

SOUTH MOUNTAIN FRIENDS MEETING

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

(QUAKERS)

Unprogrammed Worship in Ashland, Oregon

Seventh Month & Eighth Month 2020

543 South Mountain Avenue

Ashland, Oregon 97520

(541) 482-0814

ashlandquakers@gmail.com

www.ashlandquakers.org

(Near Southern Oregon University)

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

First-Hour Activity

9:30 to 10:30 am

Worship Sharing via Zoom

All are welcome to join the Zoom call by computer or phone. If you haven't seen the Zoom invitation (in our weekly Friends e-bulletin), request the invitation at

ashlandquakers@gmail.com

As has become our practice, there is no scheduled Business Meeting during July or August

Meeting for Worship

11 am to Noon: In Glenwood Park (a block from the Meeting House) Weather permitting; bring your own chair and, if so led, your mask. Or join us in Spirit by worshipping at this time in your own home.

If inclement weather, worship will be held in the Meeting House, wearing masks and honoring physical distancing

SILENT RETREAT

Outdoors at Willow-Witt Ranch

Saturday 11 July

10:30 am - 3 pm

No cost

Bring sack lunch, cup, water, chair
Provided: shade, pristine portapotty
Everyone is Invited!

DETAILS ON PAGE 2

White Fragility

White people in North America live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. This insulated environment of racial protection builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress, leading to what educator and author Robin DiAngelo refers to as "white fragility."



As DiAngelo explains in her book, titled *White Fragility*, racism is not about individuals who dislike others because of their race and who intentionally treat them cruelly. Instead, racism is an institutionalized system that benefits those who identify as white at the expense of people

who are not white, most often without white folks' being aware that this is going on. As a consequence, all of us have absorbed racism, whether or not we know it .

In our racist society where white people tend to not notice the advantages attributed to those with lighter skin tones, racism itself in the post-Civil Rights era of the past fifty years has gone underground. White people unconsciously use "coded" language to express their biases through such subtle descriptions as a "bad part of town," referring to where people of color live.

As a result, white people have a difficult time truly seeing and acknowledging how challenging life is for people of color. As well, white people are adverse to accepting feedback or seeing how they perpetuate this inequity: They want to believe they are not racist because being racist has been vilified.

White fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.

While the emotions and behaviors associated with white fragility are always in play, DiAngelo contends that white people could develop different feelings and accelerate our lifelong journey of addressing unconscious racial bias. If feedback on racist patterns were met with gratitude, motivation, or humility, possible behaviors that would manifest could be reflection, engagement, and understanding. Interrupting racism takes courage and intentionality.

(Continued on Page 2)

White Fragility (Continued from Page 1)

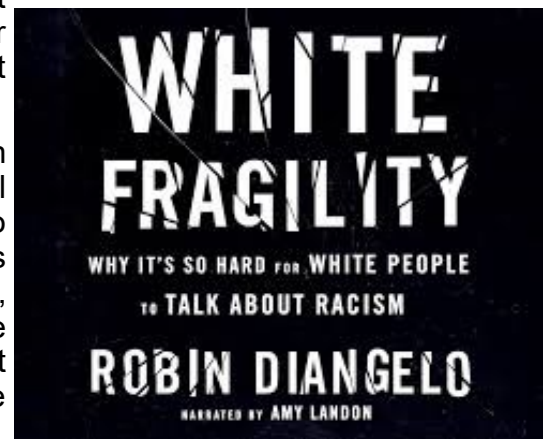
DiAngelo emphasizes that “we [white people] will never interrupt [racism] if we remain comfortable. If we accept that racism is always operating, the question becomes not *Is racism taking place?* but rather *How is racism taking place in this specific context?* Such awareness changes how we think about our lives and our actions.”

A number of South Mountain Friends have read DiAngelo’s words and found them inspirational, as the following voices exemplify:

Alex Reid experienced an aha moment when reading DiAngelo’s suggestion that white people need to recognize that we are all on a continuum and to abandon the false binary of good/bad in describing who is and who isn’t a racist. “After a lifetime as a white liberal, looking down on those I considered racist and feeling outraged on behalf of those who had to suffer their abuse, I now recognize that this problem is not only their problem but also my problem, a problem for everyone in our racist system, one that we need to address and rectify together.”

Valeria Breiten was moved by DiAngelo’s recommendation to use the action term of anti-racism for doing something about the problems and ally for inactive support. “Now I want to be anti-racist, to not only educate myself more, but also to find an avenue of activity that I could engage in which would make a positive difference in the life experiences of people of color. I recognize I have been very isolated, living in predominantly white areas, attending white schools, and so I need to tread carefully, because no one wants charity or to be fixed. That said, as a white person I have some power to change our institutions. I have a responsibility to recognize racism where it exists in my world and confront it.”

