



543 South Mountain Avenue

Ashland, Oregon 97520

(541) 482-0814

communications@ashlandquakers.org

www.ashlandquakers.org

SUNDAY AM SCHEDULE

First-Hour Activity

9 to 10 am

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

1 March No First Hour Activity
10:15-11 am: Circle of Light

8 March **Winnowing Session**
on the joyful use of our monetary
abundance so to enhance the life
and work of our Meeting

15 March **IN PERSON ONLY**
8:30-10 am: Business Meeting
(hybrid upon advance request)

22 March **How To Quaker**
Discourse and then Worship Sharing
on the Testimony of Community
Spring Celebration Brunch to Follow

29 March **Peace/Social Concerns**
Israel/Palestine/Gaza update

**Outdoor Worship on the Back
Deck 11-11:45 am Sundays**

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=SW1sd3pTZjhlbGRmUWpOY3pZaUFDdz09>

SOUTH MOUNTAIN FRIENDS MEETING

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

Unprogrammed Worship in Ashland, Oregon

Third Month 2026

Potluck, Music, & Connection

Friday 13 March at our Quaker Meeting House
5:30 Dinner Potluck * 7 pm Singer/Guitarist Concert



South Mountain Friends Meeting welcomes our community to gather as we host a concert of singer/songwriter Dann Pell—music that both grounds and uplifts. This gathering reflects the heart of our Quaker Meeting—bringing people together in fellowship, simplicity, & joy.

We invite attenders, friends, neighbors, and all who are curious about our Meeting community to join us for a warm and welcoming evening. We'll begin with a dinner potluck, a chance to reconnect with familiar faces or meet new ones around the table. Please bring a dish to share, if you're able, or just bring yourself. We honor such food preferences and sensitivities as gluten-free, onions, vinegar, tomatoes, bay leaf, and vegan/vegetarian (please list your ingredients). There is no charge for the concert; donations to Dann gratefully accepted.

Dann Pell will share an intimate concert of thoughtful, soulful music. Dann's heartfelt lyrics and his gentle, reflective style invite listeners into a space of presence and listening that resonates deeply with the Quaker spirit. "Dann Pell is a singer-songwriter and fingerstyle guitarist from Chester County, PA, who makes meditative folk music in the spirit of Bob Dylan and Iron & Wine, with an occasional psychedelic flare reminiscent of Steve Gunn and Kurt Vile." He has a beautiful selection of his original compositions and a few cover songs. "His proficiency as a musician is evident, and he conveys a compelling narrative through his music." Sample a variety of Dann's music at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eI57r8FXEJw>

Events like this remind us that spiritual life is nourished not only in silence but also in laughter, creativity, and shared moments. Whether you come for the music, the meal, or simply the companionship, we hope you'll leave feeling more connected—to one another and to the Light within. —Andra Hollenbeck

All of this takes place at our South Mountain Quaker Meeting House, 543 South Mountain Avenue, Ashland

Silence

Silence and silent meditation are amongst the most precious human activities. They are enjoyed in all cultures and religions. It seems that human beings have always known that their penchant for words and activities must be balanced by a time of silence and letting go.

Forced silence, of course, is an anguished experience. Chosen silence, instead, may reveal deep truths. As anybody with even a small experience of meditation well knows, silencing the mind's chattiness is not a luxury as much as a healthy necessity. Outer and inner silence are a requirement for a spiritual life.

As Matthew Fox writes: *Mystery invites silence...Our distance from nature in today's culture often interferes with this silence...* We have, of course, different needs as we are different from each other, yet this simple sentence explains to me why I have always needed to live very close to nature: to have a better chance to experience the sacred mystery.

Matthew says that *Stillness leads to an encounter with the Divine. Often the encounter is far beyond words.*

Says Rumi:
*Secretly we spoke,
That wise one and me.
I said, Tell me the secrets of the world.
He said, Sh...Let silence
Tell you the secrets of the world.*



God is not always speaking. And the silence of God is not always a lack of engagement.

In the West, we have become so accustomed to religion as revelation of moral or ontological truths, religion as covenant and dialogue with God, religion as norms or critique of norms, that we have forgotten the other half of the deal: silence as purification, stillness, and regeneration.

