

Community Companion

QUAKER MEETING HOUSE
3960 WINDING WAY, CINCINNATI OH 45229-1950

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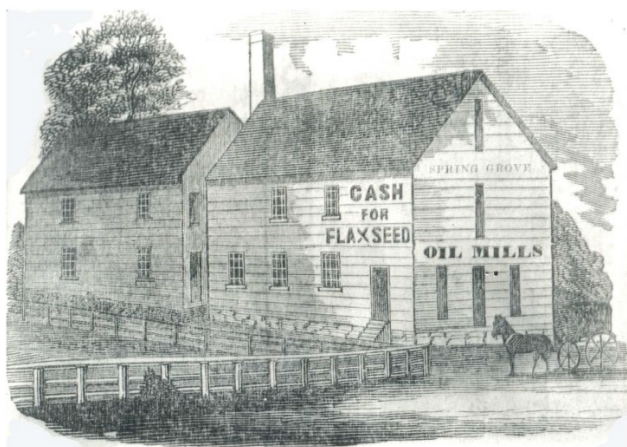
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Sixth Query

OVYM Faith and Practice

How is my life a daily example
of nonviolence?

How does our meeting nurture
peace in the wider community?



Isaac P. Evans and David S. Burson Mill in Richmond
Indiana 1853.



Pratt family on porch at farm (Quaker Farmers)
Photo courtesy of Marple Historical Society

Community Friends Meeting

Business Meeting Minutes

July 12, 2020

Present: Doug, Lisa, Mary Anne, Don I, Eric, John, Lynn, David, Eira, Paul, Frank, Wilhelmina, and Sue.

1. Opening worship: The meeting opened with centering worship, during which the clerk, Doug Burks, read the following: *"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."* ~Martin Luther King, Jr.

2. Agenda: Doug Burks noted that the action items would be brought forward to the top of the agenda.

Action Item: The OVYM minute on racism was presented for endorsement of Community Friends Meeting:

We stand with the families of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, Ahmaud Arbery, and all those who have suffered the pain of racism and its deadly consequence. We affirm Black Lives Matter and join with those insisting on radical transformation of our society.

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) can call on a long history of effort to dismantle the most blatant forms of racism that dates back to the founding of this country. At the same time, we confess to limited understanding, inadequate attention, and racist beliefs and behaviors within our religious society, including, for example, at one time segregating Black Quakers on a separate bench and preventing interracial relationships. In this time of widening awareness concerning social inequities, Friends' commitment to justice and equality is bringing more White

Friends to a recognition of their personal responsibility and to a growing commitment to change. We acknowledge that once again, now is the time in which action is critically needed.

*As a "Peace Church," we understand at a very deep level, that when there is no Justice, there is no Peace. We affirm our basic belief that there is "that of God in every person," and we are called by the gospel of Jesus to "Love our Neighbor! No Exceptions." We see this love as an active love and encourage the support of Black leadership, and the amplification of Black voices. We urge all to actively protect Black people from attack and arrest, and to work to dismantle systemic racism in all its forms. We stand together in love, calling for equality for all. The meeting **approved** endorsement of this minute. The clerk asked all committees to reflect on how we are led to act in response to this minuted concern, and to report back to the monthly meeting*

4. Peace and Social Concerns: Mary Anne Curtiss reported that the committee (Tim Leonard, Don Rucknagel, and Mary Anne Curtis) met face to face on Tim's deck on 7/2/2020. Mary Anne will be committee clerk. The committee's initial main focus will be to write, or ask involved friends to write, Community Companion articles about the Meeting's charitable contributions to inform the meeting about these worthwhile causes. The idea is to inspire friends to consider donating themselves, as well as to outreach as a Meeting. The first articles will be on the American Friends deeply and actively involved. As a start, Tim will explore with Doug Burks how Community Friends can become more engaged with MARCC.

Action Item: Peace and Social Concerns committee recommends that the clerk respond to the Request for Public Comments regarding the new asylum restrictions (EOIR Docket No. 18-0002.RIN-AA94) with the attached statement to Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security regarding

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proposed EOIR Docket No 18-0002:RIN-AA94. The new rules being proposed basically make it illegal for refugees to claim asylum when they enter the United States. Judges would be required to consider unrelated factors such as traveling through other countries to deny applications for asylum.