“Anti-racism is a lifelong work,” Valeria adds, “requiring action now in order to move against the current of our cultural upbringing and require ourselves and the world around us to truly give equal opportunity and rights to all people regardless of skin color.” Even with all of her training and awareness, DiAngelo admits that “Racism is so deeply woven into the fabric of our society that I do not see myself escaping from that continuum in my lifetime. But I can continually seek to move further along it.”



A copy of Robin DiAngelo’s *White Fragility* can be found in our South Mountain Friends library.

—Alex Reid and Valeria Breiten, reporters, and Bob Morse, writer

Quaker Silent Retreat Saturday 11 July All Are Welcome

YOU are invited to beautiful Willow-Witt Ranch on Saturday 11 July for a silent outdoor (physically-distanced) retreat. We’ll gather at 10:30 am to talk about logistics, and by 11 the silence will begin. You’ll be on your own—with 440 stunning acres to explore—until 2 pm, when we’ll gather for Meeting for Worship. At 2:45 we’ll close worship, do a little clean-up, and finish up by 3 pm.

Our gathering location is under an awning in the Aspen Grove, so parking will be by Suzanne and Lanita’s house, at the end of the main dirt road. Please BYOE everything: sack lunch, water/drinks, mask, hat, jacket, chair, walking stick, journal, sketch pad, whatever. Pristine porta-potty provided. No cost for this retreat. Directions: <https://willowwittranch.com/contact-us/directions-map>

Questions? Call, text, or email Jean Semrau (jeanashland@gmail.com)

America, This Is Your Chance: We Must Get It Right This Time or Risk Losing Our Democracy Forever



Our democracy hangs in the balance. This is not an overstatement.

Trump's leadership has been disastrous. But it would be a mistake to place the blame on him alone. In part, we find ourselves here for the same reasons a civil war tore our nation apart more than 100 years ago: Too many citizens prefer to cling to brutal and unjust systems than to give up political power, the perceived benefits of white supremacy, and an exploitative economic system. If we do not learn the lessons of history and choose a radically different path forward, we may lose our last chance at creating a truly inclusive, egalitarian democracy.

The Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky famously said that “the degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons.” Today, the same can be said of our criminal injustice system, which is a mirror reflecting back to us who we really are, as opposed to what we tell ourselves.

Millions of us watched a black man in Minnesota lie on the ground for nearly nine minutes, begging for his life and calling out to his dead mother, while a white police officer pressed his knee into his neck, killing him, with his hand casually resting in his pocket—all in broad daylight in front of people screaming for the officer to stop.

Everyone knows that the police officers who killed George Floyd never would have been fired or arrested if a courageous black girl had not filmed the incident on her phone and posted it to social media. Deep down, we already knew this kind of thing happens to black people. All of us knew it when we watched Amy Cooper call the police on a black man who calmly asked her to put a leash on her dog. We knew it when we watched two white men in a pickup truck ambush Ahmaud Arbery and shoot him to death while he was jogging in a neighborhood outside Brunswick, Ga. And we knew it before George Zimmerman stalked and murdered a black teenager named Trayvon Martin.

We know these truths about black experiences, but we often pretend we don't. As Stanley Cohen wrote in *States of Denial*, many people “know” and “not-know” the truth about oppression and suffering. He explains: “Denial may be neither a matter of telling the truth nor intentionally telling a lie. There seem to be states of mind, or even whole cultures, in which we know and don't know at the same time.”

In 1963, images of racist white police officers spraying fire hoses and siccing police dogs on young black protesters in Birmingham shocked the world and propelled many white Americans to join civil rights activists in challenging racial segregation. A similar dynamic has occurred with the images of George Floyd's death. Our nation suddenly caught a glimpse of itself in the mirror, and people of all races poured into the streets to say “no more.” Now the president seems to be itching for another civil war.

I will not pretend to have a road map that will lead us to higher ground. But for those who are serious about rising to the challenge, I will share a few of the key steps that I believe are necessary if we are to learn from our history and not merely repeat it.

