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(Near Southern Oregon University)

# **SOUTH MOUNTAIN FRIENDS MEETING**

## **THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**

### **(QUAKERS)**

Unprogrammed Worship in Ashland, Oregon

**Fifth Month 2020**

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## **We Need Each Other**

*Jay O'Hara was North Pacific Yearly Meeting's 2019 Annual Session's Friend in Residence. Jay is a member of Sandwich Monthly Meeting on Cape Cod and co-founder of the Climate Disobedience Center. Jay was part of the team that in 2016 shut down five pipelines carrying crude oil from Canada's tar-sands. A visionary climate activist, Jay works to deepen the spiritual underpinnings of powerful action in the world. The following is Jay's blog of 30 March 2020. —Ed.*

## **SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE**

As Long As We Are  
Sheltering-At-Home

### **First-Hour Activity**

9:30 to 10:30 am: Worship Sharing  
& Check-In via Zoom

The Friend, often our clerk, who  
convenes the Worship Sharing  
provides the queries.

All are welcome to join the Zoom  
call by computer or phone.

### **Meeting for Worship**

11 am to Noon: In Our Own Homes

Clerk Lisa Nichols will be present at the Meeting House along with the few who choose to join her. All other Friends are invited to worship with her from the safety of their own homes. If vocal ministry rises to the level of sharing, Friends are encouraged to email their words to Lisa ([ashlandquakers@gmail.com](mailto:ashlandquakers@gmail.com)). Subsequently by email, Lisa will inform South Mountaineers of the ministry she's collected and summarize the First-Hour queries.

**Some Committees May Meet by Zoom; All Other South Mountain Activities Remain Canceled**



We were already in unprecedented times while staring down the barrel of the climate crisis. And now we're in a pandemic that is pulling our attention to real immediate needs in communities across the country. Many of us have been practicing all our lives how to handle crisis situations. For some this experience of societal unraveling is brand new—for others this is an emergency that has been unfolding for generations. In this time, a legacy of racial violence and economic disparity is driving harms harder and faster for the most vulnerable and those on the front-lines. Meanwhile, we face a government that downplays the magnitude of the problems and does too little too late. Now we are confronted with a real opportunity to turn toward each other and community rather than isolation or turning on one another.

In this moment the practices at the heart of nonviolence are as critical in our day-to-day lives as they are in direct action: showing up as our whole human selves, noticing and feeling all the emotions that move through us, tending to our own healing, as well as others'. Anxiety or fear, heartbreak or loneliness—those feelings are real, and they inform the path. But we need more than those feelings to build the way forward. One thing that has helped us stay grounded and focused on creativity and efforts to build the world we envision in this time is to remember to stay connected to earth and the land. It has the ability to hold us in this moment.

When we form our teams, pods, affinity groups, and other forms of community-in-action, let's ask ourselves: who will bring the laughter? Who will be the one to build the bigger table? Who will teach us caution and remind us to slow down? Who will help us make sure we don't go too slowly? Who will be the one to see beauty in this moment, and then who will be the one to help facilitate our grief?

Who will you be in this time?

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**This recent photo  
taken by Friend  
Ken Deveney  
reminds us that  
spring is now  
coming into focus  
bringing promise  
of new life and  
new hope.**



**"It's no hardship to  
be largely confined  
to our rural  
property in  
springtime. I only  
regret that this year  
we won't be able to  
share the beauty  
with Friends at the  
(mostly) annual  
May garden party.**

**But one of the  
comforting aspects  
of nature is that we  
can count on  
the seasons to come  
'round again."**

**—Herb Rothschild**

# Advices & Queries on "Be Not Afraid"

Courage is a fundamental act of faith.

As Friends we examine our fears and have the courage to release those that prevent us from growing in the Spirit and following our Guide. As we continue letting go of our fears and following the motions of love, we are led into a new, more abundant, and joy-filled life. Although this life is not always free of pain, it is graced with a courage that will endure any adversity.

We ask those in authority to employ their power to reconcile and unify us, rather than to exploit fear to divide us.

It takes courage to reach out to those who are creating fear and to those who are controlled by fear. We work to restore harmony through peacemaking and reconciliation based in mutual love. Disharmony is a manifestation of fear; it results in separation from God, from ourselves, from our fellow human beings, and from all of creation.

