

543 South Mountain Avenue Ashland, Oregon 97520 (541) 482-0814

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(Near Southern Oregon University)

# SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

First-Hour Activity
9 to 10 am

#### **Discussions via Zoom**

First-Hour Zoom Link: https:// us02web.zoom.us/j/85099502775? pwd=VmgxVFFzVkhyUkhRYkpNY mJ6TGZUdz09

**<u>6 February</u>** Winnowing Session: From Climate Crisis to Community Opportunities (see Page 4)

**6 February: Rise of Meeting**Bring Your Own Brown Bag Lunch **Outdoors** (dress warmly, weather permitting, hot beverages served)

13 February Winnowing Session: Discerning When Best to Hold Business Meeting (See Page 5)

#### 20 February

Meeting for Business (9-10:30 am)

**27 February** Adult Education: Hannah Sohl, founding director of Rogue Climate, to lead a discussion on climate justice activism on the personal, faith group, and community levels

# Meeting for Worship 11 am to Noon

At The Quaker Meeting House or by Zoom at: https://us02web.zoom.us/

j/7477317797pwd=SW1sd3pTZjhlb GRmUWpOY3pZaUFDdz09

### **SOUTH MOUNTAIN FRIENDS MEETING**

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) **Second Month 2022** 

#### The Fruits of BASE's Labor



BASE is a Rogue Valley Black-led organization that our Friends Meeting sponsors. To provide a sense of events that BASE has initiated in 2021, we'll start at year's end and flip through the calendar in reverse.

Toward their objective of building unity within the Black

community, BASE observed Kwanzaa, an annual celebration of African-American culture, history, and identity from 26 December to 1 January. As the Swahili roots of the name implies, Kwanzaa celebrates "first fruits" and is based on a composite of various African harvest festival traditions. For BASE, the harvest means "that which comes from all the work done over the past year."

On the first night of Kwanzaa, the youth of BASE's Afroscoutz program took to the stage to perform the music and poetry they've worked on all fall in music and dance classes. Afroscoutz was created for children of African descent to inspire development, leadership, and socialization. After the youth "brought down the house," *Gansango Music &* 



Dance performed traditional and contemporary rhythms and movements from West Africa.

In October, BASE gathered the community for a fun, festive Halloween jamboree. Ushering in summer, BASE co-hosted Medford's first annual multicultural, family-friendly Juneteenth carnival, while showcasing local Black businesses and commemorating the emancipation of African-American slaves

BASE's founding director is a filmmaker; thus, BASE created movies for Malcolm's and Martin's birthdays. On 19 May, Malcolm X's birthday gift was a video with clips from his poignant speeches punctuated by expressions by locals recalling all that Malcolm did for freedom and prosperity for Blacks in America. In preparation for Martin's birthday, Black community members filmed highlights of their discussions of MLK's book *Why We Can't Wait*, interspersed with newsreel footage of Martin's civil rights' activities. The MLK Day film-showing kicked off BASE's challenge to Rogue Valley residents to gather in groups and discuss Martin's pivotal writing. A team of South Mountain Friends heeded BASE's request and dispensed copies of *Why We Can't Wait* to local faith communities and Ashland High School's Truth to Power Club.

South Mountain's decision as a Meeting to sponsor BASE arose out of a leading toward reparations. Another part of reparations is helping communities thrive that historically have been economically stymied by racially unjust laws and practices that restricted or literally destroyed Black-owned businesses. BASE has assembled a list of businesses and services owned and operated by Black Rogue Valley residents. The list currently has 90 entries and can be viewed at <a href="Directory Archive - BASE Southern Oregon">Directory Archive - BASE Southern Oregon (baseoregon.org)</a>.

—Bob Morse

PS: BASE's 2022 MLK Day Video: https://fb.watch/aBNiPNk1HA/

## White Christmas 2021



In
SMFM's
Outdoor
Meeting
Space,
Glenwood
Park, as
well as
Ashland's
Railroad
Park and
Bike Path





Photos by Bob Morse





## **Advices & Queries on DISCERNMENT**

Seeking and waiting for Truth's leadings is a discipline through which all can grow in patience, unity, and love. Decisions under the guidance of the Spirit knit the loving community together.

