

# Community Companion

Quaker House:  
3960 Winding Way, Cincinnati, OH 45229-1950  
(513) 861-4353  
[www.communityfriendsmeeting.org](http://www.communityfriendsmeeting.org)



Volume 19, Issue 2      February, 2013

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Frank Huss

## Assistant Clerk:

Kate Anthony

## Recording Clerk:

Paul Buckley

## Treasurer:

Mary Anne Curtiss

## Ministry and Counsel:

Eileen Bagus

Erin Bagus (SA)

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Submissions for the March newsletter due by:  
Monday, February 25, 2013 to Jean Crocker-Lakness

## Calendar

All events and meetings take place at the Meeting House unless otherwise noted.

**Singing 9:45 am, Meeting for Worship 10 am  
Second Hour or Carry in Potluck @ 11:40 am**

- Feb. 3      Carry in Meal after Meeting for Worship: FUN Committee appreciates and encourages locally grown food when possible.
- Feb. 10      Second hour: Meeting for worship with attention to business
- Feb. 12      "Is Peace Possible in the Holy Land-And Why Does It Matter to Me?" Wilmington College, p.5
- Feb. 14      Tender Mercies, see pages 8-9
- Feb. 16-18      Help Increase the Peace Training for Youth ages 12-18, see page 4
- Feb. 17      Second Hour: Meaning of Membership presented by Ministry and Counsel
- Feb. 17      Miami Quarter Meeting in Louisville, KY
- Feb. 24      Second Hour: *How the Meeting Community supports those who are aging*, presented by the ad hoc Spiritual Aging Committee see page 4
- Feb. 28      Thurs. 7:00-8:30 A Course in Quakerism: *Peculiarities & Testimonies* presented by Paul Buckley and held at Cincinnati Friends Meeting. See page 7

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## Second Query from OVYM Book of Discipline, 1978: Prayer; Divine Relationship

Do you so order your life as to include reading, meditation and communion, that you may know more of the presence and guidance of the Divine Spirit? Do you remember the need to pray for others, holding them in the presence of God?

## Summary of Minutes from the Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business 01/13/2013

[Note: These minutes have had personal names removed. The official version is in the files at the meetinghouse.]

Twenty Friends were present

1. Ministry & Counsel Committee has asked that the meeting consider recording a member as a minister.
  - Concern was raised that this person is no longer a resident member of Community Friends.
  - To be a recorded minister requires that the person be rooted in a supportive community.
  - It was asked if she considers this to be her primary community or Clear Creek Friends in Richmond, where she worships.
  - It had been stated that recording was required for an individual to participate in the Friends General Conference Traveling Ministries Program. This is not the case. All that FGC requires is that the individual have the support of his or her home community. A traveling minute would be sufficient for this purpose.
  - Although there was a strong sense that we are grateful for her work among Friends and wish to support her, we are not clear about the recording process. We want to be sure that we can find the best way to express our love and care for her within our tradition that all Friends are ministers.
  - Has there been a clearness committee? Is an ongoing support group needed?
  - What are our mutual responsibilities if we record her?
  - We are not prepared to approve recording this member at this time and refer the question back to M&C for further consideration.
2. Ministry & Counsel Committee reported that two individuals have asked to have their membership removed from our rolls.
  - One request was approved.
  - It was noted that this would also terminate the other member's recording as a minister, which may not be her intention. M&C will contact her to clarify this. In the meantime, the request for her removal will be laid over.
  - She was originally recorded to satisfy a job requirement. As part of their deliberations on the meaning of recording, M&C was asked to consider the ongoing recording of an individual who is no longer in regular attendance and what our responsibility is when a recorded minister resigns his or her membership.
  - This also raises more general questions about the meaning of being members of a religious community.
3. Changes to the 2013 meeting budget.
  - The treasurer reported that our insurance premiums in 2013 will be about \$160 more than was previously reported. This change was approved.
4. Treasurer's Report
  - At the end of 2012, we had a bank balance to annual budget ratio of 15% - well above the target of 10%. This translates into a surplus of \$1540. Traditionally, end-of-year surpluses have been transferred to the Building Reserve Fund, although this practice has not been invariably followed.
  - The treasurer also presented a summary of expenditures on the meetinghouse. We have spent over \$108,000 over the past seven years and can expect significant costs in the future. To help prepare for these, the treasurer suggested that \$1540 be transferred to the Building Reserve Fund. Approved.
  - It was noted that the utility expenses for the past year were remarkably low. Appreciation was expressed to the caretakers for this achievement.
  - The Treasurer's Report was accepted.