*How does fear influence our lives? Are our decisions based on fear, or do we trust the Spirit's urging toward love and reconciliation? How do we let go of our fears, trusting the Spirit, so that we can restore peace in our Meetings and communities?*

*Do we encourage each other through love to act in faithful witness? How do we identify and confront fears that deceive, enslave, and stop us from living faithfully?*

*In times of trial and terror how can we open our hearts, return to God's love, and move forward with courage?*

*What would we do, as individuals and as a community, if we were not afraid?*

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## Reflections on Life Today from Friends of Yesteryear



### The Light More and More Arose

"A great power of darkness seemed so to prevail as entirely for a considerable time to close up and block the way to any public service. But as I patiently submitted to the baptism and willingly became baptized with and for the dead—as it is only through death that the resurrection from death can be witnessed—a little glimmering of light appeared, in which I felt the necessity of standing up, but with the utmost caution to mind the stepping stones. For my way (for a time) was like passing through a miry bog, enclosed with mist and darkness, with but just light enough to see the way—and that composed of steppingstones, and but one visible at a time. And when I had taken one step and found it to be solid and sure, I had then to look carefully for the next.

And as I thus proceeded, keeping my eye single to the light that led the way, the light more and more arose out of obscurity and the darkness vanished. And [God, who] opens and none can shut, and shuts and none but himself can open, made way for the promotion of his own righteous cause and the exaltation of Truth's testimonies."

—Elias Hicks (1819) (Submitted by Jean Semrau)

### The Fruits of Solitude

"When William Penn, that extraordinary composite of polished courtier, daring statesman, disciplined seeker and devout Quaker saint, found himself in one of a number of periods of enforced retirement through being out of favor with the reigning monarch in the turbulent late sixteen-hundreds, he "kissed the Gentle Hand which led him into it," for he found his solitude a great treasure. His little book, ***Some Fruits of Solitude*** is the treasure shared. It never fails to lift the spirits of those who are 'persuaded to stop, and step a little aside, out of the noisy Crowd and Incumbering Hurry of the World, and Calmly take a Prospect of Things.'"



From *Children and Solitude* by Elise Boulding, Pendle Hill Pamphlet #125

You can access **Penn's pamphlet here:**

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/Some\\_Fruits\\_of\\_Solitude/guCN9sNM0eEC?hl=en&qbpv=1&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Some_Fruits_of_Solitude/guCN9sNM0eEC?hl=en&qbpv=1&printsec=frontcover)

From the Ben Lomond Quaker Center Newsletter

## Clerk's Corner

Dear Friends,

*In addition to Coronavirus season, it is allergy season for me. It is amazing how the French word "blesser" (to hurt) is so similar to the word "blessing." I feel that being reminded of my physical fragility connects me to the Light beyond ways I usually experience when I am well. This allergy season is going pretty well. Between Reiki, medication, homeopathy, and nettle tea by the quart, I am feeling well. However, I know this could change any day. I am kept very humble and dependent on the Light at this time.*

*Also, our world is a strange place right now. I think I am still holding the shock of it. I am Held by Friends and the life of our Meeting, as well as my friends outside of Meeting. My relationship with Anna is a great source of joy. We have been having lots of fun going for extra hikes, spending time in the garden, playing cards after every meal. I am so aware of how very blessed we both are to be able to continue our work; Anna is recording "booktalks" videos for the library at home, and I'm teaching flute lessons online and repairing flutes on the side. It makes me so happy that I'm still getting to serve my students.*

*And Meeting. Our Meeting! Being Clerk is the best because it allows me to witness the great kindness that f/Friends show to each other very constantly. If you could only know the lengths to which people are going for each other all the time, really, but it is especially moving to see right now. I can say my jaw has dropped three times this month when I have heard of the way f/Friends are caring for one another, usually on the sly and without wanting any recognition for what they are doing. Please know you are in good hands, everyone. If you have a need and reach out, Meeting reaches back. If it doesn't, reach out again. This is a community I love and trust. Thank you for being part of it.*

Much love,  
Lisa

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## Make Health Not War

Let's call the COVID-19 crisis and response a global public health emergency, not a war. Calling the pandemic what it is—a global health emergency—conveys the urgency needed to mobilize resources to respond. Words like "emergency" call up humanitarian metaphors, inviting us to center on the compassionate work of first responders and medical professionals working hard to help the sick. It gives us space to talk about the many mutual aid networks that have sprung up across the US and around the world.

The use of war metaphors by public officials and media figures is reflective of a culture where war is the primary reference point. Media critic Adam H. Johnson points out that in the US, war is always a central frame of reference, noting that "dozens of other countries seem more than capable of evoking civic duty, without sorting out the world as good guys and bad guys with the latter needing to be killed." In wars, we are called to fight each other; but in emergencies, we are called to help each other.

—American Friends Service Committee (submitted by Jean Semrau)

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## Wednesday Morning Worship Sharing via Zoom

**Ben Lomond Quaker Center** will be holding a series of 6 Worship Sharing Sessions at 10 am Wednesdays beginning 15 April.

Quaker Center will provide queries.

All are welcome!