We must face our racial history and our racial present. We cannot solve a problem we do not understand. Donald Trump would not be the president and George Floyd would not be dead if, after the Civil War, our nation had committed itself to reparations, reconciliation, and atonement for the land and people that colonizers stole, sold, and plundered. Instead, white people who enslaved blacks were granted reparations for the loss of their “property” while formerly enslaved blacks were given nothing—not even the 40 acres and a mule they were promised. Ever since, our nation has been trapped in a cycle of intermittent racial progress followed by fierce backlash and the emergence of new and “improved” systems of racial and social control. These cycles have been punctuated by various movements, uprisings and riots, but one thing has remained constant: A majority of whites persistently deny the scale and severity of racial injustice that people of color endure.

It's not enough to learn the broad outlines of this history. Only by pausing long enough to study the cycles of oppression and resistance does it become clear that simply being a good person or not wishing black people any harm is not sufficient. Nor is voting for Democrats or diversifying police forces. In fact, those efforts have not made much of a dent in ending abusive policing or mass incarceration.

Read (see links to articles on page 4) and organize study groups or book clubs. Begin the process of racial reckoning in your city, neighborhood, school, workplace, and family. Demand that your school district adopt a racial justice curriculum. Join grass-roots organizers working for racial justice or donate to them. Insist that your social justice organization or faith community follow the lead of grass-roots groups like the Dream Defenders and commit to the political education of its members and the community they serve. Raise your voice and march with your feet.

Excerpted from a *New York Times* “Opinion” by Michelle Alexander
(author of *The New Jim Crow*, a copy of which lives in our SMFM library)

Three Articles on Race and Racism

My White Friend Asked Me on Facebook to Explain White Privilege. I Decided to Be Honest

By Lori Lakin Hutcherson

[https://www.yesmagazine.org/opinion/2017/09/08/my-white-friend-asked-me-on-facebook-to-explain-white-privilege-i-decided-to-be-honest/?](https://www.yesmagazine.org/opinion/2017/09/08/my-white-friend-asked-me-on-facebook-to-explain-white-privilege-i-decided-to-be-honest/)

[utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=YTW_20200529&utm_content=YTW_20200529+CID_6120cd107123021c357c12f067485cf7&utm_source=CM](https://www.yesmagazine.org/opinion/2017/09/08/my-white-friend-asked-me-on-facebook-to-explain-white-privilege-i-decided-to-be-honest/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=YTW_20200529&utm_content=YTW_20200529+CID_6120cd107123021c357c12f067485cf7&utm_source=CM)

Reflections From a Token Black Friend: On Structural Racism, Implicit Bias, And What White People Do (And Don't) Say By Ramesh A Nagarajah

<https://humanparts.medium.com/reflections-from-a-token-black-friend-2f1ea522d42d>

White Debt: Reckoning What is Owed—and What Can Never Be Repaid—for Racial Privilege
by Eula Bliss

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/06/magazine/white-debt.html>

Advices & Queries on EQUALITY

Every person has the capacity to experience the Inner Light.

As Friends, we share a vision of a social order based on the testimony of equality—it embraces and seeks to transform all of human society. This vision, and the inner transformation that enables us to see it and live it, enhances our spiritual connectedness and can transcend our differences.

We treat every person with respect and love, based on our belief in the fundamental equality of all of humankind.

We examine ourselves as individuals and in our Meeting communities to be sure that we are practicing the testimony of equality in reality and not just paying lip service to it.

We cherish those parts of the history of the Religious Society of Friends that show us opposing slavery and refusing to doff our hats to superiors. We also acknowledge that Friends are not perfect in treating all human beings with equal respect and that there is work yet to do, both among Friends and in the world, to achieve the vision of a social order based on the testimony of equality.

Do we regularly examine ourselves for evidence of privilege and prejudice?

What are we, as individuals and as a Meeting community, doing to overcome the contemporary effects of past and present oppression?

*How do we avoid being drawn into violent reactions against those who are destructive of human dignity?
Do we reach out to the violator as well as the violated with courage and love?*

How do we make our Meeting open to all, regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and identity, or class?

Is our Meeting place physically accessible and welcoming to all?

Register Now for North Pacific Yearly Meeting's Annual Session Deepening the Roots in Troubled Times

The bulk of the 2020 Yearly Meeting's Annual Session will be held **22 TO 26 JULY**. Although there won't be an in-person gathering, the **ONLINE** event will include much of what Friends love about Annual Session—Worship Sharing, Interest Groups (**starting Friday 10 July**), Plenaries, Music, Community Night, Children's Program, Quaker Fair, and more are all on the schedule. Uprooting Racism interest groups (and speaker) to take place **10 TO 24 JULY**. Cost is \$25 per adult, \$35 per family. Also, Friends can pay as led. Find out more and register at as.npym.org/registration.