I wonder what kind of society could issue from cultural habits such as stillness and mindfulness. You can object that the violence we breathe each and every day is way too high in its intensity to allow for such a suggestion to be meaningful. And yet, to me at least, it is precisely the absurdity and violence of political life that call me to go deep and suggest the deepest solutions. It seems to me that unless we are grounded in silence, letting go, welcoming of the mystery, we have little chance to withstand the storms of evil which attempt to ravage our minds even before our bodies and the bodies of our neighbors.

—Gianluigi Gugliermetto (Submitted by Ká Hering)

Advices & Queries on Silence

“Remember [that] it is a still voice that speaks to us in this day, and that it is not to be heard in the noises and hurries of the mind.” —William Penn, 1691

All of us need to find a way into silence which allows us to deepen our awareness of the Divine and to find the inward source of our strength.



Amid the busyness of daily living, we seek to return to the stillness which grounds us.

We value silence, not as an end but as a means toward the end, which is communication with the Divine and fellowship with one another.

We must not remain silent when something is wrong, or when we are led to speak out.

Seek to be formed by a practice of silence, as a foundation for a mindful life.

Do we set aside times of quiet for openness to the Spirit? How do we bring stillness into our daily lives?

Do we seek to be formed by a living silence? How are our lives shaped by the practice of stillness?

Do our hearts dwell in the silence beneath everyday busyness?

Comments from Participants of the 8 February Threshing Session: Returning Spirit to Business Meeting



Meeting in person is preferable for getting in touch with the Spirit among us * To help us focus on conversations needed for resolving issues, it would be helpful to remove announcements and information-only items from taking place during business meeting; instead, they could be listed at the top of the agenda where everyone could read them on their own * Quaker decision-making differs from consensus, the former being the highest common denominator, the latter the lowest; in business meeting we aren't sharing (or pitching) our individual opinions, trying to convince each other, but rather, each of us is channeling the light of truth coming from Spirit which is within all of us * Business meeting could take place solely in person from 9 to 10:30 am (the slightly later start's being more conducive to those of us who aren't early risers; even if business meeting ran over, no one at business meeting would have to rush to drive to the Meeting House for worship) * Friends at business meeting can be mindful to not repeat what's already been said, by simply uttering the five words "this Friend speaks my mind" or even remaining silent, honoring the Quaker adage, "only speak when you can improve upon the silence" * Business meeting is deepened, focused, and perhaps less prolonged by a Friend, most often the clerk, stating the sense of the meeting, a spirit-led active listening, reflecting what's already been discerned and clarifying what remains to be discerned; this is akin to breaking a book into chapters; eventually, a more final reflection of the "sense" captures that upon which Friends unite and then approve * As Friends in worship are mindful to not speak again until all who wish have spoken, the statement of the "sense" serves to re-open the discussion for anyone to speak "when led" * Unlike on zoom where Friends line up with hands raised to be recognized by the clerk, "elders" have said that "we never know how Spirit, speaking through the current Friend, will move us; only after digesting the current message will it become clear who is meant to speak next, if anyone—it could simply be silence" * Does Zoom take us out of worship? Does Zoom serve some Friends who have disabilities? * Isn't Spirit everywhere, even on Zoom? * How might we accommodate Friends at a distance who'd like to attend business meeting? * For some living far away, still, in-person is better * We could email details of upcoming agenda items to be read over, or even, worshipped upon, or just disseminate the topics, or simply stick with the notion that we can collectively resolve whatever Spirit brings to business meeting * When unity is not forthcoming, ask ourselves what else is needed in this discussion * Bring back clerks' meeting, where committee clerks meet a week before business meeting to state their agenda item, sort out/support overlapping concerns, helping presiding clerk prepare the business meeting agenda * Meeting in person promotes knowing each other, helping each other connect with Spirit, feeling our common humanity, developing mutual trust, rendering more kindness * In-person meeting allows Friends to carry discussions over into the fellowship hall * Hearing is enhanced by any technology providing closed captions * Friends have always assumed that those who are present at business meeting are those led by Spirit to discern/decide the issues at hand * Business meeting feels different to the one clerking * Let's stay open to finding ways to include everyone who wants to be part of business meeting * How might we use new technologies in service to clerking, to hearing, and to living our values? —Bob Morse, Scribe

Meeting for Worship for Business 15 February 2026

Friends Present: Bill Ashworth, Melody Ashworth, Valeria Breiten, Ken Deveney, Ann Gaffney, Fernando Gapasin, Andra Hollenbeck, Bob Morse, Herb Rothschild, Jean Semrau, Nancy Spear, JoAnn Sustrick, Adam Thompson, Rochelle Webster

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

Quote & Reflection: *“Imagine the stories we will tell, the institutions we will build, and the lives we will lead when we affirm that every person is a person, imagine the world we will birth when we see no stranger.” ~Valerie Kaur*

Treasurer Report: We had a payment to Wix, our website hosting service, but aside from that every expense was a typical monthly expense. Our donations continue to cover our operating expenses, and our balance remains healthy.