## Summary of Minutes from the Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business 01/13/2013, continued

5. The Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Middle Youth Program Committee has asked that meetings consider several issues before the February Executive Committee Meeting.
  - Over the past several years, it has been suggested several times that the yearly meeting hire a staff person to serve the middle youth. It is estimated that this would add \$10-13 to the per person annual proportional share of the OVYM budget.
  - It was noted that there are 6-9 children in our meeting who are likely to participate in this program in the next several years.
  - Given their very different needs, having separate teen and pre-teen programs is considered important.
  - Friends are willing to invest more in our youth.
6. A series of queries regarding the Teen Program were considered.
  - In response, frustration was expressed related to communications with the OVYM Teen Secretary. The Teen Program co-clerks have not effectively addressed these problems.
  - Improved communications and additional accountability are needed.
  - Monthly Meeting / Yearly Meeting communications also need to be improved.
7. There has been some interest expressed in having more intergenerational activities at the OVYM annual sessions.
  - The OVYM Planning Committee feels that added opportunities have been built into the 2013 program.
  - It was not clear if this concern was raised by the youth or the adults.
  - Why should the youth want to do the activities we plan? The usual practice of the teens is to sleep little and eat poorly during the annual sessions. This may conflict with the goal of intergenerational activities.
  - Do we have responsibilities to the teens to have activities that they might not choose to engage in?
  - Increased involvement of the youth in the planning process is essential for successful intergenerational activities, but finding ways to include them – having them present and feeling free to play an active role in the planning committee – may be difficult.
  - Giving sage advice from a distance is easy, but we may seem judgmental and critical when we do so. Our personal involvement is also needed.
8. Committee Reports
  - House and Grounds Committee
    - o A meeting is being scheduled with our insurance agent to clarify our coverage.
    - o Members who need keys to the meetinghouse should contact John Sniegocki.
  - Community Committee
    - o The Christmas caroling on December 20 was a great success.
    - o The committee continues to set up food and clear up after meeting thanks to the active participation of our members and attenders.
  - Ministry & Counsel Committee
    - o A marriage clearness committee has been named for a member.
  - Caretakers Liaison Committee
    - o The committee met with the caretakers. No issues arose.
9. The OVYM Planning Committee met on Saturday. Plans for this summer's sessions are going well.
10. Committee clerks are reminded to send their annual reports to M&C for incorporation in the meeting state of society report by the end of January.
11. The business meeting closed with a period of worship.

**Ad Hoc Committee on Aging**

"I am convinced it is a great art to know how to grow old gracefully, and I am determined to practice it"

Hannah Whitall Smith

The committee consists of Deborah Jordan, Sarah Hoffmann, Eugenia Mills, and Jean Crocker-Lakness. They will be presenting the second hour on February 24 on the Meeting's role in supporting our older members.

Sunny Rhein as M&C rep and co-clerk of Pastoral care will be helping with this Second Hour.

- How do we as a Meeting support that of God in each other when faced with emotional and physical challenges as we age?
- What is the Meeting's role in supporting elders and caregivers?
- What are the responsibilities of caregivers and elders?
- How do we as caregivers find strength in our testimonies and values as we attend to needs of family and friends?
- How might attending to another's needs or accepting help from others, offer opportunities for spiritual growth?

**SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 20**

We are applying for a grant from the Friends Foundation for the Aging for the printing of resource packets, books for the library, and an evening light dinner program on March 20 where Leanne Montgomery, a Quaker attorney specializing in elder law will present information on practical and legal issues.

**Help Increase the Peace (HIP) training for young people ages 12-18 in Cincinnati**

Lunch and training manual included *Registration is \$5.00-\$75.00 on a sliding scale basis. Please pay what you can afford.* Saturday, Sunday & Monday February 16-18, 2013, 9am– 4pm (each day)

From: Mary Kay Rehard, HIP Workshop Coordinator

The Peace Training is scheduled for February 16-18, 2013 (over the Presidents' Day holiday weekend). The training will follow American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) Help Increase the Peace (HIP) program, and the lead facilitator will be James "JT" Taylor, A Quaker from Indianapolis IN.

The goal is to have about 15 youth from the peace church congregations join together with about 15 youth from the Avondale Youth Council. ***This first HIP workshop will produce some teens capable of serving as facilitators themselves***, in future workshops around Cincinnati.

