditations, and I spend much time preparing them. Through brevity, these meditations may complement our time of deep silent worship. It is important for me to highlight the Black experience by seeking recognition for Austin Steward, an unsung abolitionist, and bringing attention to Benjamin Lay, the first real revolutionary of the Quaker faith and of our country.

Another gift is openness. I try to be open to the spirit and open to the community around me. I have found that messages shared by other members have spoken directly to my needs. I am thankful for this spontaneous ministry. I am also grateful for emotional acceptance. Being able to grieve and share my pain with members has been a true blessing. There is power in letting tears flow knowing in this silence is support and love.

I also share the gift of hugs. Embracing others creates connection--an uplifting act of support and encouragement. I am pleased to give and receive hugs within our community.

Another gift I bring is hospitality. I am not referring to "southern hospitality," even though I was born in the South; I am referring to hospitality as defined by Henri Nouwen in his book *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*. In this case, "Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines." This concept is practiced in my daily life.

A final communal gift involves sharing food. I try to prepare something healthy and delicious for our refreshment time. This act nourishes not only the physical body, but the spirit and soul as well. The foods we make reflect our ethnicity and enhance our appreciation of diversity.

An Ashanti proverb states: "True power comes through cooperation and silence." I would like to share a quotation from the book that I mentioned earlier, *Acts of Faith*:

"Have you ever heard the sun come out in the morning? Did you hear the moon come out last night? We have been taught in this society that power is loud, forceful, aggressive, and somewhat intimidating. It is not. In silence the Creator works. His creations all appear in silence. In silence one becomes attuned to the energies and forces that are unseen and unheard. In silence one learns to cooperate.... In silence one learns to bring the head and the heart into cooperation in order to move with the strength and power of the forces in the flow." I hope that my gifts of compassion exemplify the silent strength which George Fox calls us to demonstrate.

I have shared my brokenness with you, the baggage that I carry – May it be a blessing to help each of us embrace our own humanity and see that of God in each other.

Rev. Chester Freeman attends Central Finger Lakes Friends Meeting in Geneva, New York

Spiritual Listening on Meeting Membership

9:30 am Sunday 8 September

All Meeting Participants are Welcome and Encouraged to Come Lend an Ear and Share your Voice

Queries for Preparatory Reflection:

What makes you want to be a participant of the Meeting? How does one become a part of the SMFM Community?

What does it, or would it, mean to you to be a Member of SMFM or Religious Society of Friends as a whole?

Are there particular commitments and responsibilities to the Meeting that membership requires?

Does making a distinction between Members and Attenders lead to a sense of exclusion and hierarchy? Does not using these terms foster a sense of inclusion?

Is there a value in making a distinction between Members and Attenders? How does it affect our Meeting Community and the ability of all to participate in the Life of the Meeting?

--Maureen Graham

***Western Friend* Board Convenes at South Mountain Meeting House**

Friday 20 through Sunday 22 September

Western Friend Board Members will gather at our Meeting House Friday from about 3 to 8 pm and all-day Saturday from about 8 am to 6 pm. South Mountain Friends will provide a potluck from 6 to 8 pm Saturday evening which will allow time for local and regional Friends to visit and get to know one another. The board will provide a short program of interest to Friends after the potluck. No activity will be planned for first hour on Sunday morning in order to leave the Meeting Room available to the board in case they have any loose ends to tie up. As well, not having to be at the Meeting House early on Sunday morning will, hopefully, encourage South Mountain Friends to partake in the Saturday evening potluck. The *Western Friend* Board Members will join us in worship at 11 am Sunday.

Gabrielle and Herb are the South Mountaineers who are coordinating the weekend. Please inform them of your desire to host board members in your home and/or provide food for the Saturday evening potluck. Besides contributing to the potluck, South Mountaineers can also extend a welcome by providing board members with snacks to nourish them as they arrive Friday afternoon from near and far. Please alert the coordinators to your snack-providing intentions. Kathleen and Cathy will assist with food arrangements.

It is an honor to be able to host the *Western Friend* Board.

--Bob Morse

Save the Date: Willamette Quarterly Meeting

Willamette Quarterly Meeting will meet in the Spring of 2020 (29 – 31 May) at Camp Arrah Wanna in Welches, Oregon. Please consider marking your calendars and preparing yourselves to rejuvenate in a beautiful camp with prepared meals and plenty of time to worship and fellowship with Oregon Friends. This site has something for everyone with a river, trails, and a gym—activities for families, children, Junior Friends, and adults. We welcome your participating in the rebuilding of Willamette Quarterly Meeting. In recognition of how Spring 2020 sounds far off in the distant future, we promise to provide reminders and additional information as the time draws near.