We remain patient and wait upon God as long as needed for a decision to emerge which clearly recommends itself as the right one.

We guard against contentiousness, obstinacy, and love of control and power. We remember that our views, however fondly cherished, may be wrong.

We season our decisions and test our leadings with patience and integrity. We take care to stay within our leadings, lest we outrun our Guide.

Friends approach meeting for business, committee meetings, and other occasions for group discernment with trust that the Holy Spirit will lead us to unity and right action. Unity is always possible because the same Light of Truth shines in some measure in every human heart. Communal discernment takes place in a context of worship as those present seek divine guidance.

Friends expect unity as the outcome, not as the starting point, of communal discernment. We proceed in the peaceable spirit of the light of Truth, with forbearance and warm affection for one another. Light will be shed on matters from many angles. We trust that as Truth is spoken, its power cannot be resisted.

We express our views but refrain from pressing them unduly. It is less important for any individual to be heard than it is for Truth to be given voice.

Group discernment and the search for unity may require us to accept with good grace a decision of the meeting we do not entirely agree with.

Contributing to the meeting's discernment is a responsibility of membership. This includes attending meetings for business and being faithful in the service of the meeting's affairs.



Do we patiently seek divine guidance to discern the right course of action?

How do we test our leadings? Do we patiently and prayerfully seek clearness in the Light?

Do we offer spiritual aid for others who are seeking clearness?

When our own way is unclear, do we seek the counsel of others in our meeting?

What can we do to help others recognize, temper, and strengthen their leadings?

Do we hold our meetings for business in the spirit of worship, love, and understanding? How are we seeking God's Truth together in community?

Do we regularly take part in meetings for business? Do we uphold the meeting in prayer when we cannot be present?

Do we come into meeting for business prepared to be changed? Are we ready to let go of our individual thoughts and wishes and let the Holy Spirit lead the meeting to unity?

As difficult problems arise, are we careful to meet them in a spirit of love and humility, with minds open for creative solutions? How do we avoid taking sides and forming factions?

Do we avoid the pressure of time, neither unnecessarily prolonging nor unduly curtailing full consideration?

Are we aware that we speak through inaction as well as action?

### **Faith-Based Climate Action**

On 9 January as our Meeting discussed faith-based climate action, we felt the weight of the feelings that surfaced, at times immobilizing us. Following our engaging in the Experiment with Light guided mediation, we shared our awarenesses, concerns, and questions. It was as if we were dispersing seeds, not yet sure which, if any, will germinate. Here are the comments and questions all stated as queries for all of us to ponder further:

How to communicate the urgency of climate chaos?
How to balance/prioritize individual vs. community action?
How to remember that there is that of God in everyone, even those who waste energy?
How to reconcile that we all see the world through different lenses, even I?
How to move beyond my despair in light of the reality that there's no turning back climate change?
How to center love of life (as felt by "witnessing the heat dome's impact on my garden and realizing love for the whole range of life") in whatever faith-based climate action we collectively take?

("This crisis feels so big; I hold the world in the Light.")

How to stay open to spiritual guidance as we move forward?

How to support the work of scientists?

How to reach people (who offer ideological answers)
with the perspective that this is an existential problem?

("If we don't reach people with facts but instead reach them on a feeling level"):
How to stay in touch with our feelings without getting bogged down in despair?
How to shift the discomfort, which discussing climate chaos surfaces,



## From Climate Crisis to Community Opportunities

First Hour Winnowing Session 9 am Sunday 6 February 2022

**Feelings:** Quakers emphasize speaking from our personal experience, and climate experts tell us an important step we citizens can take is to talk about climate. Such conversations, however, bring up feelings. Let us begin our discussion with each of us checking in with what we're currently *feeling* about the climate crisis.

**Visions:** As climate change has shifted to climate crisis, there's been a growing awareness of what needs to be dismantled (i.e., the fossil fuel industry, corporate money in politics, banks that finance non-green energy). The slow pace and lack of consensus for such dismantling engenders a collective sense of despondency, hopelessness, and stuckness. What if we instead give ourselves the opportunity to voice our visions of the world in which we'd like to live? As the editor of the *Anti-Racism Daily* blog recently wrote, "If we don't cultivate the capacity to imagine our futures, we'll never arrive there."

