

Community Companion

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Eric Wolff,
OVYM
registrar
busy at
work
welcoming
us to yearly
meeting

Volume 19, Issue 9 September, 2013

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Submissions for the October newsletter due by: Monday, September 23, 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

Singing before Meeting for Worship at 9:45 for those who love to sing their favorites.

Sept. 1	Carry In. Friends in Unity with Nature (the FUN Committee) appreciates and encourages locally grown food when possible for the carry in. Presentations on In reach groups
Sept. 8	Second Hour: Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Sept. 15	Core Beliefs of Early Friends presented by Paulette Meier
Sept. 22	Religious Development will discuss their plans for the upcoming year
Sept. 29	Spiritual Journey presented by Doug Burks, final presentations on In reach groups
October 12-13	Joint Quarterly Meeting at Happy Hollow Camp in Indiana
Oct. 19	Saturday- Fall Renewal see page 5

In This Issue:

Page 2-3	Summary of Minutes from Meeting for Business, 8/11/2013
Page 3	Quaker Mystics
Page 4	Quaker Fest photo memories
Pages 5	Fall Renewal
Pages 5-6	2013/2014 In reach Groups
Page 7-9	Transforming Jail Ministries Worship Team
Page 9-12	OVYM photo memories (my apologies to anyone that I missed, Ed.)

Ninth Query from OVYM Book of Discipline, 1978: General Business Procedure

Do you hold your meetings for business in a spirit of worship? Do you seek the guidance of God, rather than acceptance of a previously formed opinion? Do you help one another in your search for unity by speaking briefly and without repetition? Are you tender and considerate of differing views, coming to a decision on when you have, with Divine assistance, found a sense of Unity?

Summary of Minutes from the Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business 8/11/2013

[Note: These minutes have had most personal names removed at the request of Ministry and Counsel. The official version is in the files at the meetinghouse.]

Present: 15 including Kate Anthony (Presiding Clerk) and Paul Buckley (Recording Clerk)

- The meeting opened with a period of worship during which the clerk read part of an article by Patricia Loring on the unique and worshipful character of Quaker business meetings.
 - The clerk asked for consideration of how we conduct business meeting.
 - She emphasized only speaking once to an item of business and
 - Waiting for the clerk to recognize you before you begin speaking.
 - She suggested that rather than separating out action items, we take them up as they came up during committee reports. Friends **approved**.
- Treasurer's Report
 - Year-to-date, we are about \$4000 behind in contributions
 - Fortunately, expenses are also lower than budgeted
 - Several suggestions were made for improving the monthly treasurer's report
 - Fund balances for each of our funds
 - The ration of reserves to the current budget
 - The report was **accepted**.

Committee Reports

- Ministry & Counsel Committee
 - The committee met and made internal assignments
 - John Sniegocki is recommended for membership. It was noted that John's place of residence is unsettled, but the committee felt it was appropriate to bring the recommendation forward. **Approved**.
 - A Welcoming Committee of Eileen Bagus, Eugenia Mills (convener), Sue Brungs, and Sunny Rhein was named.
 - The annual meeting renewal, planned for October 19, will be led by Cathy Barney.
 - Eugenia Mills is nominated to serve on the Cannon Fund until June 30, 2014. **Approved**.
- Adult Education Committee
 - Six In reach Groups are being planned:
 - Dreams – Rhonda Pfaltzgraff-Carlson
 - Healing – Pam Richards
 - Clearness in your daily life – Doug Burks
 - Eugene Peterson's "The Message" – Tim Leonard
 - Aging – (leader being recruited)
 - What does community mean?/The Joy of Business Meeting – (leader being recruited)
 - There will be presentations on the new In reach Groups on September 1st & 29th with a goal of starting up in October.
 - The committee wants to have a presence at the Victory of Light in November
 - Funding has come from Ministry & Counsel in the past – the request was forwarded to M&C
- Friends in Unity with Nature Committee
 - The committee is considering whether to replace, remove, or repair the composting toilet.
- Library Committee
 - The committee has been reviewing the materials on file in the basement and considering what to keep, send for storage, and shred.
 - They are also trying to get a handle on materials that have been checked out – some for several years.

