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(Near Southern Oregon University)

SOUTH MOUNTAIN FRIENDS MEETING

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

Fifth Month 2021

The Power of Quaker Faith

I am a Friend because I have experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in my life, and I believe that power is more accessible to me within the community and the discipline of Friends. I work for Friends General Conference because I believe in the transformational potential of the Quaker path.



Yesterday (7/6/16), I thought I would be standing here telling you about all the ways FGC serves Friends. However, last night Philando Castile was killed in his car outside Minneapolis after being stopped by police for a broken taillight. Tonight is not the night to tell you more about FGC.

The transformational potential of Quaker faith and practice is offered to us, but it is not guaranteed. Without faithful action, transformation is impossible.

Today, as one Friend to another, I ask myself and I ask you to be faithful to the nudge for change and action that God has already sown in our hearts.



[However] in worship just now, it occurred to me that as a white Friend when I look around at other white Friends, I suspect it is not a “nudge.” I suspect it is the insistent siren for change and that we have to take out our earplugs. We must trust that as we humbly step forward to make changes that our world and our God demand of us, that we must trust in unfolding Guidance, that it will continue to be available to us.

Just as George Fox walked into the bog, seeing one step at a time, he did not need to see the end of the path to know that it was important to step forward.



—Traci Hjelt Sullivan

Former FGC Associate Secretary for Development
Address Given at the FGC Gathering, July 2016

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

First-Hour Activity

9 to 10 am (new earlier time)

Discussions via Zoom

All are welcome. Full Zoom invitation in weekly e-news.

First-Hour Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85099502775?pwd=VmgxVFFzVkhYUkhRYkpNYmJ6TGZUdz09>

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85099502775?pwd=VmgxVFFzVkhYUkhRYkpNYmJ6TGZUdz09>

2 May

Uprooting Racism Worship Sharing on “Using White Privilege to Confront Racism”

9 May

“Experiment in the Light” Guided Meditation (details on page 2)

16 May

Meeting for Business (9-10:30 am)

23 May

Adult Ed: “Let Your Life Speak” with Maureen Graham

30 May

Peace & Social Concerns: Worship Sharing on EarthCare Minute: “How we answer to that of God in all creation”

Meeting for Worship

11 am to Noon

At Quaker Meeting House (space is limited due to social distancing)

Or, join us by Zoom at:

<https://zoom.us/j/99810847118?pwd=R3poNVQxMFEyWFBMRVZFcTJYbDNYZz09>

<https://zoom.us/j/99810847118?pwd=R3poNVQxMFEyWFBMRVZFcTJYbDNYZz09>

Experiment with Light

Experiment with Light is a Quaker practice which is based on early Friends' discoveries. It was devised in 1996 by theologian and Quaker Rex Ambler following his study of early Friends' writings. (Yes, the same Rex Ambler whose writings on Quaker mysticism we've been reading and pondering for the past several months; spoiler: after having *read* his words, we will now get to *hear* his words in his own voice; read on, dear Friends.) Rex wanted to discover what it was that made early Friends so sure, so centered, so willing to suffer privations to keep alive their faith.



He developed a process by which the Light may be accessed.

Once you have accepted an invitation to be still, the Experiment with Light process can be separated into four main steps:

1. Mind the Light (pay attention to what's going on inside you, particularly where there's something that makes you feel uncomfortable)
2. Open your heart to the truth (don't run away from anything that's difficult or that you don't want to face, but keep a little distance from it: "Be still and cool in thy mind")
3. Wait in the Light (be patient, let the Light show you what is really going on, ask questions if what is being offered to you isn't clear or you want to know more, and wait for the answers to come, don't try to explain)
4. Submit (accept and welcome the information or images and the insights, dreams and perceptions that may come later, and allow them to show the truth)

Trying this for himself, Rex found ways to move forward on his own issues and gain the inner peace he was looking for. So, as a personal experiment, it definitely worked! Trying it with a group of others, there were similar breakthroughs and expressions of wonder and gratitude for this simple practice which can bring such profound change. Since then Experiment with Light has found ready participants both in the UK, where Rex resides, and throughout the world.