**Creations:** What are our Meeting's gifts? What roles might we play and what initial steps might we take toward inspiring an interfaith movement that builds community cohesion while "greening" our region?

-Bob Morse

The question arose during the 9 January climate discussion whether there might be a "carol" that could be sung from neighborhood to neighborhood to stimulate climate talk and action. Ken Deveney offered a song that he had already written:

#### "Keep it in the Ground" (to the tune of "There is a Tavern in the Town")

We've got to keep it in the ground. That cry is heard the world around.

We got to tell our congress persons to get on the ball, 'cause climate change affects us all! Taxing greenhouse pollution is a very good solution; let those fossil fuel corporations find another trade.

Adieu, adieu, kind friends, adieu. We're gonna cook in our own stew! We got to tell our congress persons to get on the ball, 'cause climate change affects us all!



## When Best To Hold Business Meeting

Winnowing Session: 9 am Sunday 13 February

At the onset of COVID restrictions and our move to Zoom, we shifted the beginning of business meeting to 9 am. During January's business meeting when the request to again change the start time surfaced, many views were shared—without a sense of unity. Therefore, Friends decided to winnow this topic. Some options are:

Stay at current meeting time of 9 am and remain on Zoom

Move the start of meeting back to the pre-COVID time (8:30 am) and Zoom

Do hybrid Meeting for Business in addition to our usual hybrid Meeting for Worship to eliminate the travel-time challenge between the two meetings

Return to in-person meetings at 8:30 am as done before COVID

Consider other times for Meeting for Business such as after Meeting for Worship, say 1 pm, or on a weekday evening

—Valeria Breiten and Andra Hollenbeck

## **Quaker Men to Gather**

The next Willamette Quarterly Meeting (WQM) Men's Retreat is scheduled for 8-10 April at the Big Bear Camp near Walton, Oregon. Note the date while staying tuned for details.

Questions? John Etter, 541-554-4515, johnetter4449@gmail.com or Neal Hadley, 541-530-3955, nhadley892@gmail.com

## **Enhancing Fellowship Through Photos and Blurbs**

To further our getting to know each other better, Friendship and Hospitality committee is compiling an album of folks who attend South Mountain Friends Meeting to be kept in our fellowship hall at the Meeting House for Friends to peruse. To begin the project, I request that Friends email me a picture of themselves (as a JPEG).

Please accompany your photo with a brief biological blurb. Here are some bio prompts: Where do you live? When/where did you initially attend a Quaker Meeting? How long have you been affiliated with South Mountain Meeting? How does Quaker affiliation/identity inform your life? What activities or community involvements nourish your soul?

—Ká Hering, Kathleen4bees@gmail.com

# **American Friends Service Committee Is At A Perilous Crossroads**

We write as concerned Quakers and friends of Friends about a dramatic re-engineering of the organizational structure of AFSC proposed by management and Board leadership that will alter the Quaker character of the organization. Today we are at a crossroads. Will AFSC adopt a top-down NGO, grant and donor centered approach, or will it build on a powerful history by committing even more deeply to a grassroots, community-led approach that builds strategy and campaigns from the bottom up?

This article is excerpted from an open letter printed in the December 2021 Western Friend.

In 2018, the AFSC organized the nonviolent direct action "Love Knows No Borders." Hundreds of faith leaders joined a solemn walk across the beach of Border Field State Park to stand in solidarity with migrants coming in large caravans to seek asylum in the United States. The week before, Customs and Border Protection had teargassed mothers and children striving to reach safety. Confronting Border Patrol agents dressed in riot gear, the faith leaders knelt and prayed for the migrants. This protest was covered in hundreds of news outlets and raised the visibility of draconian immigration policies. That week there were over sixty echo actions all over the country organized in solidarity by Quaker meetings and local grassroots organizations.