Summary of Minutes from the Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business 8/11/2013

Committee reports continued

- Transforming Jail Ministry Worship Team
 - The team is worshipping at the jail on the third Sunday of each month. In July, they were in the Justice Center infirmary.
 - A second hour to discuss the meeting's openness and readiness to welcome ex-offenders is being planned. They are also considering a second hour on the extent of connection between the worship team and the meeting.
- Stewardship Committee
 - The committee noted that the \$5000 increase in our funding of the Building Reserve Fund represents a 15% increase the meeting budget. Friends were reminded that we will need to increase contributions to cover this obligation.
- House & Grounds Committee will have a workday on October 5.
- The 2014 Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting annual sessions ended last Sunday. Rhonda Pfaltzgraff-Carlson reported that the sessions were permeated by the Holy Spirit.
 - Community Friends was well represented – about 30 people attended.
 - The yearly meeting is moving ahead with hiring a middle youth staff person.
 - Friends were reminded that the OVYM Executive Committee will meet in our meetinghouse on October 5.
- Joint quarterly meeting will be at Happy Hallow in Indiana on October 12-13.
- The business meeting closed with a period of worship.



Paul Buckley, Recording Clerk

Quaker Mystics, submitted by Rhonda Pfaltzgraff-Carlson

What Canst Thou Say? (WCTS) is a worship-sharing group in print for Quakers with an interest in mystical experience and contemplative practice. The editors of WCTS are pleased to announce the creation of two blogs!

The name of the first blog is What Canst Thou Say? The Blog. The intent of this blog is to share, from the perspective of Friends, a spiritual approach to life. Through our sharing of Friends' stories, we hope to model, teach, and practice listening to God, encourage new and old Friends alike to have a spiritual practice, and to document the transformation that results from our reaching out to the Universe for guidance. Visit this blog at <http://worshipsharinginprint.wordpress.com>.

The second blog, Quaker Mystics: Naming the Spiritual Condition of the World is written by the WCTS editors and gathering organizers. A leading to "name the spiritual condition of the world" came out of the First Annual Gathering of Friendly Mystics and later prompted the creation of this blog. To read about that leading and to learn more about the second gathering, visit <http://quakermystics.wordpress.com>.

Quaker Fest: Sunday August 11th : photos by Eugenia Mills



Making bubbles

Paulette
and
Jamie
singing



Fall Renewal

Community Friends Meeting will have its fall Renewal on Saturday October 19th at the meeting house.

Cathy Barney, a member of Cincinnati Friends Meeting and a graduate of the School of the Spirit has consented to be our facilitator on the topic of discerning our gifts individually and as a meeting. What are our strengths? How do we allow them to discern divine leadings? How do these gifts work together to open up avenues of the Spirit in the larger community?

Cathy is experienced in using a whole-group-small-group-whole-group approach to these renewals, and her grace is no stranger to many of us in Community Friends Meeting.

Here is the schedule:

9:30 Gathering with coffee and light refreshments.

10:00 Worship

11:00 Whole Group session talk, discussion, creative activity

11:30 Small Groups on the work of "naming" our gifts and the gifts of the meeting

12:30 Lunch and Socializing

1:30 Continue the work of the small groups

2:30 Whole group session. Reporting from small groups Begin to name the gifts of the meeting

3:30 Closing and worship

2013-2014 In-reach Groups

During carry-in on Sept. first, each of the leaders will make a brief presentation of their topic. Sign-up sheets indicating interest and availability will be left in the vestibule for Friends beginning with the roll-out the First Sunday of September and will be left available until the end of September, when a final announcement with exact meeting times will be made public.

Group 1: Dream Work as a Spiritual Practice

Leader: Rhonda Pfaltzgraf-Carlson

Suggested times: Wednesday morning, Wednesday evening, or Thursday evening.

Description: Through dream work, a person gains greater access to their interior world, tools for increasing self-understanding, and clues about how to enhance personal and spiritual development. Persons with a sense of curiosity about dreams and openness to inward transformation will find this work rewarding.

My hope is that through learning and sharing about our daily and nightly lives that we will have fun, develop friendships, and deepen our sense of community.

When the group initially comes together, we will discuss our experience with and approaches to dreams and how we will share the tasks of group facilitation. I will provide an outline for our time together and recommend reading and information about dreams with the hope that others will also contribute what they have learned. No previous experience with dream work is required.

We will meet for an hour and a half or two hours biweekly or monthly, depending on the interest of the group.

The group will be closed after the second meeting.

Group 2: Indigenous Healing and the Healer Within

Leader: Pam Richards

Suggested times: daytimes, evenings, or weekends.

Description: This group will study one the books of Dr. Lewis Mehl-Madrona, a psychiatrist and American Indian healer, and the author of Coyote Medicine, Coyote Healing, and Coyote Wisdom who values the work of the Inner Healer, the Spirit and the spiritual support of the community in the healing process. He believes we can all learn from indigenous healers that it is not a broken person we need to heal, but a broken story.