During the years when Friend Althea Godfrey was living in the Rogue Valley and active within our Meeting, she introduced South Mountaineers to Rex's Experiment in Light, which was so very inspirational for all those who experienced it, many of whom met weekly for quite some time.



To hear Rex Ambler explain how he discovered and has been impacted by the Experiment with Light: [Watch this 10-min video.](#)

—Bob Morse



An Opportunity to Experience the Experiment with Light

First Hour: 9 am Sunday 9 May 21

**Together we'll listen to an audio recording
of Rex Ambler guiding this meditation**

Gizelle Luccio, Convener

White Folks: What Can We Do?

Launched in 2015, artEquity provides tools, resources, and training at the intersection of art and activism. The folks at artEquity believe that having shared language and a shared understanding of the power dynamics that affect our lives is the gateway to collective action and collective impact. The goal at artEquity is to build a base of individuals and organizations who are strategically poised to create and sustain a culture of equity, inclusion, and justice through the arts.

For the past twelve years, artEquity's founder and executive director, Carmen Morgan, has worked with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival on structural and organizational equity. With her guidance OSF has implemented innovative programming, policies, and new organizational structures to support ongoing inclusion efforts. Previously, Carmen was the Associate Regional Director for the American Friends Service Committee, where she oversaw human rights work on the US/Mexico border; gay liberation and sovereignty education work in Hawai'i; and tenant rights and racial/economic justice work in California and Arizona.



In a video produced by OSF in which Carmen moderates a discussion on "[White Fragility/White Activism](#)," she remarks that, "We need more white people to speak their truth." In response, Michael Robertson, deputy director of artEquity, reveals a list that he's been compiling from conversations with BIPOC and fellow white racial justice advocates. Michael's list of "White Folks: What Can We Do?" serves as queries in assessing ourselves and our Meeting vis-à-vis our progress in uprooting racism and dismantling white supremacy culture.

*Can we **listen** more than we speak and listen deeply and not respond sometimes?*

*Can we **believe** people of color when they share their stories and when they say they're injured, and can we say, "I hear you"?*

*Can we read and study and **learn** until the day we die?*

*Can we **not ask** people of color, our friends of color, to teach us?*

*Can we **explore** our white fragility and know the characteristics of white supremacy culture?*

*Can we always **ask** who is not at the table? Should **we** be at this table?*

*Can we **give** money to racial justice organizations?*

*When we make a mistake, can we **own** it and not expect to be taken care of by people of color but own that mistake?*

*Can we **support** leaders of color? And that can be everything from asking what you need to making sure that people aren't talking behind their back in their organizations.*

*Can we **speak** from our own perspective as a white person? We don't need to understand what it's like to be people of color, but we do need to talk about our own experience.*

*Can we **credit** people of color for our education?*

*Can we **ask** who's not at the table, who's not in the film, who's not in Congress, who's not in your organization, who's not on your board?*

*Can we ask how will racism play out today in the rooms that I'll be in and how will I **work** against being complicit in that racism?*

—Bob Morse

A Tale of Privilege

I'm tired of carrying these bags
Who can I get to haul this extra weight?
You there
Carry my bags
Ah yes, this feels nice
I feel free to move now

And suddenly I realize I should have never had to
toil so
You there
Since you're already carrying my bags
Carry my food
I'll still want to eat it all
Clearly, I'm more important because only one of us
is walking free
Though I don't like how you are looking at the food
I don't trust you with it but I also don't want to carry
it
What a stressful problem
Do you see how hard my life is?