This is 3-day training, on February 16-18, 2013, held from 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. all three days. In the workshop, your teen will gain skills in peacemaking, including communication and self-expression, creative problem-solving and conflict resolution, team-building, and leadership skills.

There are several ways that individuals can volunteer to help:

§ Provide food or beverages: to save money, we will be collecting donations for snacks and beverages for 30 participants, 3 facilitators, and up to 6 adult volunteers per day. Mary Ann Kokegne is coordinating the snacks and meals. Mary Kay can put you in touch with her if you'd like to help, or you can contact her directly by email: makids3@fuse.net

§ Adult Volunteers: we will need extra hands during the workshop to help with activities and to prepare, serve and clean-up for snacks and lunches all three days. You can volunteer for a morning or afternoon shift. Register online as an Adult Volunteer and indicate your availability! <http://hiptrainingcincinnati.eventbrite.com>

§ Help recruit youth: we hope to have 15 Youth Participants from the peace church congregations, paired with 15 youth from the Avondale Youth Council (at-risk youth in a neighborhood with significant urban violence). Talk to families with kids who are ages 12-18 in your congregation, put us in touch with your youth leader, and help us get them registered. You can download registration forms from the Peace Church blog, or register online at: <http://hiptrainingcincinnati.eventbrite.com>

§ Publicity—spread the word: Tell youth about it! They will gain leadership skills, they will be prepared to train others, and they will receive a certificate and facilitator's manual. This is a great service to the community (18-24 hours of workshop time, if they have required service hours at school), and will help build college applications. We hope to replicate this training in more communities around Cincinnati in coming years. The youth who are trained to be facilitators will have a chance to train others.

Contact Mary Kay Rehard, if you are interested in helping out with the youth peace training!

Email: [mary.k.rehard@gmail.com](mailto:mary.k.rehard@gmail.com) Tel. 513.376.7768

**THANKS FROM THE WOOD FAMILY**

Nick Wood, son of Barbara and Horatio Wood, and all the members of the Wood family would like to express their sincere thanks to all the members of the Meeting who provided assistance and loving support to them during Barbara's last illness and in the planning and carrying out of her memorial service. It was a beautiful and memorable event. Thanks to everyone who continues to express concern and makes themselves available to Rachel and Livi as they experience major transitions in their young lives. Finally, gratitude to those helping Nick empty the large house in Clifton which Barbara and Woody called home for more than fifty years.

At the time of Barbara's passing, many members of Meeting asked if there was anything they could do to be helpful to the family. Although they expressed few needs then, now it would be very helpful if Friends felt moved to provide a casserole or other food at lunch time for Nick and about five other workers, some of whom are vegetarians, who have been working hard all day almost every day to get the house ready for sale. If you would like to offer assistance, please call Eileen Bagus, who is keeping track of lunch dates, at [513-891-8780](tel:513-891-8780).

**“Is Peace Possible in the Holy Land—and Why Does It Matter to Me?”**

An Invitation from Michael Snarr, Wilmington College, professor of social and political studies who regularly teaches Introduction to Global Issues, Global Politics, Case Studies on Nonviolence and the newly developed Global Politics of Food course.

Wilmington College recently applied and received a small grant from the United Institute of Peace (USIP) aimed at helping people in this area become more aware of our capacity to positively impact the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Thanks to that grant and the support of Wilmington College, I am pleased to invite you to a talk by Bart Campolo and Jamal Shehade on February 12 at 7:30 in the McCoy Room (Kelly Center).

Bart is the National Outreach Director of the Telos Group, whose mission is to strengthen the capacity of American faith communities—and especially American evangelicals—to help positively transform the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Jamal Shehade is an Arab Christian (Palestinian) Israeli citizen whose family has run the House of Grace for ex-prisoners in Haifa for many years. Together, they will lead us in a discussion on the topic: “Is Peace Possible in the Holy Land—And Why Does It Matter to Me?” This is an opportunity for members of our local community to hear about the realities of life on the ground in Israel and Palestine, and to learn how we Americans can be pro-Israeli, pro-Palestinian, and pro-peace all at the same time.

**Quaker Jail Ministry Worship Group**, submitted by Eileen Bagus

Cookies for Jail Ministry, Other Meeting Prisoner Assistance

In December members of Meeting were asked to support the work of Transforming Jail Ministries, the ecumenical organization to which our Quaker Jail Ministry Worship Group belongs, by baking cookies for people incarcerated in Hamilton County and their jailers. The response was overwhelming! Forty-six dozen cookies were donated and distributed in jails by Christmas Eve. The Team is grateful to the Meeting for this broad-based help.

