



543 South Mountain Avenue

Ashland, Oregon 97520

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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)

4 January No First Hour Activity

10:15-11 am: Circle of Light

11 January Developing Together A
Grounded Sense of Place (Toward
Right Relationship with Native
People): Story Sharing followed by
Worship Sharing (see page 2)

18 January ZOOM ONLY

8:30-10 am: Business Meeting

25 January How To Quaker:

Discourse and then Worship Sharing
on the Testimony of Peace

Simple Breakfast to Follow

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

Meeting for Worship

11 am to Noon EVERY WEEK

**Hybrid: Both at the Quaker
Meeting House and by Zoom
(link below):**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7477317797pwd=SW1sd3pTZjhIbGRmUWpOY3pZaUFDdz09)

[j/7477317797pwd=SW1sd3pTZjhIbG](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7477317797pwd=SW1sd3pTZjhIbGRmUWpOY3pZaUFDdz09)

[RmUWpOY3pZaUFDdz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7477317797pwd=SW1sd3pTZjhIbGRmUWpOY3pZaUFDdz09)

SOUTH MOUNTAIN FRIENDS MEETING

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

Unprogrammed Worship in Ashland, Oregon

First Month 2026

Poetry That Moves Us Toward Right Relationship with Native People

EAGLE POEM

By Joy Harjo

To pray you open your whole self
To sky, to earth, to sun, to moon
To one whole voice that is you.
And know there is more
That you can't see, can't hear;
Can't know except in moments
Steadily growing, and in languages
That aren't always sound but other
Circles of motion.

Like eagle that Sunday morning
Over Salt River. Circled in blue sky
In wind, swept our hearts clean
With sacred wings.
We see you, see ourselves and know
That we must take the utmost care
And kindness in all things.



Breathe in, knowing we are made of
All this, and breathe, knowing
We are truly blessed because we
Were born, and die soon within a
True circle of motion,
Like eagle rounding out the morning
Inside us.
We pray that it will be done
In beauty.
In beauty.

"I feel strongly that I have a responsibility to all the sources
that I am: to all past and future ancestors,
to my home country, to all places that I
touch down on and that are myself, to all
voices, all women, all of my tribe, all
people, all earth, and beyond that to all
beginnings and endings." —Joy Harjo,
member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation



Developing Together A Grounded Sense of Place

Presented by the Toward Right Relationship with Native People Interest Group

Story Sharing Followed by Worship Sharing
9 am Sunday 11 January 2026 in person and by zoom
All Are Welcome

Worship Sharing on the Query: **How do we Quakers reach out to the extended community of humans with a message of light, caring, and stewardship for all of creation?**

Alternative Advices & Queries on Sustainability

Offered by South Mountain Friend Tomi Hazel Ward



Advices and queries amongst Friends are for meditative guidance to seek clarity in our relationship and spiritual endeavors.

Careful considerations of sustainability should include study of the sciences of complexity and whole systems design. An ecological system consists of a minimum number of parts that are in right relationship. In a resilient system, relationships are more important than inventories. The relationship-net amongst elements in a whole system is more important than the diversity alone. In the long story of humankind, many cultures have had some good and persistent times living sustainably in place. Such cultures co-evolved spirituality and education that fit with ecological meta-stability. Others have stumbled through wastefulness and greed into darkness; they cut all the forests and used up or lost all their soil. In the cultures with appropriate fitness, local community reliance is the foundation of social ways. We are constrained to farm and live within the solar energy and water budgets. If we export more carbon from our field and forests than is fixed by photosynthesis and use too much water each year, we will decline in fertility. To fail to strive toward and hold to this peaceful complexity and wholeness is to diminish the light.

How do we as individuals reach to the extended community of humans with a message of light and peaceable kingdom (caring universe) and of stewardship with the glory of diversity and interconnectivity in creation?

As our held-in-common individual and community intelligence is the key to cultural sustainability, do we value our members' experience and keep record of our community story so as to continue to learn and to persist in wisdom?

How do we nurture those of us who have witnessed brutality to creation and returned to our community? Do we provide debriefing and recovery to those whose ideals have led them to ecological service?

Do we in our own lives live in the garden of peace and model right sharing of world resources? Do we constrain our needs to those fulfilled by local products and do we grow a significant portion of our own food and medicine? Do we constrain our use of imported goods and energy?

Are we as a community of seekers ready to knit and support new right livelihoods and to uphold traditional land-based families? Do we have real material and cultural relations with each other? Do we barter, trade, and give gifts wisely?

In this modern information and economic speed-up and industrial disaster, how do we remain centered in the wonders of creation and mystery with enough time in our lives to grasp the vastness of wholeness?

Do we practice non-violence with all of creation, not just humans?