The group will remain open until the end of November

Group 3: Personal Discernment: Finding One's Way in a Complex World

Leader: Douglas J. Burks

Suggested times: Monday, Wednesday, or Thursday evenings; or Saturday morning

Description: In this group, each individual will explore how they discern the appropriate path when faced with the need to make choices. We will also explore how to make yourself open to spirit and to be sensitive to leadings from the spirit. Discernment is an examination. The group will center on knowing oneself and exploring practical methods to live a good life in the spirit. We will explore how avoid being caught up in the rush of our complex daily world and to live a more thoughtful examined life.

Materials will be supplied.

This is an open group. People are welcome come whenever they are able.

Group 4: The Joy of Business Meeting

Leader: Peggy Spohr

Scheduled time: Tuesdays 7-9pm - October 8, November 5, and December 3 in her Clifton home. (Tuesday evenings ahead of Monthly Meeting)

Description: Meeting for Business is one of the main vehicles through which God works in the lives of Friends and builds our community. We will meet to learn from our experiences with the amazing opportunity for discernment and action that Meeting for Business can and has provided us. The facilitator will guide us through a reflection on preparing for and embracing the joy of communal discernment.

Brief reading materials will be provided, and a conversational format will be followed.

Limit of 8.

Group 5: "The Message" by Eugene Peterson

Leader: Tim Leonard

Suggested times: Weekday evenings

Description: Readers often find the Bible to be distant from their lives. "The Message" reduces this distance significantly. This group will take selected passages from "The Message" and work with them using various formats, including worship sharing, centering prayer, "Divine Reading"(also called "lectio divina"), and comparative reading of "The Message" with other translations. The aim here is to deepen friends' engagement with the bible individually and communally.

This group will be open to drop-ins at any time.

Group 6: Living the last third of our lives

Leader: Jean Crocker-Lakness

Suggested times: weekday evenings once a month

Description: We will use the model that we live the first third of our lives for our parents, the second third of life for the world (jobs, children, family) and the last third of life for ourselves. We will discuss what it means to live the last third of our lives for ourselves and how to do this. Selected articles on the topic will be used. We will meet for an hour and a half or two hours monthly, depending on the interest of the group.

The group will be closed after the second meeting.

The Hopes, Challenges and Joys of the Transforming Jail Ministries Worship Team

Submitted by Rhonda Pfaltzgraf-Carlson

In this article, I describe what we, the TJM Worship Team, have experienced and learned over the past year. While I cannot speak for any one person, I hope to provide a general perspective. In particular, I describe the team's view of what it brings to this ministry, how we are nourished by it and our current vision for it. Also, I will highlight the challenges and joy we have experienced. In conclusion, I will briefly describe what seems to be on the horizon. For a more personal perspective, please also read Mary Kay Rehard's reflections on her participation as a member of the worship team.

Our Contribution, Rewards and Vision

This past May, we met to share our perceptions of what we bring to this ministry, how we are nourished by it and our desires for the future. Through a worship sharing format, we found that we bring a deep sense of compassion to our service. We empathize with the inmates, each of us knowing, through personal experience and/or the experience of family members that life can be extremely challenging, with our poorer choices sometimes landing us in jail or prison. We also bring the knowledge that reliance on God helps us to get on our feet again. Therefore, we trust that our presence and the worship services we provide offer caring and hope to incarcerated persons during this most difficult time in their lives.

When we started our participation in this ministry, most of us were uncertain and had some anxiety about entering the Justice Center. That sense of foreboding dissipated quickly. Since that time, all of us have come away touched by our contact with the persons who are incarcerated there. Their trust in us and God creates rich worship that is a blessing to share. In addition, they confirm our need for reliance on God. Their openness with us, especially when testimonies are shared, leaves us with a sense of wonder and gratitude for the mercy and goodness of a loving God.

We don't have a 'grand plan' for our ministry. We plan to continue as we have been, trusting that our presence is meaningful. Specifically, we discerned that providing worship services at the Justice Center is our key focus. We sense the greatest need is there and we wish to offer what we can.

Highlights of Our Challenges and Joys

Challenges

Our primary challenge as a team has been to determine the extent of programming that we feel comfortable with. Much of this challenge is due to the conflict that arises between serving in a jail setting and being Friends whose personal preference is for unprogrammed worship. In a jail setting, incarcerated persons are being held to serve a short amount of time, usually less than six months, or to serve time while awaiting sentencing after which they will be moved to a treatment facility or a prison. Because Transforming Jail Ministries randomly assigns worship teams to the Justice Center cell blocks and the treatment facilities, our team rarely goes to the same location twice in a year. This results in our having a very low chance of being in worship with any one person twice. Given this situation, the unfamiliar nature of unprogrammed worship, and the uncertainty and loneliness associated with being in jail, our team determined early on that we would need to provide an introduction to silent Quaker worship and also have some elements of a more structured service that would be familiar and immediately uplifting to newcomers.