Since last July Lynn Funck and her family have been providing all-day Monday through Friday child care for an infant girl who was born while her Mother was incarcerated in the Cincinnati Justice Center. Lynn and Eileen Bagus have taken the baby to visit her Mother monthly since then both to the Ohio Reformatory for Women at Marysville and now to the Dayton Correctional Institution, to which she has been transferred. Lynn has become a great support for the baby's Grandmother, who is her temporary guardian, and she plans to mentor the young Mother when she is released in mid-2013. Eileen has carried on a letter-writing and telephone ministry with the Mother, who wants to visit our Meeting upon her release.

The Prison Ministry Fund also received an anonymous donation of about \$3,000 in December. Ministry and Counsel Committee, which is charged with approving dispersals from the fund, has just approved the first use of some of this money-- a \$200 contribution toward the Help Increase the Peace (HIP) workshop in February. This is the youth version of the Quaker Alternatives to Violence Program, which Mary Kay Rehard is coordinating in an effort to bring together 30 teens, half from the Cincinnati Peace Churches and half from a youth club in Avondale. The young people will be trained to become HIP facilitators themselves so that they can teach HIP principles to other teens.

## Memorial Minute for Leonora Cayard (Lisa's mother)

Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting, January 13, 2013



Leonora Balla Cayard was born on September 15, 1924, in Muenster, Germany, and grew up in Marburg, Germany. She was the daughter of Emil Balla, a professor of Hebrew Language and Old Testament Literature at Marburg University, and his wife Gertrud, nee Hecht. Leonora was 8 years old when Hitler came to power and 14 when World War II started in Germany. Her parents were known to be opponents of the Nazi regime, and her mother's father was of Jewish descent. These facts could have caused the family to be sent to a Nazi concentration camp, and only the hand of God and a friendly administrator at the university protected them.

During the war years, Marburg was the occasional target of Allied bombing raids, and the family took refuge in an air-raid shelter they had built under their home. Neighbors joined them there, among them a family with three little boys who screamed frantically when they were carried through the night to this shelter. Seeing the suffering that war brought to these innocent children, Leonora promised herself that she would devote her life to working for peace so that children would not have to suffer war any more.

Leonora studied foreign languages at Marburg University, but her main interest was studying music and playing the violin, which enabled her to join the Marburg Symphony Orchestra. In 1949, she had the opportunity to study in the United States on a fellowship at Yale University, combining her interest in languages with her passion for music. Her determination to work for peace brought her in contact with the New Haven Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), where she found a religious home. After a year of study at Yale, she accepted an appointment as instructor in German at Howard University in Washington, D.C., where she also learned as much as possible about our democratic form of government. Before returning to Germany, she participated in a six-week Peace Training Workshop sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, one of the oldest religious peace organizations in this country, learning theories and practices of working for peace. One of the participants in this workshop was Wallace Cayard from Texas, who had also become a Quaker a year earlier. Their common faith and values brought the two together, and at the end of the six weeks they were engaged. The couple was married in Germany in 1952. After their return to the States, Leonora became a German language teacher and continued her musical activities while her husband was in graduate school. In the summer of 1956 they moved to West Liberty, West Virginia, where Wallace had accepted a teaching position. Leonora was busy at home with four small children born within five years.



## Memorial Minute for Leonora Cayard, continued

In 1959, the family moved to Wheeling, WV. Leonora and her family became members of Pittsburgh Friends Meeting where she was an active and dearly loved member of the Quaker community. Leonora's gentle and steady presence was felt, as she served the Meeting community in many ways, sharing her gifts with our Meeting children in First Day School, and in her service to many committees. Leonora established archival procedures for both Pittsburgh Friends Meeting and Lake Erie Yearly Meeting for the records and yearbooks archived at Swarthmore College's Friends Historical Library.

When the children began school, Leonora returned to teaching German, first part-time at West Liberty University, then full-time at Bethany College. She developed the foreign language department at Bethany and soon became its head, and also continued to play violin in the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra.

Leonora continued teaching until her retirement in 1986. After retirement, Leonora and Wallace spent most of their time working for peace. In 1989, they decided to move to Sherwood Oaks, a retirement community north of Pittsburgh, where Leonora was able to continue enjoying her passion for performing and teaching music.