Do we have our own personal relationship with natural systems, which are the gift of creation, manifestations of the light? Do we take the time to observe, contemplate, and meditate on the lessons of complexity?

Do we hold our families, neighbors, and meetings in the light of cooperation, sharing, and care? Do we celebrate all the work roles, genders, ages, and the extended-family and elder councils that lead to clarity and continuity for the work of living and love?

Meeting for Worship for Business 21 December 2025

Friends Present: Bill Ashworth, Melody Ashworth, Valeria Breiten, Ken Deveney, Ann Gaffney, Ká Herring, Andra Hollenbeck, Bob Morse, Herb Rothschild, David Runkel, Nancy Spear, Richard Spencer, Kathleen Stiles, Adam Thompson, Rochelle Webster.

Minute Approval Discussion: A few months ago, we stopped approving the overall compilation of notes that we often call the minutes (due to the way other organizations use the term “minutes” as a name for notes) at the beginning of each business meeting. This was not discussed as a business meeting first. We continued past practice of approving every minuted item as they are minuted. A Friend raised concern about removing the approval of the minutes, particularly without any comment or discussion at business meeting. Included in the discussion were the following:

- The recording clerk is unsettled about the purpose of our minutes and would like to do two things with the intent of purposefully making decisions to meet our goals with understanding of why we are making those decisions: determine historically and currently what others are doing and why; discuss as a meeting what our goals are for minutes and why.
- Historically, Friends recorded only those things that were “minuted” and were approved on-the-spot to ensure the sense of the meeting is captured with the minute. New England Yearly Meeting noted that spirit moves differently from session to session so the approval on-the-spot was a very important part of the process. (This meeting has always done this.)
- Past practice of this meeting has changed over time.
- Friends shared that individuals should not be named when sharing

their thoughts. That is a practice this recording clerk has not been doing and is attempting to change with this month’s notes!

- Friends were clear that there is not yet clarity about notes and minutes, and that more discussion is needed. All Friends are invited to both bring their ideas forward and share them for future discussion.

The one place where the meeting has clarity at the moment is that we continue the practice of reading official minutes back and approving them in-the-moment. The rest we will continue to sit with and discuss again.

Nominating Committee (NC): Nominating Committee would like to add Jean Semrau to the finance committee. Ministry and Council met with Friendship and Hospitality to work on the job description for Welcoming Committee as well as the general procedures which, as a reminder, can be changed and updated as part of next year’s review process. As a reminder, changes to procedures and requests for changes to job descriptions that committees need should be emailed to nominations@ashlandquakers.org. Nancy is stepping off nominating committee. Adam will continue to maintain the job descriptions and procedures document. Peace and Social Concerns may need changes to their job description. If changes are indeed needed those would come through nominating committee (which currently is just Adam).

Treasurer Report: Contributions are lagging behind both what we budgeted and what we spent, but December donations thus far are healthy. A reminder that almost \$15,000 dollars of the checking account is the bequest from Yav that the meeting is still determining how to spend.

Joint Committee (JC): JC has

increased room rental rates, which have not increased since 2019. The increase is approximately 7.5%. Meg Wade is the new Executive Director of Peace House after the retirement of Elizabeth Hallett. Various maintenance work (including the purchase of a new vacuum) continues. A reminder to Friends that the building is fragrance-free. The JC budget is created and will be brought to Business Meeting next month to be approved.



Honoring Elizabeth Hallett (left) upon her retirement for her years of dedication as Peace House director and introducing incoming director Meg Wade

Toward Right Relationship Interest Group: (see page 2)

Friendship & Hospitality (F&H): Potluck brunch 10-11 am Sunday 28 December (see details in the December newsletter)

Ministry & Counsel (M&C) recommended membership for Kathleen Donham.

2025.12.01 The clearness committee for Kathleen Donham’s membership to South Mountain Friends Meeting has recommended that Friends accept her request. Friends joyously submitted her membership for seasoning.

Concern was expressed about the amount of time left in this meeting to tackle the many issues on the agenda, but instead M&C shared the list of items they would like to carry over until next month, giving time for Friends to contemplate:

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Business Meeting Minutes CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

- A process to reconsider when and how we do Meeting for Business, including moving back to in-person meetings for business.

- M&C would like to engage in a visioning process, perhaps surrounding the question: "If our Meeting moved into our most courageous future, what would our Meeting look like?"

- Neighborhood groups need a place to live organizationally, and M&C would like to suggest they work in coordination with the Welcoming Committee to do so.

M&C hopes to expand adult education beyond How to Quaker and would like to discuss how that could happen.

Additionally, M&C will be making their check-in calls starting in January. Do not be concerned when you get a call! These calls are to ensure that Friends are seen, known, and heard in various ways by the official meeting structure. These calls happen annually to remain connected with Friends.