Plus why do I have this coat when I'm not currently
cold?
You there
Since you have my bags and food, take my coat
How frustrating for me that you move so slow
That's more proof that I'm superior
See how nimble I am

You should really be able to keep up

Now, I'm suddenly aware that even items in my
pockets make me feel less free
You there
Take these things from me
Nothing should hinder me
I'm too essential to be held back in the slightest
But don't steal my things
Your role is to hold my baggage but don't think you
have the right to use it
And stop asking for help
Do you think you are owed free handouts?
After all this time struggling to keep up?
What have you done to deserve help?
Work harder like me
I'm getting so much done
All on my own

But I might one day need to know how to carry
heavy weight
I haven't had the practice
I feel insecure even thinking about it
Surely I can find a teacher

You there

—Marshall Lyles, Counselor 2020



Allow

There is no controlling life.
Try corralling a lightning bolt,
containing a tornado. Dam a
stream and it will create a new
channel. Resist, and the tide
will sweep you off your feet.



Allow, and grace will carry
you to higher ground. The only
safety lies in letting it all in –
the wild and the weak; fear,
fantasies, failures and success.
When loss rips off the doors of
the heart, or sadness veils your
vision with despair, practice
becomes simply bearing the truth.

In the choice to let go of your
known way of being, the whole
world is revealed to your new eyes.

—Danna Faulds, Poet & Yoga Practitioner 2015

A Small Needful Fact

Is that Eric Garner worked
for some time for the Parks and Rec.
Horticultural Department, which means,
perhaps, that with his very large hands,
perhaps, in all likelihood,
he put gently into the earth
some plants which, most likely,
some of them, in all likelihood,
continue to grow, continue
to do what such plants do, like house
and feed small and necessary creatures,
like being pleasant to touch
and smell,
like converting sunlight
into food, like making it easier
for us to breathe.

—Ross Gay, Gardener &
Teacher 2015



In 2014, Eric Garner was killed in NYC when a
police officer put him in a prohibited chokehold
while arresting him.

Meeting for Business 18 April 21

Friends Present: Bill Ashworth, Melody Ashworth, Beth Aspedon, Valeria Breiten, KenDeveney, K Hering, Andra Hollenbeck, Bob Morse, Alex Reid, Javan Reid, Herb Rothschild, Jean Semrau, Adam Thompson

Centering Worship: "To be afraid is to behave as if truth were not true." —Bayard Rustin, Activist

Minutes:

2021.4.1 Friends approved minutes for the 21 March 2021 Meeting for Business.

Treasurer Committee spending continues to be low and contributions continue to be generous. Net loss for the year slightly exceeds net income, but our account balances remain healthy.

Adult Education Committee presented upcoming topics for education as listed in the newsletter schedule.

Uprooting Racism Team shared the Meeting's history preceding this action item and the most recent activities initiated by BASE (Black Advocacy & Social Equity) before requesting \$300 from the Leadings Support budget so that the Meeting can begin sponsoring BASE at \$100/month in April.

2021.4.2 Friends approved sponsoring BASE at \$100/month for the rest of this fiscal year.

Homeless Outreach Committee: Three new people are now ready to join one of the Circle of Friends, while others from all three Circles

have received what they needed from their participation and moved on.

Joint Committee plans to reopen the building to renters starting 1 June unless new health and safety directives are issued. Only totally immunized people may attend gatherings unless a hold harmless agreement is signed by attenders with the organization renting the space. Friends approved this arrangement with advice that JC look more deeply into liability issues. Fire abatement work has been finished, and Building & Grounds awaits a follow-up inspection by the City. Friends expressed gratitude to B&G for this work. LED bulbs are being installed to reduce electricity costs. The Committee suggests that SMFM and PH each make an inventory or video of their belongings in the building, in case of fire. SMFM will request B&G take on this task on our behalf. JC asked for \$750 in addition to the remaining \$250 budgeted for a total of \$1,000 which will be matched by Peace House.

2021.4.3 Friends approved contributing the remaining \$250 already set aside and an additional \$750 to the Joint Committee to cover costs for the building and its utilities this fiscal year.

Nominating Committee members Valeria Breiten, Beth Aspedon, Terri Brain and Maureen Graham are beginning their work and welcome suggestions regarding committees and job descriptions.