This powerful action was possible because AFSC has been structured to root itself in, and respond to, the communities in which we work. The organization's immigrant rights network—70 staff in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and San Diego—offered perspectives "from the ground" about how to respond to the rising outcry of immigrants. Knowing the geography and local context of the immigrant rights movement, local staff offered the vision of a solemn beach walk by faith leaders and used their expertise to guide the rising coalition in purposeful action. The Board offered critical support by approving the nonviolent direct action.



For over a century, AFSC has been a public, visible witness of the Quaker peace testimony. The organization fed and protected children during the world wars, stood up against the internment of Japanese Americans, and published Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Letter from Birmingham City Jail*. AFSC advocates today to eradicate racism and the prison system, and for peaceful solutions that honor the shared well-being of all people.

The distributed power and locally rooted organizational model of AFSC is what made these courageous actions possible. Yet AFSC's current management and Board leadership is pushing the organization instead toward a model of top-down, centrally led initiatives and actions. We believe that such a shift will substantially compromise the integrity and power of AFSC's work. The fuel for our organizing is our relationships on the ground and the autonomous, but deeply connected, work of program staff who know and understand the communities in which they operate.

A year ago, with the support of the AFSC corporation (a 100+ member Quaker body formed from and representing Friends throughout AFSC's sphere of influence), the Board approved a strategic plan, the development of which cost the organization \$400,000 (excluding hours and hours of staff time). In the name of strategic plan implementation, the Senior Leadership Team has since proposed a dramatic organizational restructuring that invests another \$500,000 per year into a commitment to fund six additional middle management positions while adding no resources into the programs on the ground. It is unclear from where the funding for the new management positions will come. We need investments in current staff, creating pay equity, and providing additional funding for local program and network convening, rather than experimenting with an excessively costly move to hire so many more managers. The proposed restructuring will not help AFSC live into its strategic plan or its deeply held values.

The Board is guided by a seasoning policy, which describes the way the organization operates from Quaker principles: "In order to make good decisions, AFSC governance bodies and staff need to be sensitive to the experiences and perspectives of the broad variety of stakeholders within and outside of the AFSC family. These stakeholders include Quakers, donors, and partners with whom we work in communities or coalitions."

Continued on Page 7



Though there have been "listening sessions," the widespread dissent expressed by staff and stakeholders regarding restructuring has not been answered in any substantive way. As part of the restructuring process, a consultant was hired (for \$60,000) to listen to AFSC constituencies about the best structure to implement the strategic plan. What makes AFSC unique arises from how our programs develop locally and are often led by those directly impacted by the issues we work on. Locally focused and accountable programs that cooperate with each other across regions and continents create transformative work. But the leadership team threw out the recommendations of the consultant's report, many of which proposed enhancing accountability to the communities in which AFSC works.

AFSC's legitimacy in a world of [hierarchical] NGOs arises from its accountability and connectedness to communities. This is also part of what makes AFSC a Quaker organization: Quaker authority rises from individuals and local communities/meetings ("ganglia" as Rufus Jones called them) which then come together in yearly meetings and other configurations to build power together, rather than asserting power from above. This structure is intentionally designed to devolve power to the base. The [leadership's] proposal, if it proceeds, will systematically dismantle the locally focused and accountable way AFSC has worked.

Among Friends, when there is substantive conflict in a decision-making process, the response is not to push through and minimize the conflict, which seems to be what management is attempting to do. We stop. We step back, we make space, and we listen for collective guidance—even when it means delaying an important project. And we listen with love and respect for as long as it takes to achieve unity.

Several staff have left or are on the verge of leaving the organization—some of whom have been with AFSC for decades—due to the difficult experience of these processes and their concern about the new direction AFSC seems poised to take. We risk losing vital expertise held by some of the most principled, accomplished, and wise organizers and activists working today.

We write this public article because we love AFSC and feel the vocal uneasiness expressed has not been heard inside the organization.

We invite other Quakers to write to the Board and insist that this restructuring process be halted and re-examined. We ask that the current management undergo an external evaluation and that the organization as a whole recenter in its distinctive Quaker principles and the understanding of the light of the divine in each person. We call on our beloved AFSC to undergo a thorough and searching reflection and examination of how this push toward centralized power got so far in spite of so many strong concerns raised along the way. A deep and honest conversation, facilitated by a skilled outside Quaker consultant between the Board, AFSC staff, and others, is necessary to determine a way forward that interrupts the patterns in the organization which have caused such deep harm.