Peace and Social Concerns (P&SC): P&SC has a number of items:

- Donations of \$100 each were made to the following Quaker organizations: American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), Quaker Peace Teams, Right-Sharing on the World Resources, Friendly Water for the World, a Quaker School in Ramallah on the West Bank

- The vigil for Gaza continues and P&SC invites more Friends to join.

- Due to the thankfully quiet nature of the movement in Oregon, P&SC is wrapping up our Christian Nationalist work.

There has been some discussion about the bringing together of Friends in the valley by opening up discussions with other Rogue Valley Quaker faith communities inspired by the work of Braver Angels. This will be added to next month's agenda.

Bequest Discussion: The meeting of Friends to discuss what to do with the recent bequest is tied to the visioning that M&C is requesting. Friends expressed a desire to do the visioning work so that the committee working on the bequest suggestions can do so with the vision in mind.

Of Note:

A theme of Friends throughout the Meeting was the nature of what should be a part of business meeting and what should be handled or discussed in other venues. This uncertainty has been and continues to be a contributing factor to the lack of time available for discussions that do need the full meeting's thoughtful consideration. Friends felt this uncertainty deeply during the meeting and expressed concern and a desire to move through this uncertainty together so that other serious topics can receive the time and attention they deserve.

Respectfully submitted,
Rochelle Webster, Assistant Clerk
Ann Gaffney, Recording Clerk

Annual Session in Olympia

Each summer North Pacific Yearly Meeting, the regional Friends organization with which South Mountain Monthly Meeting is affiliated, meets for an Annual Session. This year the gathering will take place Thursday through Sunday 22-26 July and will be held at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washinton. Friends of all ages are welcome to attend for times of worship, fellowship, business, learning, and fun. Travel assistance will be available. For questions or more information, please contact Heidi Neff at as-event-planner@npym.org.



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 (if wanting to zoom into the Meditation Group, text Ka for link: 541-778-5206)



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



Brief History of New Year's Resolutions

From the Babylonians who resolved to return borrowed farm equipment to medieval knights who would renew their vow to chivalry, New Year's resolutions are nothing new.

In 2000 BC, the Babylonians celebrated the New Year during a 12-day festival called *Akitu* (starting with the vernal equinox). This started the farming season to plant crops, crown their king, and make promises to pay their debts. One common resolution was the return of borrowed farm equipment (which makes sense for an agriculturally based society). The Babylonian New Year was adopted by the ancient Romans, as was the tradition of resolutions. The timing, however, eventually shifted with the Julian calendar in 46 BC, which declared January 1st as the start of the new year.

January was named for the two-faced Roman god, Janus, who looks forward to new beginnings as well as backward for reflection and resolution. The Romans would offer sacrifices to Janus and make promises of good behavior for the year ahead.

Janus was also the guardian of gates and doors. He presided over the temple of peace, where the doors were opened only during wartime. It was a place of safety where new beginnings and new resolutions could be forged.

If you think about the land and the seasons, the timing of early January makes sense for most of Europe and for North America, too. The active harvest season has passed. The holiday frenzy is ending.

As Robert B. Thomas, the founder of the Almanac, said, this is a time “of leisure to farmers ... to settle accounts with your neighbors ... now having been industrious in the summer, you will have the felicity of retiring from the turbulence of the storm to the bosom of your family.”

New Year's resolutions were also made in the Middle Ages. Medieval knights would renew their vow to chivalry by placing their hands on a peacock. The annual “Peacock Vow” would take place at the end of the year as a resolution to maintain their knightly values.

By the 17th century, New Year's resolutions were so common that folks found humor in the idea of making and breaking their pledges. A Boston newspaper from 1813 featured the first recorded use of the phrase “New Year resolution.” The article states:

“And yet, I believe there are multitudes of people, accustomed to receive injunctions of new year resolutions, who will sin all the month of December, with a serious determination of beginning the new year with new resolutions and new behavior, and with the full belief that they shall thus expiate and wipe away all their former faults.”

In the United States, New Year's resolutions are still a tradition, but the types of resolutions have changed.

As a legacy of our Protestant history, resolutions in the early 1900s were more religious or spiritual, reflecting a desire to develop stronger moral character, a stronger work ethic, and more restraint in the face of earthly pleasures.

Over the years, however, resolutions seem to have migrated from denying physical indulgences to general self-improvement, like losing weight. While it may seem superficial, medical sociologist Natalie Boero of San Jose State University suggests that today's resolutions are also a reflection of status, financial wealth, responsibility, and self-discipline—which isn't that different from how the New Year's resolution tradition began.

—Gathered by Bob Morse



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 and Nancy Spear 626-437-8913

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

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*

South Mountain Friends Meeting

543 South Mountain Avenue

Ashland, Oregon 97520