Leonora passed away on December 14, 2012. Her husband, Wallace Cayard, predeceased her. She is survived by four children: Lisa Cayard (and husband Mark Roberts,) Steve Cayard (and wife Angela DeRosa,) Cathy Habschmidt (and husband Larry,) and Susan Cayard, as well as by six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. She also leaves two nieces in Germany, Cornelia Balla and Ursula Balla. Leonora leaves a remarkable legacy of devoted love for her family and dedication to making the world a more peaceful place for all children.

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**QUAKERISM: A Course with Paul Buckley ONLY 2 CLASSES LEFT!**

Cincinnati Friends Meeting is pleased to offer to all Friends in Cincinnati and to anyone interested in finding out more about Friends a course with Paul Buckley.

Paul Buckley of Community Friends Meeting is a Quaker author and Adjunct Instructor in Quaker Studies at Earlham School of Religion. He is well-known among Friends for his book *21<sup>st</sup> Century Penn* and his works on Elias Hicks. This course will meet Thursday evenings (7:00-8:30). Each session contains "stand-alone" material, so if you miss a session or two, you can still attend at any time. Requested donation: \$5 per session or \$45 if pre-paid. (Scholarships available.) If you have questions, please contact Donne Hayden 513-207-5353 or cfmpublicfriend@gmail.com

**February 28: Peculiarities & Testimonies (Note date change- there is no class on Feb. 14)**

- a) What are the Quaker Testimonies? (peace, simplicity, integrity, community, equality, environment, ???)
- a) Where did they come from? How were they formulated?
- b) Are they unique to Friends?
- c) What is the difference between a testimony and a personal belief or spiritual practice?
- d) Can Quaker religious beliefs and social concerns be separated?
- e) *How have the testimonies been "a cross to your conscience"? Should all Friends obey the Testimonies?*
- f) *How would we know if there was a new testimony? Is there something you think might be one?*

**March 14: Other Issues & Diversity among Friends**

- a) In what ways do issues of Christianity, doctrine, method of worship, women's roles, sexuality, etc. vary among the different branches of Friends?
  - b) On what significant issues do all Friends agree?
  - c) Is there a common core – some set of shared characteristics, beliefs, or values – that unites the branches of the Religious Society of Friends?
  - d) *Do these things matter to you? Do you think it makes any difference in the grand scheme of things?*
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People around the Meeting**Carol and Doug Burks**

Carol and Doug began attending Community Friends Meeting in 1995. Doug joined in 2000. Carol is not a member. She says "I don't join things" Carol and Doug both went to Earlham College where they met. Doug Teaches biology at Wilmington College where he has taught for 31 years.



He is very active in the Friends Association for Higher Education. He likes Community Friends meeting because we are very open, and accepting of people.

Carol likes "all the characters in the meeting". She includes herself in the definition of "Characters". She has been a member of the community committee, peace and social concerns committee, and House and Grounds committee. She is currently the insurance consultant for the meeting. She states that she is one of the few in the Meeting who work in corporate America. She is employed by the Great American Insurance Co. where she is an underwriter for farms in Florida. She enjoys Tender Mercies and the Free Store activities. Doug is currently substituting for Byron on Ministry and Council.



***Mission Statement:*** Tender Mercies transforms the lives of homeless adults with mental illness by providing security, dignity, and community in a place they call home.

***Tender Mercies*** is a vibrant community that. . .

- Maintains affordable permanent and transitional housing which promotes residents' comfort and makes a positive contribution to the neighborhood
- Provides support to residents allowing them to live independently as an integral part of their community
- Is financially secure and professionally managed
- Is a model of mutual respect and dignity in which individuals hold each other accountable for their actions and behaviors

Since 1985, Tender Mercies has been providing housing for homeless people with chronic mental illness. Three clergymen created the organization after two women with a history of mental illness became victims of a violent crime.

The women had spent years in various mental hospitals and ultimately ended up living on Cincinnati's streets. The clergymen found the women a place to live on Race Street but someone broke into the building, assaulting both women and murdering one. It was painfully clear something had to be done. That something... was Tender Mercies.



## Tender Mercies, continued

The members and Friends of Community Friends Meeting volunteer monthly at Supper for the Tender Mercies Meal Program

Because all of their buildings are single room apartment settings, city ordinances prohibit cooking in one's room. Residents have small chest refrigerators and there are microwave ovens in the lobby areas of the buildings but no large cooking facilities. To compound the need, many residents come to Tender Mercies with no income and all have limited resources. The end of the month can get pretty tight. Tender Mercies has a goal that residents are provided with at least one HOT meal a day.