Peace and Social Concerns will make its FY21 donations to area organizations. The July 2020 NPYM Earthcare Minute was presented.

We recognize that the Light pervades creation: shines not just in humans, but in all other beings, and the spaces around us all. We bear witness to the continuing revelation coming through the living world. As we see our place in the web of relationships that make up creation, we release any sense of domination. We act to restore and maintain the relationships and processes that allow life on Earth to thrive.

2021.4.4 Friends approved the NPYM Minute on Earthcare and an exploration of its queries which will take place during First hour on the 5th Sunday of May.

Ministry & Counsel Andra Hollenbeck began an open discussion on the status of hybrid worship in the future. This conversation will continue throughout the month to include as many Meeting participants as possible before any changes are made to our current practice.

Friendship & Hospitality members continue to reach out to Meeting participants as they feel called. They look forward to engaging with people in person and hosting events when health restrictions are lifted.

Respectfully submitted,
Andra Hollenbeck, Co-Clerk
Alex Reid, Recording clerk

North Pacific Yearly Meeting *Virtual* Annual Session

14-18 July 2021

Our Friend in residence will be Cherice Bock, a lifelong Quaker and a former co-clerk of Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting. She works as the Creation Justice Advocate at Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and has taught courses at various universities including the Oregon Extension outside Ashland. Her special interest is ecotheology.

The details at [NPYM Annual Session website](#) describe pre-session and during-session worship groups, interest groups, and fun activities. Registration will be available starting 24 May on the as.npym.org website.

A Non-Traditional Blessing

May God bless you with **discontent** with easy answers, half-truths, superficial relationships, so that you will live from deep within your heart.

May God bless you with **anger** at injustice, oppression, abuse, and exploitation of people, so that you will work for justice, equality, and peace.

May God bless you with **tears** to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and war, so that you will reach out your hand to comfort them and to change their pain to joy.

May God bless you with the **foolishness** to think you can make a difference in this world, so that you will do the things which others tell you cannot be done.

If you have the courage to accept these blessings, then God will also bless you with:

Happiness—because you will know that you have made life better for others

Inner peace—because you will have worked to secure an outer peace for others

Laughter—because your heart will be light

Faithful friends—because they will recognize your worth as a person.

These blessings are yours—not for the asking, but for the giving—from God.
Amen.

—Benedictine Sister Ruth Fox, OSB, of Sacred Heart Monastery in Richardton, ND, 1985

Submitted by Marybeth Webster



In Memoriam: David Zarembka

David Zarembka, 77, died of COVID in early April 2021, a week after COVID took the life of his wife Gladys Kamonya. David and Gladys lived in Lumakanda, Kenya, where they were members of their local Friends Church. Although born and raised in a Polish-American family in Missouri, David's heart was always in Africa.

It was several decades ago that South Mountain Friends first learned about the African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI) of Friends Peace Teams, an organization founded by David that is dedicated to peacemaking activities in Eastern and Central Africa. This area is no stranger to civil war and genocide, not unrelated to long histories of being colonized. Through AGLI David introduced the Quaker-based Alternative to Violence Project and helped develop the trauma-responsive Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) program in Rwanda, Burundi, the Congo, and Kenya. Through David's web of connections with Friends across the US, South Mountain Meeting twice hosted a Burundian HROC trainer and organizer and learned first-hand about this pathway for bringing victims and victimizers together in retreats that elucidated common traumas, shrunk biases, and healed hearts. More recently, our Meeting was blessed to be visited by David and Gladys.



Through his publications, *PeaceWays AGLI* and *Reports from Africa*, David provided many of us with an invaluable insider's view into the social, political, spiritual, and cultural facets of life in Sub-Saharan Africa. Readers of South Mountain's newsletter may recall reading David's article "Who is White?" in the March 2021 edition. Through his writing, organizing, teaching, and loving, David was unfaltering in pursuing his humanitarian endeavors to improve lives tainted by violence while continually planting seeds for a world grounded in peace.