"We at Community Friends Meeting (Quakers) of Cincinnati, Ohio unconditionally condemn all forms of torture. For this reason, we have a long history of assisting asylum seekers. We have supported a family fleeing death and violence in El Salvador in the 1980s. In this century, our members have supported a gay Christian who was imprisoned and tortured in Egypt for his sexual orientation. Now, in 2020, we are part of coalition of faith communities supporting a torture survivor from Democratic Republic of the Congo and their family.

We oppose the proposed rules, which would certainly send powerless human beings back into situations of torture and death.

It is not easy discerning whether to support an asylum claim, but it's critically important for anyone with human feelings who knows or should know the stories of these, our sisters and brothers. Seeking asylum is a right according to international and U.S. law. Any one of us would wish, even pray, for help if we or our children were in a similar situation, and it is only a matter of luck that so far we are not.

Appealing to fear and racism is a distraction from addressing more significant problems, a political "divide and conquer" tactic, or worst, a race towards ever more cruelty in order to give an impression of power. But it is not power. Realistically addressing the issues that challenge our world is the only right path.

This, we witness. This, we believe."

The meeting **approved** having the clerk submit the above statement in response to the Request for Public Comments regarding the new asylum restrictions. Individuals are also encouraged to submit their individual comments.

6.Update on Opening Meeting for Outdoor Worship:

Eric Wolff reported that the Ad Hoc committee investigating the possibilities of conducting meeting for worship outside the meeting house has reviewed several options. All of these options are contingent upon sufficient declines in the number of daily new cases and hospitalization numbers in Hamilton County and Cincinnati. At this time the data shows that new cases are increasing rather than decreasing. The committee cautiously make these recommendations:

- Since it is safer to meet in the open air rather than an enclosed space, we should begin this return with worship outdoors.
- Outdoor worship should be performed with appropriate distancing before, during and after the meeting gathers.
- Wearing masks during outdoor worship is recommended
- The restroom in the basement of the house should be approached through the garage door.
- People who are not family members of the residents of the house should not enter the main floor of the house.
- The Meeting for Business may want to consider a date on any group that wishes to may organize outdoor worship or meetings on the property but not at 10:00 A.M.

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The 10:00 zoom meeting for worship shall continue to be the normal meeting for worship at least until there is a downturn in the number of daily new cases and hospitalizations in Hamilton County that shall have persisted for a period of at least two weeks. The decision on when to return actually to indoor meetings must be made by the meeting for business in accord with Quaker practice.

There was some discussion about this report, including some questions about the reliability of testing data, and the need to bring our own chairs for outdoor worship when that resumes. It was noted that Hamilton and Butler County have been identified by the Governor as COVID-19 hot spots due to rising numbers. It was clarified that it was not considered wise to include children in outdoor worship. Friends expressed appreciation for the work of the ad hoc committee. The committee was asked to identify specifically which data would be used to make a determination for re-opening outdoor worship, including not only new cases but also ICU admissions and deaths. There was additional discussion about the importance of wearing masks to set a good example and to protect the health and safety of meeting attenders.

7. Library Committee: John Sniegocki reminded Friends that materials from the library are available by request. There is a list of materials available on line.

8. Sanctuary Inreach Group: Mary Anne Curtiss reported that the Meeting will be responsible for the Congolese family this coming week. We will be assisting with child care so the parents can study. Tatina's due date is in late July. Their court date is in August. Community Friends Meeting has stepped up to assist with transportation and child care. The report was accepted.

9. Tender Mercies: A photo of the Tender Mercies crew wearing masks was shared! David Funck reported that the ministry is going very well. Friends have continued to provide homemade food and themed dinners for the residents. This month there was a picnic theme with fried chicken, which is very popular. The staff has been serving the meal, and they are very impressed with the quality of the food our meeting provides. The report was accepted.

10. Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Lynn Funk reported that expenses exceeded income in June. Unrestricted income was \$1,110.91. \$200 was transferred to the Building Reserve Fund. There is \$3,345 in the COVID relief fund. Contributions to charities and payments to parent bodies were paid. The percent of expenses on hand remains high at 26%. Meetinghouse expenses are higher this year than last year, due to an overpayment and a refund for gas and electric last year. It was noted that Ministry and Counsel is doing outreach to those who might need assistance and offering the COVID funds as needed. The treasurer's report was accepted.