Use PASSWORD 276105

<https://zoom.us/j/91561996986?pwd=dCttNEdKYzFIUm1LRGFNS2h2WWFVUT09>



*Dear Friends,*

*What follows is a very rough first draft of the State of Society Report. I hope that you will help me, as you always do, to create a truer and more succinct document that reflects the year we have had together. I really look forward to hearing from you; please tell me anything I missed, or anywhere I missed the mark ([ashlandquakers@gmail.com](mailto:ashlandquakers@gmail.com)). I look forward to continued discernment with you.*

*Sincerely,*

*Lisa Nichols, Clerk*

## **South Mountain Friends Meeting State of Society Report 20 April 20**

South Mountain Friends Meeting has been a vibrant Meeting throughout the course of this year. Committees have been active and engaged. It seems that Meeting for Business, and special first hour activities, often draw a substantial number of people for our small Meeting. For example, Adult Education sessions have been very well attended and enjoyed, often by more than ten members and friends. Hearts are being opened by our Uprooting Racism Focus Group, as our community has moved into the acknowledgement that racism is systemic and pervasive in our society and ourselves.

Our Ministry and Counsel committee is thriving and has been very thoughtful and spiritually grounded in caring for members and attenders via care committees, constantly considering the life of the Meeting, and creating rich reflection sessions. It also guided our Meeting through a discernment process which resulted in a decision to remove membership status from the directory, in order to promote inclusion of friends not drawn to become members. We were delighted to welcome a new member, Kathleen Hering, to our Meeting, this year. The spiritual life of the Meeting is also nurtured by our Circle of Light, which holds individuals and the Meeting in Divine Radiance on an ongoing basis.

A small but devoted group of f/Friends have continued South Mountain Friends Meeting's outreach to the homeless. Every Sunday night, these volunteers have ensured that a hot meal is served for dinner, two individuals have stayed overnight, and breakfast has been served at the Ashland Winter Shelter. In order to fulfill these commitments, we have connected with many volunteers from outside the Meeting. The topic of Homelessness has been featured twice by the Adult Education Committee. Although we do not plan to coordinate a night next year, we will continue the relationships we have developed, and support it in a way that is right-sized for our small Meeting.

F/friends have been honest and tender to one another in Meeting for Business this year. When disagreements surface, we have spent extra time in worship. As needed, we have extended this by holding Spiritual Listening sessions, which allow us to worship-share for an hour on a specific topic. The solutions we create together while sitting in the Light, while sometimes unanticipated, have been far superior to those proposed by any one individual. Discernment of challenging issues has felt complete and has built intimacy among f/Friends. Frequency of messages during Meeting for Worship vary from week to week. F/friends are thoughtful about leaving space between messages, which have the spiritual foundation to linger with us throughout the week.

Just as Meeting was bubbling with so much excitement that we could hardly find enough first hours for all the activities we wanted to do, the Coronavirus made some major changes in the life of the Meeting. However, the flow of our community continued. Meeting for Worship in homes has proven to be a deep experience for many f/Friends, just as it has been throughout the year. Physical, emotional, and spiritual care of members who were recovering from surgery was uninterrupted. Our first hour session was moved to a query-based check-in on Zoom. Our worship has been held by members and attenders in their own homes at the usual hour, while the Clerk and one or two others have held space in the Meetinghouse.

There have been a few challenges within our Meeting. The ceiling of our Meeting room fell in the late spring of 2019, injuring one person who was renting the space at the time. Repairs were swift and complete, and the renter has thankfully recovered. At about the same time, it took much seasoning to find unity on our budget; our efforts paid off as this year, committees have had what they needed to do their work, and our budget is on-track. We lost two of our longtime members this year; we grieved the passing of Tim Wohlforth and Kathryn Roether with family members who joined us in worship.

We enjoy having new visitors and getting to know them over time. We have a welcoming website to help people find us, and at the door the Greeters make sure to warmly welcome new faces and old with great enthusiasm each week. Our Meeting is small; however, it is vibrant and lively, and many f/Friends from out-of-town comment that they enjoy the depth of worship with us.

# Voters to Decide Fate of Proposed County Jail

## SMFM on Record Opposing Expanded Incarceration

There will be a measure on the 19 May ballot to create a new taxing district to build and run a new Jackson County jail with almost three times the current capacity. In February, our Meeting agreed to join the Real Solutions coalition opposing passage and advocating for non-punitive approaches to mental illness, chemical dependency, and the ill consequences of poverty and homelessness. In taking this position we are following in a centuries-old Quaker tradition of reform and our more recent call for ways to end mass incarceration nationally.

Member organizations like the area chapter of the National Alliance for Mental Illness tried repeatedly to persuade county officials to develop a more comprehensive and life-affirming proposal but were rejected. We now believe that a "NO" vote is the only way to get the county to work with community groups and other agencies to develop such a plan, as other Oregon counties have, that reduces crime and includes better prevention, diversion, crisis assistance, and treatment—and that addresses underlying problems like affordable housing, mental illness, addiction, and poverty.