We decided that we would introduce Quakerism and silent worship through a reading written by a team member. We also determined that reading from a spiritual text, such as the Bible, and singing a song would help prepare people for worship. We also felt it would be important to provide a time for sharing concerns and/or joys, as we do in our own Meeting. While everyone on the team has felt that an introduction to Quakerism and unprogrammed worship is necessary, not everyone has been comfortable with a reading and a song. A couple of people left the team over these concerns. While we still include a reading and a song, we feel quite strongly that maintaining 15 to 20 minutes of waiting worship is the central part of the service.

Although the worship style we have settled on seems to meet the needs of most of the people we worship with, there have been some notable exceptions. The juvenile boys and the women were not as able to settle into silence as the men. The second time we met with the juvenile boys, we decided rather than having open worship to read a selection from one of Isaac Pennington's letters and to discuss associated queries in a worship sharing format. The juveniles were much more engaged and found the time more meaningful when we used the worship sharing format.

We have only served incarcerated women twice. Both times the groups were large, over 50 individuals from multiple cell blocks. Many of the women treated the gathering for worship as an opportunity to socialize with others they could not often see—talking, hugging, even attempting to sit together and braid each other's hair! Needless to say, it was difficult to settle into silence. During the second service, we allowed the women to express themselves more as they wished. Several of them sang solo out of silent worship, but they began turning this “vocal ministry” into a talent show, clapping and cheering. While they enjoyed having that opportunity to express themselves, the service had a more superficial rather than a spiritually grounded tone.

Joys

Worship at the Justice Center and in the treatment facilities is similar and different from our worship at the meetinghouse. We have shared spoken messages that have seemed to be what the group or persons in the group needed. Other times, just sitting in silence with each other has been profound. Sometimes at the end of the service, the tone of the group feels different than it was at the beginning. Periodically, people share their love and concern for their families and friends. They also share their desire not to slip into the behavior that landed them there... again. Recently, a man testified that our service reminded him that he was meant to be in the pulpit pit rather than in jail. His hope was through re-framing his orientation to crime and God that he would eventually return to serving his true purpose.

A deep sense of joy comes from experiencing the rich worship that we've had with incarcerated people. All of us have noted our surprise in response to the tone of the worship and the open sharing. Sometimes we have described the worship by using the traditional Quaker terms 'gathered' or 'covered'. Beneath this surprise, I believe, is the realization that through us, in a place that can be scary and dark, with people who are generally considered contemptible, we have found the Sacred. We bring nothing but ourselves and our slim program into a place that is cold, foreign and tightly regulated, but through trust in each other and God, we discover beloved community.

Areas of Movement

The worship team is currently committed to continuing to serve in the treatment facilities and the Justice Center. While this will not change in the foreseeable future, I believe that some areas of movement are on the horizon. Recent events and conversations have led me to believe that, as a meeting, we need to consider whether this ministry should come under the care of the meeting. In particular, I believe we are being called to discern whether this ministry should be formally recognized as a ministry of the meeting and the extent to which it should be under the care of the meeting.

In addition, I believe that the meeting needs to consider its openness to and readiness for welcoming formerly incarcerated people into the meeting. While many of us would welcome these returning citizens to worship with us and desire that they become Friends, we also need to be thoughtful about boundaries. We should consider the experience and decisions of meetings who have been down this road before us as we come to decide how we will relate to persons who may have difficulties with respecting the possessions and persons with whom they relate.

In conclusion, I have gotten the sense that God, through this ministry, is giving us an opportunity to grow individually and as a community. I am thankful for this chance to serve by discerning with you the way forward. I ask that you will hold our team and the Meeting in the Light as we work together to discover God's desire. The scripture passage, Matthew 5:13-16, came to me as I was finishing this article. My sense was that we are being called to 'be a city on a hill'. How will we let our Light shine?

Reflections on Participating in a TJM Worship Team

Recently, TJM worship team members were asked by Rev. Jack Marsh to share their responses to the following questions. 1) What would those who have participated in this project say has been the most valuable thing they learned as a result of the ministry and why? 2) What would those who have participated in this project say has been the most important thing they have done in this project and why? Mary Kay Rehard shared the following responses and was willing to share them with the Meeting.