Meeting for Business 21 June 2020

Friends Present: Bill Ashworth, Melody Ashworth, Beth Aspedon, Ken Deveney, Anna Monders, Gizelle Luccio, Bob Morse, Lisa Nichols, Alex Reid, Herb Rothschild, Jean Semrau, Adam Thompson

Centering from Faith & Practice “Be not afraid” is a phrase that appears frequently in the Bible and still speaks to us today. When those in power use fear to manipulate and control, causing abuse, violence and oppression, it can be challenging for us to live and act in accord with Quaker values. Living in a time of fear can corrode our ability to listen and respond to the Spirit.

Living in the Spirit within a supportive, faithful fellowship gives us courage and guidance to let our lives speak, even when we are afraid, and helps us turn toward each other and toward the Light. When fear threatens our resolve, God’s love comforts and strengthens us. When we trust our Inner Guide, we can walk through our fears and come out in love.

Nominating Committee continues to seek willing volunteers and will present a slate in late summer.

Peace & Social Concerns

With the ballot measure for the jail defeated, alternatives to incarceration are being explored for those with mental health and/or chemical dependency issues. A measure to decriminalize simple possession of banned drugs will appear on the November ballot.

Treasurer

May expenses exceed revenues, but it is projected that they will be equal by the end of the FY, 30 June.

Ministry & Counsel

Silent Retreat to take place 11 July at Willow-Witt. A new membership information form has been created and will be sent out; an online “Mutual Care and Final Wishes” form is in development; and a new brochure “A Quaker Path: Seeking Clearness for Becoming a Member” will be sent out for review before printing.

Joint Committee

Friends responded to Fire Marshall demands by cleaning the grounds 4 June. An electronic system will replace our current key lock box at the Meeting House. Revenues for space rental are down. Consequently, half of the Joint Committee’s contingency fund has been expended.

2020.6.1 Friends are prepared to contribute to the Joint Committee at a time of need in the amount of up to \$1250.

Other Considerations Friends discussed possibly resuming in-person Meeting House Meetings in the fall but will continue to meet outside for the present.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Nichols, Clerk, and Alex Reid, Recording Clerk

**Not everything that is faced can be changed,
but nothing can be changed until it is faced.**

—James Baldwin, author and civil rights activist

Radical Acting in Faith for White People: An Online Course for Deepening Racial Justice Work Class Participation Open to All

Engage in deep, embodied learning and practice with other white people of faith working to end white supremacy. We will build the skills to show up fully, follow Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), speak effectively, and engage in direct action. This four-part e-course requires participants to do work between core sessions including recommended small group gatherings and commit to action that results in tangible, positive outcomes for BIPOC people in our communities and systemic change.

—Lucy Duncan, Lisa Graustein, and Mila Hamilton of the **American Friends Service Committee**
To Register: <https://www.afsc.org/action/online-e-course-radical-acting-faith-white-people> **The Dates:**

- 25 June - core session - 5 to 6:30 pm PDT
 - 2 July - recommended but optional small group work - 5 to 6 pm PDT
 - 9 July - core session - 5 to 6:30 pm PDT
 - 16 July - recommended but optional small group work - 5 to 6 pm PDT
 - 23 July - core session - 5 to 6:30 pm PDT
 - 6 August - recommended but optional small group work - 5 to 6 pm PDT
 - 13 August - core session - 5 to 6:30 pm PDT
-

A Move to Eliminate Qualified Immunity

A bill recently drafted by US Senators Booker and Harris has a section called “Qualified Immunity Reform.” It would *eliminate* a doctrine that the US Supreme Court simply invented. In 1871, Congress enacted the civil rights statute (section 1983 of Title 42 of the U.S. Code) which allowed people to sue government officials who violated their federal constitutional rights. Attorneys usually refer to such a lawsuit as “a 1983 action). Section 1983 was part of something called the Ku Klux Klan Acts. It made it possible to sue local police for civil rights violations.

When it enacted Section 1983, Congress said absolutely nothing about “qualified immunity.” Nevertheless, somewhere around the mid-1970s, the Supreme Court suddenly ruled that Congress must have meant to provide for qualified immunity when it enacted this statute. So, the Supreme Court simply decided that qualified immunity exists, and, ever since, we’ve been stuck with it.

Qualified immunity protects police and other governmental officials from civil liability (from money judgments), even though the officer violated someone’s federal constitutional rights, so long as the officer’s “mistake” in violating the constitution was a “reasonable” mistake. So, for example, if it weren’t “really clear”—even to the dumbest officer—that, for example, using a chokehold for eight minutes to subdue a suspected counterfeit-bill passer was a Fourth Amendment violation, then the officer cannot be held civilly liable as under these circumstances; he is “immune” from liability.