11. Ministry and Counsel: Lisa Cayard reported the committee met on June 28. Deborah and Frank will continue as M&C representatives to the Caretakers Liaison Committee. The committee reflected on experiences attending OVYM virtually this year, and considered how our meeting might be let to respond to the issues of racial injustice. It was decided to bring the OVYM minute on racism to business meeting for endorsement. Other suggestions included the possibility of more open-ended worship sharing inreach groups, with queries for each session, a book study related to racial justice, and working with Peace & Social Concerns to lead a Second Hour discussion to share where we are and what we are led to do. We discussed plans for a fall renewal, and settled on the theme, "Transforming our hearts, transforming the world." Deborah Shaw from Greensboro NC has accepted our invitation to facilitate the renewal, which will be held on

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September 19. Lisa has contacted Youth Members who are or will soon be age 25. There are three young adults whose youth membership has ended: Dylan Cahalan, Jesse Florio, and Lucy Grace Hartsock. These young Friends have been contacted every two years since age 16 and encouraged to request adult membership. Jesse's family moved away from Cincinnati many years ago. Lisa read a heartfelt email response from Lucy, now known as East Hartsock, thanking the meeting for the love and support of Community Friends. The report was accepted.

12.Action Item: The meeting was asked to minute that the Youth Membership of Dylan Cahalan, Jesse Florio, and East (Lucy) Hartsock has ended, now that they are age 25, with the understanding that they would be warmly welcomed to request adult membership at any time in the future. The meeting **approved** this minute.

13.Adult Religious Education: Adult Religious Education will meet next week to plan for upcoming Second Hours and discuss fall Inreach groups. Please let the committee (Deborah Jordan or Susan Gerke) know if you want to suggest a topic or offering for us to consider. The report was accepted.

14.Unity with Nature: The committee hopes to meet next week.

15.House and Grounds: Eric Wolff reported that the committee met on June 17. Caretakers' bathroom lights are working. Cleaning supplies are being donated. Some trees in back of the meetinghouse need to be cut, and quotes are being obtained from arborists. The new owners of the Ledgewood property are asking about purchasing the strip of meeting property that connects to Ledgewood Drive, but we would like to maintain ownership for access to the back woods. The committee is discussing purchasing a Zoom account. There was discussion of bedbugs, and they may ask a professional to come in. The rooms where they were found have been thoroughly cleaned. There have not been signs of them

since then. The meeting encouraged House and Grounds to take a responsible approach to eliminate the bedbugs. There are some tasks that need to be completed on the grounds, so they are considering scheduling a work day. Some projects have been completed by individuals. The report was accepted.

16.Nominating Committee: Sue Brungs brought the name of Pam Cobey to serve on Adult Religious Education Committee. This name was **approved**.

17.Minute of Appreciation: The clerk proposed a minute of appreciation for Sue Brungs and Nominating Committee for their excellent and timely work this year. The meeting **approved** this minute with thanks.

18.Religious Development Committee: Lisa Cayard reported that the committee briefly discussed possible plans for child care when the meeting resumes outdoor in-person worship, but this planning seems to be on hold due to the rising number of cases in Hamilton County. Allyse Sonnega is planning a virtual First Day School story time for the children on July 11, and Liz Virgo will plan one on July 25. The report was accepted.

20.Outreach Committee: John Sniegocki reported that outreach committee met via Zoom on June 24th. Present for the meeting were Beth Rosen, Sue Brungs, Paulette Meier, and John Sniegocki. Beth agreed to serve as clerk of the committee for the coming year and John will serve as recording clerk. The committee shared ideas and hopes with regard to outreach for the coming year. The forms that outreach will take will depend upon the impacts of the coronavirus crisis. While in-person meetings are suspended, the committee plans to find ways to spread awareness of our online meetings for worship

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as well as to educate about Quakerism more broadly. This will be done through the Meeting website (which will be updated to state that no in-person meetings are currently taking place and will give Doug's contact information for anyone wishing to join the online meetings for worship), the Meeting Facebook page, etc. Given the potential of QuakerSpeak videos to deepen knowledge of the Quaker tradition, we plan to send an announcement to the Meeting email list whenever a new video is released and will post these on the Facebook page as well. The report was accepted.

21.Stewardship Committee: Will be meeting soon.