In answer to this need, groups of volunteers have responded in a dramatic way. Since its founding, groups of volunteers have provided Tender Mercies' residents with tasty, nutritious meals prepared off site and "catered" in. How does it work? A group volunteers to serve a meal in one of the Tender Mercies buildings. This can be breakfast, lunch or dinner. Meals can be served to a large group (40 to 50) or in one of the smaller buildings (9 to 16). The volunteer group prepares the meal and provides all the items required to serve it (paper plates, cups, napkins etc.). The group arrives at mealtime and sets up a buffet line in the lobby of the building. Residents are served and take their meal at the tables in the common area. During the mealtime, residents and volunteers chat and get to know each other better. It's a wonderful opportunity to build community spirit. For more information or to volunteer, contact Lynn or David Funck.

## The Children of the Meeting Sing with Paulette Meier



The children: Cecilia Branson, Toby Dean, John David Sniegocki , Reid Pfaltzgraff-Carlson, Charlotte Dean, Josie and Dahlia Mays, and Bing Pfaltzgraff-Carlson ( Elana Branson is sitting with her mother in front of the window) sang an original song about William Penn written by Paulette this past Sunday, January 27

## From Friends General Conference

To Friends Everywhere:

One hundred and thirty Friends from twenty yearly meetings gathered October 17-21 in Reisterstown, Maryland for the 2012 meeting of the Friends General Conference Central Committee. We were hosted by Pearlstone, a Jewish retreat center and teaching farm that joyfully welcomes people of all faiths. We rejoiced in the opportunity to experience here some of the diversity we are longing to grow into as the Religious Society of Friends.

This is an exciting time in the life of Friends General Conference. Originally, FGC had planned to reduce programming and staffing in some areas once our campaign was complete and the special money raised for those programs was spent. Generous Friends, however, are stepping forward with new gifts to support our work (thank you). As a result, we have approved a three-year financial plan that has more modest reductions in some areas, supports high-quality on-going work, and has money for exciting new initiatives. Our Stewardship Services program is breaking new ground, engaging Friends in thinking more deeply about the ministry of money, and planting seeds for the future. Our lively new interactive website ([www.fgcquaker.org](http://www.fgcquaker.org)) is attracting more visitors than ever. Our bookstore, Quakerbooks of FGC, has exceeded sales expectations and cut costs this past year, and hopes to continue to serve Friends and Friends meetings for many years to come.

Our ongoing program work continues. The Quaker Quest program, enormously successful over the past five years, continues to help meetings engage in outreach and spiritual exploration. Our new “Quaker Cloud” will soon be providing local meetings with a toolkit for managing their websites, minutes, directories, and other online resources. We continue to grow in affiliations as well. This weekend we were delighted to welcome Starkville (MS) Friends Meeting as a new directly affiliated monthly meeting within FGC.

The 2013 Friends General Conference Gathering, to be held in Greeley, Colorado, June 30 to July 6, promises to be a Spirit-filled week of worship, fellowship, learning and fun. We hope many of you will join us! The diversity training exercises we engaged in as a group this weekend challenged and stretched us, and deepened our yearning for our meetings to become more inclusive and affirming of everyone. We encourage meetings and yearly meetings everywhere to join us in this work.

One of the highlights of this weekend was an opportunity to hear from the coordinator of our New Meetings project, Brent Bill, who joined the FGC staff in mid-September. Financed by a two-year grant from the Shoemaker Foundation, the New Meetings project will support the formation of new Quaker meetings and worship groups in areas where none now exist. We will be working closely with yearly meetings in designing and implementing the project, and we are looking forward to a consultation of yearly meeting clerks and general secretaries, January 18-19 at Pendle Hill, where they will come together to share their resources, ideas and dreams.

During our sessions here we united with a new vision statement for Friends General Conference:

**We envision a vital and growing Religious Society of Friends—a faith that deepens spiritually, welcomes newcomers, builds supportive and inclusive community, and provides loving service and witness in the world.**

**Through Friends General Conference, we see Quakers led by the Spirit joining together in ministry to offer services that help Friends, meetings, and seekers explore, deepen, connect, serve and witness within the context of our living faith.**

We feel blessed by our time together. Our business and committee meetings, grounded in Spirit, have felt almost like three days of uninterrupted worship. This weekend we have been called to step together into the stream of living water. We do not know what work may lie ahead, but we trust the stream to carry us and pray that we may be faithful.

In the Spirit, Sue Regen, Presiding Clerk

Barry Crossno, General Secretary