For the more than one hundred years that the AFSC has existed, its inclusion of those most impacted by oppression has proven that great work can be accomplished by people of faith and conscience working together as equals. In our view, this is the only way forward if we are to achieve authentic equity and justice in our increasingly polarized and troubled world.

## If you feel moved to write to AFSC staff and governance leaders, here are some questions you may wish to raise up, as we are doing:

- → What is the problem this restructuring effort is attempting to solve? Why the proposal for a top-heavy structure? Is this a colonial structure?
- → Where is the space in this new structure for the leadership of affected communities? Where is there room for Spirit to speak through oppressed communities?
- → In a time of social/environmental upheaval, we face a future of increased immigration/internal displacement. How will a move away from community-led organization help AFSC be responsive to its partners?
  - ✦ How will the need to fund these new management positions affect programmatic funding?
    Will one be funded at the expense of the other?

#### Click here to share written comments. Click here to read background documents.

—Lucy Duncan, Arnie Alpert, Beverly Ward, Jana Schroeder, Kathy Hersh, and Kathy Hyzy (Lucy Duncan co-authored this "letter" as an independent Friend, but due to speaking out, she's been fired from the AFSC.)

## **Meeting for Business 16 January 2022**

<u>Friends Present:</u> Bill Ashworth, Melody Ashworth, Beth Aspedon, Crystal Bosbach, Valeria Breiten, Ken Deveney, Ká Hering, Andra Hollenbeck, Bob Morse, Alex Reid, Herb Rothschild, Jean Semrau, Nancy Spear, Adam Thompson, Mary Ward

Quotation for Reflection "Friends expect unity as the outcome, not as the starting point, of communal discernment. We proceed in the peaceable spirit of the light of Truth, with forbearance and warm affection for one another. Light will be shed on matters from many angles. We trust that as Truth is spoken, its power cannot be resisted."

—Excerpt from Advices on Discernment

#### **Minutes**

2022.1.1 Friends approved minutes for the 19 Dec 2021 Meeting for Worship for Business.

**Treasurer** Donations to date are low, and we are nearing the \$4,000 minimum balance we keep in our checking account. The need to increase donations has been referred to the Finance Committee. Instructions for making donations by automatic deposit to Rogue Credit Union will be included in a future newsletter.

Ministry & Counsel Bill Ashworth will clerk an ad hoc committee with Steve Wells, Merlin McDaniel, Carolann (Peace House Office Manager) and Valeria Breiten to purchase an air purifier for the Meeting House. A winnowing session will be held the second Sunday in February during first hour to discuss whether the monthly Meeting for Business should start at 8:30, 9:00 or at some other time and whether it should be held by zoom, in person, or as a hybrid meeting.

**Friendship & Hospitality** New attenders Nancy Spear and George Scholes have volunteered to

serve as Greeters. The committee is collecting photos of all who attend Meeting to create an album available for viewing at the Meeting House. A second Brown Bag Lunch is scheduled for the first Sunday in February.

Peace & Social Concerns Steve Radcliffe is a new member of P & SC. <u>Ashland News - Independent</u>, Nonprofit, Community News was launched 14 Jan,

so we again have a local newspaper. Friends endorsed the recommendations of the subcommittee on Climate Change to hold a winnowing session during a First Hour in February and to show the documentary "Other Side of the Hill," which describes climate improving projects in



Eastern Oregon, at a prior evening gathering. The subcommittee will consider advertising the showing and invite the interfaith community to attend.

#### **American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)**

There is no clear unity about the organization's recent staff restructuring efforts at the national level. The process, described as "not a Quaker process," has been halted temporarily. We are holding this important organization in the Light.

**Adult Education** shared the monthly programs they have calendared for spring.

Respectfully submitted,
Andra Hollenbeck, Presiding Clerk
Alex Reid, Recording Clerk
Poster/quote contributed by Becky Hale



"Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things break. And all things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. So go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you." —L. R. Knost

## **Quaker Heroes**

The January *Friends Journal* looks at Quaker heroes. You'll find stories of well-known historical Friends (some whose reputations are in active reappraisal), and you'll likely meet some new ones.