22.Miami Quarterly Meeting: No report

23.Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting: Lisa Cayard reported that the 200th Sessions of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting were held completely online due to the coronavirus pandemic. The theme was "Embracing our Call to Faith; Envisioning our Future." The last section of the revised Faith and Practice, on the Monthly Meeting, was approved, concluding over 20 years of work on this revision! A minute on racial injustice was approved by the Yearly Meeting. There was a lot of work involved in planning the online sessions. Eric Wolff, who served as registrar, noted that attendance was similar to past years. The report was accepted.

24.Friends Committee on Legislation: They are getting ready to set priorities for the coming year. The lobbying group has been very active.

25.Review of minutes: Due to the late hour, it was agreed to send the minutes out by email for corrections and approval.

26.Closing: The meeting closed with silent worship.

On the first four chapters of Augustine's Confessions

The song addressed God full of praise and love
in wonder at the singer's humble state,
drawn with all earth to quiet oneness
with that same God who was the song.

Filled with the spirit of God-the-Song,
the singer continued with faithful doubt
chanting his asks of fearful hope
back and forth as did David's psalms.

Astonished by wonders the song had shown,
in the resonant words that seemed not his own,
the singer was by the song that he sang
stirred by paradox to a crescendo dumbfounding.

He burst into praise for the God that he loved
Just yet merciful, hidden yet near,
Steadfast but elusive, jealous but secure
owing nothing, but forgiving all debts.

Timothy Leonard (2020)

AWARD WINNER

Eugenia Mills, former member of Community Friends Meeting now living in Richmond, IN, was recently awarded first prize for her photo entry in the spring Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge photography contest. Eugenia has been photographing nature for several years now, capturing the beauty, antics, and mystery of our friends in nature. "When I look through that lens, I see God." We congratulate Eugenia and thank her for her ministry, helping to open us to the wonder of the Divine.



Reported by Peggy Spohr

Welcome to the new Community Friends Meeting Library website!



Contemporary and classic Quaker works, Pendle Hill Pamphlets, and links to on-line Quaker resources are among the items posted. A method for requesting materials to reserve and pick-up is also included. Enjoy this new blessing for our community.

Reported by Peggy Spohr

The American Friends Service Committee

The American Friends Service Committee is a world-wide practical expression of the Quaker belief in that of God in every person. The organization was founded in 1917 to provide a means for young Friends and other conscientious objectors to provide services in support of the view that to kill a person was to kill some portion of God and to serve the belief that love among and for others could remove the occasion for war.

During that time – the First World War – AFSC volunteers drove ambulances, ministered to the wounded, and stayed on in Europe after the armistice to rebuild war-ravaged communities and provided service opportunities in support of refugees and orphans around the world.

Since that time the organization has continued to evolve into a worldwide Quaker organization that promotes lasting peace with justice. Drawing on continuing spiritual insights and working with people of many backgrounds, the AFSC nurtures the seeds of change and respect for human life that transform social relations and systems towards a just, peaceful, and sustainable world free of violence, inequality, and oppression. Its success in these efforts led the AFSC along with British Friends, to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947.

Some specific activities have included:

- Helping distressed Appalachian mining communities find alternative means to make a living.
- After World War II, sending aid teams to India, China, and Japan
- Giving aid to civilians on both sides of the Vietnam War and providing draft counseling to thousands of young men
- Sponsoring conferences for young diplomats in emerging African democracies
- Establishing economic development programs in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
- Providing extensive support to the modern U.S. civil rights movement and public school desegregation

- Working with numerous communities such as Native Americans, immigrants, migrant workers, prisoners, and low-income families on education and justice issues
- Building peaceful communities all over the world

The Board of the AFSC recently approved a set of central values that the organization seeks to adhere to:

- We respect the equality, worth, and dignity of all people and regard no one as our enemy.
- We seek right relationship with all life on a sustainable Earth.
- We accept that our understanding of truth is incomplete and seek ever deeper insights from lived experience.
- We trust the Spirit to guide discernment of our collective actions.
- We assert the transforming power of love and active nonviolence as a force for justice and reconciliation.

It is active today in the United States (23 states), in Africa (5 countries), in Asia (5 countries), in Latin America (3 countries), and in the Middle East (2 countries).

Reported by Tom Bennett



American Friends Service Committee Workers at Scott's Run, W. Va.