--Sakre Edson for the Beloved Community Planning Committee

SMFM CALENDAR

September 2019

Sun Mo Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

1 9:30 am Committee Meetings 10:30 am Circle of Light	2	3 4:30-6:30 pm Ministry & Counsel Meeting	4	5 3:30-5:30 pm Free Writing Friends	6	7
8 9:30 am Spiritual Listening on Meeting Membership	9	10 7-9 pm Ashland Song Circle	11 6:30 to 8 pm Light Meditation Group	12 3:30-5:30 pm Free Writing Friends	13	14 1-4 pm Laundry Love Henry's Laundromat
15 8:30 -10:30 am Business Meeting	16	17 SMFM Newsletter Deadline	18	19 3:30-5:30 pm Free Writing Friends	20 3-8 pm Western Friend Board meets at Meeting House	21 8 am - 6 pm Board meeting 6-8 pm Potluck and Program
22 9:30 am No First Hour Activity 11 am Board Members join us in Worship	23	24	25	26 3:30-5:30 pm Free Writing Friends	27	28
29 9:30 am Peace & Social Concerns: Specific Topic TBA	30					

Update on Divestment from Private Prisons & Detention Centers: You'll be happy to know that the Bank of America has now committed to stop providing credit to private prison and detention center operators.

Lost and Found: The Lost and Found bin in the meetinghouse kitchen has a fine assortment of jackets, hats, glasses, a nice scarf, and a LOT of water bottles. Please claim what is yours before it all moves on to Goodwill.

--Jean Semrau

6-9 August 2019 Hiroshima-Nagasaki Vigil

Ashland's new Methodist minister, Brett Strobel, keynote speaker at the 34th annual vigil (initiated by our Friends Meeting and organized by Peace House), said, "We lost a moral tenet and broke trust with the future and gave up our faith with each other. ... So we're here to reiterate, never again."

--Bob Morse



MEETING OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

Clerk: Melody Ashworth 324-9824

Assistant Clerk: Anna Monders 488-5577

Recording Clerk: Lisa Nichols 488-5577

Treasurer: Adam Thompson 201-8255

Newsletter Editor: Bob Morse 482-8449, assisted by Pam Johnson and Sylvie Weaver

Web Administrator: Scott Plummer 301-5840, Adam Thompson, Bill Ashworth; **Website**

Contributors: Bob Morse & Pam Johnson

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

Archivist: Pam Johnson 535-1940

Art Coordinator: Becky Hale 601-3084

Children's Education & Spirituality: Ken Deveney (convener) 488-5506, Cathy McDaniel

Winter Shelter Coordinators: Alex Reid 707-499-9146 and Bob Morse 482-8449

Please direct all Meeting-related electronic correspondence to ashlandquakers@gmail.com

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

Finance Committee: Barbara Arrais, Scott Plummer (clerk), Treasurer *ex officio*

Joint Committee Representatives: Herb Rothschild, Steve Wells

Buildings & Grounds: Steve Wells, Merlin McDaniel, Raymond Scully, Glenn Allister, Hazel Ward

Nominating Committee: Beth Aspedon, Alex Reid

Friendship & Hospitality Committee: Patricia Morrison, Crystal Bosbach, Cathie McDaniel, Kathleen Hering

Greeters: Steve Radcliffe, Sylvie Weaver, Alex Reid, Javan Reid, Bob Morse

Peace & Social Concerns Committee: Herb Rothschild (clerk), Ken Deveney, Javan Reid, Pam Allister

Library Elves: Jean Semrau, Steve Wells, Heather Starbird, Becky Hale

Adult Education Committee: Lisa Nichols (clerk), Becky Hale, Jim Phillips, Karen Roertgen

Ministry & Counsel Committee: Gabrielle Leslie (co-clerk) 897-4458, Maureen Graham (co-clerk) 326-9609, Rochelle Webster 201-8255, Cathy McDaniel 770-3318, Clerk or Assistant Clerk *ex officio*

All area codes are 541 unless otherwise noted

South Mountain Friends Meeting

543 South Mountain Avenue

Ashland, Oregon 97520