The side bar details are provided by Rogue Action Center, lead organizer of Real Solutions; more info at <https://www.rogueactioncenter.org/> —Herb Rothschild

### What is the Ballot Measure About?

The Jackson County Sheriff and Board of Commissioners are proposing a county-wide service district at a rate of .87/1,000 of assessed property value to fund the construction and operations of a new jail.

The funding cannot be used for any diversion programs to prevent people from ending up in our county jail due to a need for mental health, addictions, or housing services. The current jail has a maximum capacity of 315 beds; the proposed jail facility has a maximum capacity of 896 beds.

The Jackson County Commissioners voted to put this proposal on the 19 May 2020 ballot for a county-wide vote.

If a majority of Jackson County voters say yes, all county homeowners (and many renters) will pay higher housing costs for the expensive jail-only tax even if they, or even the majority of voters in their city, voted against the ballot measure.

## MEASURE 15-190: JACKSON COUNTY'S JAIL-ONLY TAX INCREASE

- WE CAN'T AFFORD IT.
- IT WON'T WORK.
- IT WOULD PREVENT THE REAL SOLUTIONS WE NEED.



**Vote NO on Ballot Measure 15-190**



ROGUE ACTION CENTER

Accept what comes from silence.  
Make the best you can of it.  
Of the little words that come  
out of the silence, like prayers  
prayed back to the one who prays,  
make a poem that does not disturb  
the silence from which it came.

--Wendell Berry

# And The People Stayed Home

And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still.

And listened more deeply.

Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.

—Kitty O'Meara (submitted by Beth Aspedon)

# Do Eyes Smile When I Smile?

"All I could see were their eyes," exclaimed my former colleague upon seeing the film *Agnes of God*.

She had never before realized what so scared her about the Catholic school nuns of her childhood.

Raised without any religion, I was astonished by the memory her exclamation had jogged.

As a child, I viewed God as a collection of eyes.

Nowadays as I stroll or bike around my community, my mask hides the smile that acknowledges my neighbors.

I wave to people I know and don't know, thinking this gesture to be an adequate smile replacement.

But the wave is as empty as an elbow bump when my heart wants to embrace my fellow human beings.

Do my eyes smile? I wonder.

I stand before my bedroom mirror bedecked in my new mouth-and-nose cover.

I watch my whole face respond to my experimental smiles.

Nose curls, skin gathers, sometimes eyebrows raise.

Eyes narrow, but do they brighten?

I settle into silence, seeking the headwaters of my smiles.

I trek my meridians and find the source in my heart, my soul's gateway.

Ah, yes, I recall hearing that eyes are the windows of the soul.

It's when my heart sings that my eyes shine, and I become one big smile.

—Bob Morse

# Moonlight Through Branches

From this elegant planet, we gaze up at  
seductive empty space and long for  
a surprise bridge over wildness  
over our own cruel natures  
and that of truffle-digging pigs  
dual heroes at rooting up  
whole forests  
one for survival  
one for self-defined  
refined taste.

We knew our job: Be good to the earth!

Trust betrayed.

Creeping viral destruction is an invitation:

Clean our act. Retire failed tries and fake success.

What matters is seeing moonlight through branches,  
living trees, living eyes,  
awestruck.

—Marybeth Webster

# MEETING OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

**Clerk:** Lisa Nichols 488-5577

**Assistant Clerk:** Jean Semrau 488-6855

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

**Treasurer:** Adam Thompson 201-8255

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Joint Committee Representatives:** Herb Rothschild, Steve Wells

*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*

*All area codes are 541 unless otherwise noted*

**Finance Committee:** Scott Plummer, Beth Aspedon, Bill Ashworth, Treasurer *ex officio*

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

**Nominating Committee:** Beth Aspedon, Alex Reid, Anna Monders

**Friendship & Hospitality Committee:** Crystal Bosbach, Cathie McDaniel, Kathleen Hering, Valeria Breiten,  
**Greeters:** Steve Radcliffe, Sylvie Weaver, Alex Reid, Javan Reid, Valeria Breiten, Karen Maleski, Terri Brain (sub)

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

**Library Elves:** Melody Ashworth, Jean Semrau, Steve Wells, Fran Curtis

**Adult Education Committee:** Becky Hale, Jim Lobsenz, Terri Brain, Melody Ashworth, Kathleen Hering

**Ministry & Counsel Committee:** Gabrielle Leslie (co-clerk) 897-4458, Maureen Graham (co-clerk) 326-9609, Rochelle Webster 201-8255, Cathy McDaniel 770-3318, Jim Phillips 482-2388, Clerk or Assistant Clerk *ex officio*

South Mountain Friends Meeting

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