Tender Mercies

Community Friends Meeting has been providing a dinner on the second Thursday of the month for a decade and half. The list of Friends involved in this ministry are too numerous to mention individually. For the past several years David and Lynn Funck along with Susan Gerke have led the group. We have taken pride in providing home made nutritious meals.



Hannah Branson, David Funck, Lynn Funck, Doug Burks, and Carol Burks in front of Tender Mercies.

With the Covid-19 pandemic we have not been able to serve meals with the clients we have built-up long-term relationships with. This has not stopped us as we prepare meals that the staff serve up for us. We provide carry out containers so the residents can take the food to their rooms.

This July we provided a fried chicken picnic that included beans, Cole-slaw, and other great foods. Each month we build a meal around a theme.

The administrative staff were amazed with all we brought and said that during this time they couldn't believe how loyal we have been.

History of Tender Mercies

Tender Mercies states its mission as providing housing and supportive services for homeless adults with histories of severe mental illness. Our permanent supportive housing model addresses the root causes of homelessness, thereby preventing a return to the streets for our region's most vulnerable persons.

In 1985 when psychiatric beds in Hamilton County were reduced from 4,000 to 400, Father Chris Hall, Reverend Randy La Fond and Reverend Edward Slater, started Tender Mercies by reaching out two women without anything but cab fare to a shelter. They secured an apartment for them, applied for their Social Security benefits, and helped them get medical treatment and from this small start began a ministry that grew. Over the past 35 years, Tender Mercies has saved the lives of over 2,500 homeless adults with mental illness from a life of barely surviving on the streets. Today nearly 200 homeless men and women with mental illness rebuild their lives in their home at Tender Mercies.

The core of Tender Mercies' mission is their permanent housing program. They provide permanent housing (it is not time limited like a shelter) and support services in 6 buildings in the Over-the-Rhine and West End community of Cincinnati with 24/7 staffing. Along with housing, Tender Mercy provides services including: Wellness & Recovery, Social & Recreational Experiences, GED & Vocational Support, Counseling & Workshops and Aftercare. The goal of the program is to help the residents improve their quality of life and regain their independence with safe, private housing and support services that fosters them security in an environment where personal safety is a priority; dignity for the resident in an environment that fosters them to develop personal, social and economic strength and a community for the resident that ensures a regular, predictable environment with a sense of belonging, family, and affirmation of individuals.

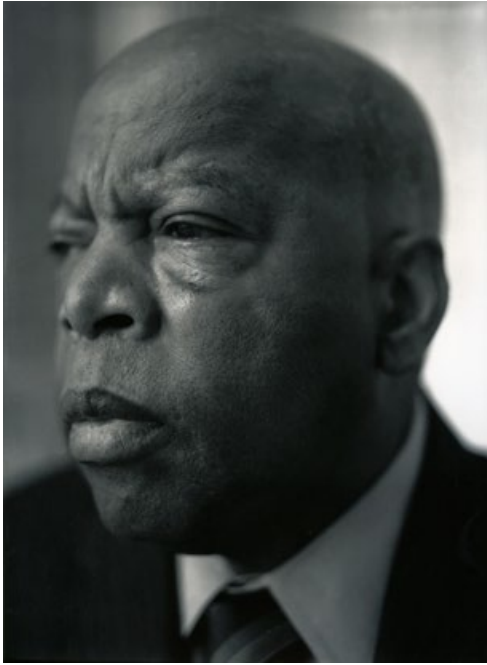
A Review of the Hate U Give

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas is a book for our times. It was written for a young adult audience and was used by many colleges this past year as a first-year student orientation discussion book. It is a story of a teenage African American woman, Starr Carter, who lives in two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered for her when she witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood boy-friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. The reader sees the impact of the resulting protests and riots that result from the fatal shooting. More importantly the reader feels for Starr as she searches to understand and respond to the events swirling around her.

The book deals with the complex issues of racism and racial identity in our culture. One does not walk away from this read with any easy answers. The title alludes to the central point of the book. Khalil says to Starr explaining the meaning of a rap song. He says "*Listen! The Hate U – the letter U – Give Little Infants Fucks Everybody. T-H-U-G L-I-F-E. Meaning what society gives us as youth, it bites them in the ass when we wild out. Get it.*"

This book is not for the faint hearted. It speaks a hard truth in direct terms while still being hopeful. It reflects both the good and evil that exist in our society. It is a must read for those trying to understand how racism touches all aspects of society.