2026.02.1 Friends approved the following changes to the check signers for Rogue Credit Union account number 868920102:
(1) remove Elizabeth Hallett,
(2) remove Herbert Rothschild;
(3) add Meg Wade; (4) add Adam Thompson.

Nominating Committee (NC): Peace & Social Concerns has revised their job description to the Meeting. Job descriptions are approved by the Meeting (whereas procedures are not). The new job description will read:

2026.02.2 Friends approved as presented the new job description for Peace/Social Concerns, as follows: The Peace & Social Concerns Committee helps the Meeting live out the Quaker testimonies in all or some of their collective aspects. These include the Testimony of Peace, the Witness and Civic Responsibility aspects of the Testimony of Integrity, and the Harmony with Creation aspect of the Testimony

of Stewardship.

Peace & Social Concerns (P&SC): P&SC is bringing forth again, with more clarity, a proposal to practice our skills of dialogue and conversation by initiating a conversation with another local Quaker church, either Medford or Talent, focusing on understanding how each congregation thinks about how Quaker testimonies should be put into practice. Recall that the Medford Quaker Church was one of only three faith organizations to respond to our letter regarding Christian Nationalism. Friends had questions about both the content and method of such a meeting. P&SC at this point is interested in reaching out to discover if there is interest on behalf of the other church and then jointly plan such a discussion.

2026.02.3 Friends approved Peace and Social Concerns reaching out on behalf of the Meeting to initiate a dialogue with Southern Oregon Quaker churches in order to share understandings and perspectives on the Quaker testimonies and putting Quaker testimonies into practice.

Ministry & Counsel (M&C): M&C has three action items to discuss today:

M&C recommends moving Meeting for Business to in-person, with hybrid available upon request, from 9 to 10:30 am. Part of the reason for the advance notice is so that the Clerk and Recording Clerk are not tasked with managing the Zoom as well. The advance notice of virtual attendance would allow the recruitment of a separate individual to manage the Zoom. The timing shift from an 8:30 to a 9 am start time is suggested with the understanding that if there are topics that need deeper or further discussion, a winnowing session, a threshing session, or a called meeting for

business would be in order. Discussion surrounded the timing of the meeting and its impact on both meeting for business and meeting for worship.

2026.02.4 After discernment and discussion led by Spirit, Friends approved the following changes to Meeting for Business: Meetings shall be in-person, with virtual access available with advanced notice, and shall take place from 9 to 10:30 am in the meetinghouse.

M&C recommends reinstating Adult Education beyond the appreciated How to Quaker and, in order to do so, would like to reinstate an Adult Education Committee. The vision is that both the phrase “adult education” and the use of the meetinghouse be broadened. Friends suggested a winnowing session to gather ideas.

2026.02.5 Friends approved the (re)formation of an Adult Education Committee.

M&C would like to form an ad hoc committee to plan a meeting retreat, which would use donated funds to support the retreat, if such funds are needed beyond the money in the budget.

In addition, a brief discussion was held regarding Peace House. M&C will be pursuing closer connections with Peace House. In the past, the origination of Peace House was to be similar to an action arm of Meeting, but with a broader connection to the community. As far as the city is concerned, Peace House is operating as an entity of the Meeting as a condition of the conditional use permit. As a first step in this process, M&C will talk with Meg, director of Peace House, Herb, clerk of P&SC, and our Joint Committee representatives, in order to explore improving our collaborative efforts.

ANNOUNCEMENTS ON PAGE 5

Business Meeting Announcements

Peace & Social Concerns:

Spring Lobby Days will happen later this spring; P&SC is in the process of identifying folks with support from SOU and past attendees.

FCNL asks every 2 years for input on what their priorities should be. P&SC will share more info on that when they have it.