—Bob Morse

Advices & Queries on Sexuality

Our physical and spiritual selves are an integrated whole. Our sexuality shapes how we understand ourselves and how we understand and relate to others. Our sexual nature can be both a blessing and a source of vulnerability. Understanding our own sexuality is a journey. We are open to grace and we seek knowledge, understanding, and tenderness toward each other. We recognize that sexual orientation is a full spectrum and that gender identity may be fluid. We affirm that all are children of God and valuable members of the beloved community, however they identify themselves.

Faith & Practice
North Pacific Yearly Meeting,
2017



We do well to look past the outward appearances of orientation and identity to see the quality of all individuals and relationships in our meetings. Just as there is that of God in every person, there is that of God in every relationship that calls upon God. We remain tender toward all relationships founded on integrity, mutual respect, commitment, and love.



When dealing with issues of sexuality and sexual behavior, we strive for an appropriate balance between open, honest discussion and protection of privacy and confidentiality for individual members and attenders.

We take care to avoid sexual behavior based on license, exploitation, oppression, and violence in our personal lives and to witness against such behavior in our meetings and communities.

Parents support their children's healthy sexuality by providing good examples, constructively supporting each child's natural interest, and answering questions lovingly.

Friends are encouraged to maintain accurate resources on issues of sexuality, sexual behavior, and gender identity and to answer questions, especially from children, honestly and appropriately.

While the meeting can and should be a source of abiding love and support to members and attenders, we acknowledge that some situations may require professional intervention and others may require notification of law-enforcement authorities.

Do we accept and appreciate our sexuality as part of our humanity and as a gift from God?

How do we integrate our sexuality and our spirituality?

How can we help each other be faithful in expressing our sexuality?

Do we support members and attenders with love and care relating to their sexuality and gender identity?

How safe is our meeting? How do we create an environment appropriate for discussion of deeply personal issues?

How willing are we to talk openly and listen carefully when others' ideas and behavior are different from our own? How do we respond to that of God in them while acknowledging our own discomfort or disagreement?

As individuals and as a meeting community, do we avoid stereotyping and judging people based on their relationships, sexual orientation, or gender identity?

How do we love and respond to those who have been harmed by sexual discrimination, abuse, or violence?

How do we love and respond to those who have committed the discrimination, abuse, or violence?

Do we know how and when to refer members and attenders for professional help?

Do we know how and when to contact legal authorities?

MEETING OFFICERS

Co-Clerk: Andra Hollenbeck 601-6421
Co-Clerk: Bill Ashworth 778-9470
Recording Clerk: Alex Reid 707-499-9146
Corresponding Clerk: Beth Aspedon 778-1564
Treasurer: Adam Thompson 201-8255
Weekly e-Bulletin Editor: 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
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 ashlandquakers@gmail.com

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

South Mountain Friends Meeting
543 South Mountain Avenue
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MEETING COMMITTEES

Ministry & Counsel: **Gizelle Luccio** 897-4458, Jim Phillips 482-2388, Steve Radcliffe 479-3487, Linda Spencer 865-3682, Co-Clerk *ex officio*

Children's Education & Spirituality: **Ken Deveney**, Cathy McDaniel

Finance: **Jean Semrau**, Fran Curtis, Treasurer *ex officio*

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

Nominating: **Valeria Breiten**, Beth Aspedon, Maureen Graham, Terri Brain

Friendship & Hospitality: **Crystal Bosbach**, K Hering, Cathy McDaniel

Greeters: Steve Radcliffe, Alex Reid, Javan Reid, Rochelle Webster, Karen Maleski, Terri Brain

Peace & Social Concerns: **Herb Rothschild**, Ken Deveney, Javan Reid, Pam Allister, Elizabeth Hallett

Library: **Fran Curtis**, Melody Ashworth, Steve Wells

Adult Education: **Jim Lobsenz**, **K Hering**, Melody Ashworth

Homeless Outreach: **Bob Morse**, Alex Reid, Becky Hale, Terri Brain

*Names in **bold** indicate committee clerk or co-clerks*