New York Times. July 30, 2020

By John Lewis

Mr. Lewis, the civil rights leader who died on July 17, wrote this essay shortly before his death, to be published upon the day of his [funeral](#).

While my time here has now come to an end, I want you to know that in the last days and hours of my life you inspired me. You filled me with hope about the next chapter of the great American story when you used your power to make a difference in our society. Millions of people motivated simply by human compassion laid down the burdens of division. Around the country and the world you set aside race, class, age, language and nationality to demand respect for human dignity.

That is why I had to visit Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, though I was admitted to the hospital the following day. I just had to see and feel it for myself that, after many years of silent witness, the truth is still marching on.

Emmett Till was my George Floyd. He was my Rayshard Brooks, Sandra Bland and Breonna Taylor. He was 14 when he was killed, and I was only 15 years old at the time. I will never ever forget the moment when it became so clear that he could easily have been me. In those days, fear constrained us like an imaginary prison, and troubling thoughts of potential brutality committed for no understandable reason were the bars.

Though I was surrounded by two loving parents, plenty of brothers, sisters and cousins, their love could not protect me from the unholy oppression waiting just outside that family circle. Unchecked, unrestrained violence and government-sanctioned terror had the power to turn a simple stroll to the store for some Skittles or an innocent morning jog down a lonesome country road into a nightmare. If we are to survive as one unified nation, we must discover what so readily takes root in our hearts that could rob Mother Emanuel Church in South Carolina of her brightest and best, shoot unwitting concertgoers in Las Vegas and choke to death the hopes and dreams of a gifted violinist like Elijah McClain.

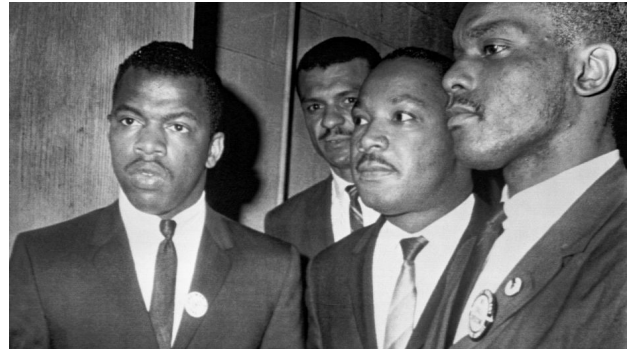
Like so many young people today, I was searching for a way out, or some might say a way in, and then I heard the voice of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on an old radio. He was talking about the philosophy and discipline of nonviolence. He said we are all complicit when we tolerate injustice. He said it is not enough to say it will get better by and by. He said each of us has a moral obligation to stand up, speak up and speak out. When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something. Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we called the Beloved Community, a nation and world society at peace with itself.

Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble. Voting and participating in the democratic process are key. The vote is the most powerful nonviolent change agent you have in a democratic society. You must use it because it is not guaranteed. You can lose it.

You must also study and learn the lessons of history because humanity has been involved in this soul-wrenching, existential struggle for a very long time. People on every continent have stood in your shoes, through decades and centuries before you. The truth does not change, and that is why the answers worked out long ago can help you find solutions to the challenges of our time. Continue to build union between movements stretching across the globe because we must put away our willingness to profit from the exploitation of others.

Though I may not be here with you, I urge you to answer the highest calling of your heart and stand up for what you truly believe. In my life I have done all I can to demonstrate that the way of peace, the way of love and nonviolence is the more excellent way. Now it is your turn to let freedom ring.

When historians pick up their pens to write the story of the 21st century, let them say that it was your generation who laid down the heavy burdens of hate at last and that peace finally triumphed over violence, aggression and war. So I say to you, walk with the wind, brothers and sisters, and let the spirit of peace and the power of everlasting love be your guide.



Publication Information

The Community Companion is a monthly publication of Community Friends Meeting of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Materials for the publication are due by the Wednesday of the last week of the Month. Materials received after that date will be published in two months if appropriate. Announcements, events, articles about CFM members, committees and concerns of Friends are invited and welcomed. The Community Companion is not possible without your submissions.

Publication every first day of the Month.

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