Thanks to this doctrine, suits against officers who’ve killed people routinely get dismissed because it wasn’t “clearly established” by court decisions that what the officer did was “unconstitutional.” At the moment, I am appealing from the dismissal of a civil suit against a Tacoma officer who shot and killed a woman about 4 years ago. Not only do I have to persuade the Court of Appeals that what the District Court judge did was unconstitutional (because the officer used excessive force and the use of excessive force violates the Fourth Amendment), but I also have to persuade the Court that it was “clearly unconstitutional” to even the dumbest officer because courts had already ruled that it was unconstitutional in prior cases.

Moreover, to defeat qualified immunity, plaintiffs (like the mother of the woman whom police killed in my case) have to show that the prior cases that established that such conduct was unconstitutional were really similar to the case at hand. For example, it is not enough to say that a prior case held that a chokehold applied to a person who was stopped for speeding was unconstitutional; there has to have been a case where the chokehold was applied to someone stopped for passing a counterfeit bill and the court held that was excessive.

Obviously, it would be wonderful if this bill were to soon pass through both houses of Congress and gets signed into law. However, even if our efforts only result in a failed Congressional vote, Senators and Congressional representatives who vote against the bill may be vulnerable in November. Their “no” votes can enhance the campaign of their challengers in the upcoming election. **Please, tell your representatives and everyone else to support the Justice in Policing Act of 2020.**

—Jim Lobsenz

US Exporting COVID-19

With COVID-19 spreading like wildfire through packed detention centers, the US government is not only endangering the lives of detained migrants but also exporting COVID-19 to Latin America and the Caribbean through deportations. Instead of heeding the collective call to [#FreeThemAll](#), the US government has repeatedly deported people with active cases of COVID-19 to their home countries, causing further spread of the pandemic. Latin American countries, several of which have long closed their borders and stopped accepting commercial flights in order to protect their populations from COVID-19, are forced to accept flights of deportees from the US, a number of whom have COVID-19. Guatemala alone has reported 119 people infected with COVID-19 on deportation flights from the US.

—School of the Americas Watch (submitted by Jean Semrau)

Quaker Center Impacted by COVID-19

Please hold the Ben Lomond Quaker Center in prayer and Light. Its future is greatly uncertain. Four programs are currently postponed, and ten rental groups have canceled. As of 1 May 2020, the Quaker Center had already lost \$42,000 in anticipated revenue.

To make a donation: <http://www.quakercenter.org/gifts-and-donations/>

Dear Mister Floyd

in pandemic times we learn
that breath is everything
look what we risk to keep it
flowing in and out of lungs
to feel it cool the nostrils
to feel the breastbone rise
to trust how it finds its way
and feeds the blood

in pandemic times we see
how the world goes to work
for a simple breath
giving up livelihoods, bringing
children home from schools
to protect this elementary act
see the nurses in shields like
warriors, see mask-makers at
their sewing machines intent
over scraps of fabric, see factories
retool to make machines that push
air through our windpipes so we can
sing the song of life, see distilleries
turn spirits into sanitizer to make
our hands clean, but our hands

are not clean, Mister Floyd
because of the other virus
the contaminant which is
our pre-existing condition and
causes us to step away from
each other for centuries

now your town is on fire and
you lie still on the pavement
see how our tears fall on our masks
see how our masks fall from our faces
see the fabric unravel, Mister Floyd
rise please rise like this smoke
do not refuse to haunt us or
how will we remember what
we learn and forget

breath is not cheap

—Kate Tucker, Retired Unitarian Universalist Minister and Jean Semrau's long-time friend

To Change The World Enough

To change the world enough
you must cease to be afraid
of the poor.
We experience your fear as the least pardonable of
humiliations; in the past
it has sent us scurrying off
daunted and ashamed
into the shadows.

Now,
the world ending
the only one all of us have known
we seek the same
fresh light
you do:
the same high place
and ample table.
The poor always believe
there is room enough
for all of us;
the very rich never seem to have heard
of this.

In us there is wisdom of how to share
loaves and fishes
however few;
we do this every day.
Learn from us,
we ask you.
We enter now
the dreaded location
of Earth's reckoning;
no longer far
off
or hidden in books
that claim to disclose
revelations;
it is here.

We must walk together without fear.
There is no path without us

—Alice Walker

“No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

— Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*

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

*Newsletter submissions are due to Bob Morse (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, Cathy 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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