Moved location for Gaza peace vigil to the intersection of Barnett and Highland, Fridays 12-1.

Ministry & Counsel continues to manage our neighborhood groups, monthly Friendly get-togethers; contact M&C, if need be.

Friendship & Hospitality is helping M&C with the **potluck** prior to the **concert** 13 March (see page 1).

Respectfully submitted,
Valeria Breiten, Clerk
Ann Gaffney, Recording Clerk

Conceptualizing Large Numbers

We frequently hear the words million, billion, and trillion.
But, really, how much is a billion dollars?

A **million** seconds = 11½ days (< 2 weeks ago)

A stack of a **million** pennies = a mile-high tower

Earning \$45,000/year, it would take 22 years to amass a **million** dollars

A **billion** seconds = 32 years (1994)

A stack of a **billion** pennies = an 870-mile-high tower

Earning \$45,000/year, it would take 22,000 years to amass a **billion** dollars

****A billion ants would weigh nearly as much as an elephant!****

A **trillion** seconds = 32,000 years (the Stone Age)

A stack of a **trillion** pennies = an 870,000-mile-high tower (the distance to the moon and back to earth and then back to the moon)

Earning \$45,000/year, it would take 22,000,000 to amass a **trillion** dollars

(your Friendly editor is a weakly-veiled math geek)

International Vocal/Piano/Percussion Trio

SOU Music Recital Hall, South Mountain Avenue, Ashland
3 pm Sunday 22 March



Mezzo-Soprano Cecilia Duarte, originally from Mexico, is joined onstage by Spanish percussionist Jesús Pacheco and Venezuelan pianist Ana María Otamendi. The trio have toured together extensively; while all three specialize in the myriad musical jewels of the Spanish-speaking world, the program they're presenting will also include art songs on **themes of nature** in English, French, Italian, and German, often with influences of the folk traditions.

Now in its 7th season, **Anima Mundi Productions' Heart of Humanity Concert Series** is dedicated to bringing world-class musicians to Southern Oregon for musical events that turn the concert hall into a space for renewed hope, communal healing, and mutual understanding. This season, *For Love of Nature*, is a celebration of our natural world, calling on all of us to be loving stewards of our environment.

Tickets & information: (541) 833-3066, tickets@animamundiproductions.com, www.HumanityTickets.com

Quaker Events Open to the Greater Community

Free Writing Friends: every MONDAY afternoon

Song Circle: 6:30 pm 2nd TUESDAYS

Meditation on Peace & Love: 5-6 pm every THURSDAY

Details: [OUR SCHEDULE](#) |
[AshlandQuakers](#)

Officers

Presiding Clerk: Valeria Breiten 480-688-7442

Assistant Clerk: Rochelle Webster 646-5186

Treasurer: Adam Thompson 201-8255

Recording Clerk: Ann Gaffney 603-490-7193

Communications Clerk: Jean Semrau 646-8225 with Kitty Cable (tech support) and Marian Spadone (admin support)

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

Standing Committees

Ministry and Counsel: Andra Hollenbeck 601-6421, David Runkel 210-0031, Zach Klaphaak 646-5584, Jean Semrau 646-8225, Jim Lobsenz 206-399-2782, Valeria Breiten/Rochelle Webster (*ex officio*)

Nominating Committee: Adam Thompson 201-8255

***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: Andra Hollenbeck, Bob Morse, Tara Jones, Fernando Gapasin, Richard Spencer

All area codes are 541 unless otherwise noted

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

South Mountain Friends Meeting

543 South Mountain Avenue

Ashland, Oregon 97520

Interest Group Contact Persons

***Adult Education:** Bill Ashworth 778-9470

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

***Art Displays:** Becky Hale 601-3084, Marian Spadone 503-252-1624

***Building & Grounds:** Merlin McDaniel 301-6054

***Circle of Light:** Crystal Bosbach 930-4222, Nancy Spear 626-4377-8913

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

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

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

***Meditation on Peace/Love:** Ká Hering 778-5206, Fernando Gapasin 503-917-1286

***Outdoor Worship:** Ká Hering 778-5206

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

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

***Young Adult Friends:** Hazel Jordan 360-229-5498

***Zoom Support:** Samantha Archer 385-645-1546, Rochelle Webster 646-5186

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*