Download the PDF version of the full issue here: <a href="https://www.friendsjournal.org/private/FJ-2022-01.PDF">https://www.friendsjournal.org/private/FJ-2022-01.PDF</a>. Read the issue online: <a href="https://www.friendsjournal.org/issue-category/2022/quaker-heroes-2022/">https://www.friendsjournal.org/issue-category/2022/quaker-heroes-2022/</a>

—Fran Curtis, South Mountain Friends Librarian

## The Map You Make Yourself

You have looked at so many doors with longing, wondering if your life lay on the other side.

For today, choose the door that opens to the inside.

Travel the most ancient way of all: the path that leads you to the center of your life.

No map but the one you make yourself.

No provision but what you already carry and the grace that comes to those who walk the pilgrim's way.

Speak this blessing as you set out and watch how your rhythm slows, the cadence of the road drawing you into the pace that is your own.

Eat when hungry.
Rest when tired.
Listen to your dreaming.
Welcome
detours
as doors deeper in.

Pray for protection. Ask for the guidance you need. Offer gladness for the gifts that come and then let them go. Do not expect to return by the same road. Home is always by another way and you will know it not by the light that waits for you

but by the star that blazes inside you telling you where you are is holy and you are welcome here

—Jan Richardson

# What the Night Is For

Oh, my heart, if we could cease working on our sorrow like we were trying to stitch together shattered glass.

This breaking is not for fixing, as though, if we could just find the fitting tool, everything would tumble into its place, joined and whole.

Perhaps it is time to let the shards lie where they have fallen.

Perhaps it is time to let ourselves



Poems Contributed by Anya Kumara

sit and weep over them.

And then perhaps we scatter them—into the soil, into the sky, it does not matter where.

Let them take their place. Let them shimmer like a constellation in all that darkness—

sky-dark, soil-dark, at home in that strange and radiant solace that knows what the night is for—

how it takes the broken things and sets them shining to light our way from here.

—Jan Richardson

### **MEETING OFFICERS**

Clerk: Andra Hollenbeck 601-6421

Recording Clerk: Alex Reid 707-499-9146

Corresponding Clerk: Beth Aspedon 778-1564

Treasurer: 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

**Experiment with Light:** Gizelle Luccio 897-4458

Circle of Light: Crystal Bosbach 930-4222

Joint Committee Representatives: Herb Rothschild

531-2848, Valeria Breiten 480-688-7442

All area codes are 541 unless otherwise noted Please direct all Meeting-related electronic correspondence to <u>ashlandquakers@gmail.com</u>

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

#### **MEETING COMMITTEES**

Ministry & Counsel: Valeria Breiten 480-688-7442, Jim Phillips 482-2388, Steve Radcliffe 479-3487, Melody Ashworth 324-9824, Ken Deveney 488-5506, Clerk *ex officio* 

Children's Education & Spirituality: Ken Deveney, Cathy

McDaniel, Melody Ashworth

Finance: Jean Semrau, Fran Curtis, Treasurer ex officio

Buildings & Grounds: Merlin McDaniel, Raymond Scully,

Terri Brain

Nominating: Maureen Graham, Valeria Breiten, Terri Brain

Friendship & Hospitality: Crystal Bosbach, K Hering,

Cathy McDaniel

Greeters: Steve Radcliffe, Rochelle Webster, Karen Maleski

**Peace & Social Concerns: Herb Rothschild**, Ken Deveney, Javan Reid, Elizabeth Hallett, Jim Lobsenz, Steve Radcliffe

Library: Fran Curtis, Linda Spencer

Adult Education: Ká Hering, Jamie McLeod-Skinner, Jim

Lobsenz, Melody Ashworth

Homeless Outreach: Alex Reid, Bob Morse, Becky Hale

Names in **bold** indicate committee convener or clerk

South Mountain Friends Meeting 543 South Mountain Avenue Ashland, Oregon 97520