Transforming Jail Ministries Worship Team, continued**The most valuable thing I have learned by participating in TJM:**

The most valuable thing I have learned is sharing the prayer concerns on the hearts and minds of the prisoners with whom we worship and fellowship. The time of open sharing in our worship service, when inmates can share joys and concerns, is a time of listening and learning for our worship team leaders. We take time to listen to each person who feels moved to speak, and to gather up those concerns in prayer. I appreciate the openness and authenticity of the prisoners during this part of our worship. Often they express appreciation for our team's presence, giving them the opportunity for corporate prayer. It is clear that many of the inmates pray individually in their cells during time that is available. But we sense that it is special for them to come together with others. With younger inmates we have brought queries--questions that are not meant to be answered, but as prompts for reflection. These often center on a life of faith and the search for meaning. The juveniles being tried as adults had insightful reflections to share. I always feel honored to be invited into the interior life of others, especially these incarcerated individuals. I find it hard to imagine the psychic pain of separation. Many speak of worries about sentencing, health-related problems of their loved ones outside the prison, worries about the safety and welfare of their children. It is an honor to be asked to join in prayer for these concerns and to carry them forward into the week in our individual daily devotions, as we depart.

The most important thing we have done in this TJM project and why:

I think it's pretty simple--showing up. It's important for us to experience that regularity and commitment. It's important to the prisoners in ways that words cannot communicate--their value as individuals, their importance to others, the role that they have to play in the world, and most of all, how God loves each of them. By showing up, we transmit some of God's love to them. It has been surprising to me how readily our team will volunteer to lead worship, even on holidays like Christmas or Easter, times that people usually want to spend with family, relaxing. If it takes us a half hour to drive each way, a half hour of preparation and waiting to enter, and an hour of worship, that is a commitment of about 2.5 hours on a given Sunday. I am impressed by how our team commitment seems to have embraced this, and it has carried us through our first year of volunteering. I think we have been able to sustain the commitment because, as I explained in my previous message, we receive so much in return for the giving we do. We go with the intention of ministering to others, and we receive ministry from the inmates. That is the wonderful mystery that Christ spoke of. We encounter the Risen Christ in the prisoner. It is humbling, gratifying and rewarding. I hope we can continue to "show up" and inspire other congregations to take up this challenge to be present to and share the concerns of prisoners in our midst.

Photo Memories from OVYM

On left: friends Reid & Toby enjoying the Yearly Meeting.

Below: Susan Hyde with her mother – longtime member of Community Friends: Agnes Moon enjoying lunch



Photo Memories of OVYM, continued



On the left: Anita Paul from NYYM presenting a workshop on the Spiritual Opportunities of Aging. She was brought to OVYM by a grant obtained from the Friends Foundation for the Aging.

On the right: the Pfaltzgraff-Carlson family- Rhonda, David, Reid and Bing

Below: Eugenia Mills, Eileen Bagus and Deborah Jordan eagerly anticipating Anita's workshop

Below: Lisa Cayard and Susan Gerke enjoying lunch

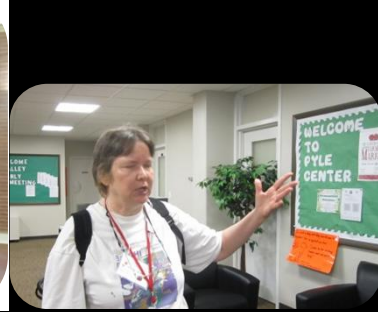


On left: Rachel Ernst

On right: Pam Richards and Jean Crocker-Lakness



To left: Bill Cahalan, Paul Buckley, and Jim Crocker-Lakness talking with plenary speaker Stephen Potthoff



Center:
Bill
Cahalan &
Deborah
Jordan



Above right: Jennifer Wolff helping her brother at registration



Above left: Marjorie Isaacs and Kate Anthony

Above right: Jamie Fota and Paulette Meier

Left: Charles Moore and Eric Wolff (ask them what they were doing)

Below: Dylan Jordan Cahalan. His comments on OVYM: "It's cool" "It has been very intense- the canoe trip", Richard House and his S.O. Julie Bath Primack, Frank Huss



Below: Hannah Branson with daughters Cecilia and Elana

To right: Shannon Isaacs delivering FGC report



To right: Rachel Logan-Wood delivering teen service trip report
Below: reunion- Mark Roberts (Lisa's husband) was in the teen group at Community Friends with Susan Moon Hyde. Lisa met Mark at Olney and all three went to Wilmington College



Left: Rachel Dean with daughter Charlotte
Center: Lucy Grace Hartsock with plenary speaker Maurine Pyle
Right: David Funck visited on Sunday