

December 2019

The Friendly News

San Antonio Quakers

7052 N. Vandiver (at Eisenhower)
San Antonio, Texas 78209
Message Phone: 210.945.8456
Website: www.sanantonioquakers.org
Facebook: @saquakers



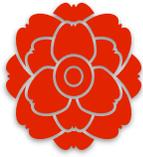
December Calendar

SUNDAY Dec 1	9:00 am—Religious Education Committee, Library 10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:15—Potluck Lunch and Conversation —Book & Media Exchange 12:30pm—Quaker Reading Group in Meeting Room
MONDAY Dec 2	4:30-5:30 pm—Yoga with Greg 5:30-6:30—Community Engagement Committee
TUESDAY Dec 3	8-9am—Prepare Lunch for Refugees 7-8 pm—"A Course in Miracles" discussion (<i>weekly</i>)
FRIDAY Dec 6	7:30-8:30pm—Night Shift Meditation (<i>bi-weekly</i>)
SUNDAY Dec 8	10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:30—FORUM: TOPIC TBA
THURSDAY Dec 12	5-6pm—Peace & Social Concerns Committee 6-7 pm—Soup and Conversation 7-8pm—Mid-Week Meeting for Worship
SUNDAY Dec 15	9:15 am—Quakers Sing 10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:15—December Birthdays & Farewell to the Randles family 11:30—Meeting for Worship w/ Attn to Business
MONDAY Dec 16	4:30-5:30 pm—Yoga with Peggy
TUESDAY Dec 17	8-9am—Prepare Lunch for Refugees
FRIDAY Dec 20	7:30-8:30pm—Night Shift Meditation (<i>bi-weekly</i>)
SATURDAY Dec 21	9am-2pm—Faith & Play Training POSTPONED
SUNDAY Dec 22	10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:30—FORUM: The First Christmas, w/ Gretchen
TUESDAY Dec 24	5:15—Carol Singing 6pm—CHRISTMAS EVE MEETING FOR WORSHIP 7pm—Rice, beans, & tamales
WEDNESDAY Dec 25	CHRISTMAS NO MID-WEEK WORSHIP
SUNDAY Dec 29	10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:30—Fellowship and Welcome to New Members

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Note: Children may join in worship for the first 10 minutes then go to the children's program



December Query

As fall changes into winter and the sunshine fades, how can we unleash our Inner Light?

December Events:

December 1: Book & Media Exchange (during potluck)

Bring your used books, DVDs, and CDs for the exchange table and find new ones in exchange. You can even take books, DVDs, and CDs if you didn't donate any. It's a Friends Meeting tradition.

December 3 & 17: Making Lunch for Refugees (8-10am)

We will need about 4 people to pack sandwiches, snacks and fruit for asylum seekers traveling from the bus station to their families across the country. See Gretchen.

December 8: Forum (topic TBA) (11:30am)

We are hoping to continue last month's presentations about organizations we support. If that's not possible, we will discuss how Quakers develop social concerns.

December 15: Quakers Sing (9:15-9:45am)

We'll sing from "Songs of the Spirit" including spirituals, songs of celebration, Quaker songs, and some Christmas carols, because we are moved to sing again at 5:15 on Christmas Eve before worship. Your voice is welcome.

~~*December 21: "Faith and Play" Training (9am-2pm)*~~

The Religious Education Committee will lead a training for our new children's program. You can learn about story-telling and other techniques that help our children learn by playing – and thinking, too. Bring a bag lunch. More details will appear in the next few weeks. Speak with Joni M. if you have any questions or wish to participate. ***POSTPONED TO JANUARY***

December 22: Forum on the First Christmas (11:30am)

Gretchen will lead a conversation about the First Christmas, based on her study of recent Biblical scholarship.

December 24: Christmas Eve Meeting for Worship & Simple Meal

Another Friends Meeting tradition is worship at 6 p.m. and shared tamales, beans, and rice at 7 p.m. It's a time to bring family members and friends to gather in fellowship. Optional singing from 5:15-5:45.

No Last Wednesday Midweek in December!

Ongoing Events

Quaker Reading Group

We will meet on Sunday, December 1st at 12:30pm following Potluck to continue discussing Robert Griswold's article "No Creed is Not the Same as No Theology" (Friends Journal, 2001; readable online at <http://bit.ly/2pzT17F>) You are welcome to join the group even if you haven't read it.



1st & 3rd
Mondays
of the Month

4:30 - 5:30pm



6pm - 7pm
Soup

&



7pm - 8pm
Silent Worship

2nd Thursday of the Month

Meetings for Weeding:

No Meetings for Weeding this month.

Course in Miracles:

David H. facilitates a conversation about "A Course in Miracles", open to Friends and others who are interested in the spiritual journey. Meets in the Library on Tuesdays (**December 3rd, 10th, 17th**) 7-8pm. **No meeting on Dec 24th (Christmas Eve Meeting for Worship).**

"Night Shift" Mindful Meditation:

Join us on two Friday evenings for a period of mindful meditation, walking meditation and ambient music, followed by tea and fellowship. This event helps us make the shift from a busy work week. Michael R. facilitates. michael@morning-shift.com **December 6th & 20th, 7:30-8:30 pm**

You are welcome to join any of these activities.



Looking Ahead to January

Dream Week at FMSA

Please put Saturday, January 18 on your calendar to join the community in a free movie to celebrate Martin Luther King week. We'll show **The Long Walk Home**, dramatizing the Montgomery bus boycott and its local and eventual national effect. Please be advised that it includes scenes of violence. We will have a facilitator for discussion following the film. FMSA is an official partner in the Dream Week events and we'll carry our banner in the March on Monday, January 20. Full details will be in the next Newsletter.



Notes from Recent Events:

November 10th Forum on Some Local Organizations We Support

By Gretchen Haynes

The forum on Nov 10 (re)introduced three organizations that receive donations from FMSA.

- Graciela Sanchez described a new initiative of the **Esperanza Peace and Justice Center**, "Mi Barrio No Se Vende" [My Neighborhood is not For Sale]. Developers are moving in to displace residents from San Antonio's West Side, and Esperanza is helping them to fight back. They are also working on a Museo del Westside to preserve the Latino heritage for all San Antonio. They will hold their the 30th annual Peace Market for three days on Nov 29 to Dec 1 at the Center at 922 San Pedro Avenue. These are just a few of the many activities of the organization.
- Sara Ramey, the founder and director of the **Migrant Center for Human Rights**, told us of the current status of detentions and deportations that she deals with daily. The serious lack of immigration judges prolongs the process and the Stay in Mexico policy has put thousands of asylum seekers in harm's way in squalid conditions where only 2% of seekers have access to legal assistance. Sara is seeking to train four or five bilingual volunteers to help those in Mexico by telephone to fill out the legal papers. They would make calls in eight-hour shifts over three days at the Center office.
- **Thrive Youth Center** was represented by Sandra Whitley, also founder and director of the organization. She outlined the process for getting 20 LGBT youth a year into their own apartments through a federal grant from Housing & Development. The young people live rent-free for a year and are helped along the way to assume the rent payment. The agency, now located at Haven for Hope, also provides education, living skills training, and employment advice for these 18-to-24 year-olds who lack a permanent home.

Many are rejected by their families when they declare their sexual orientation; about 75% are transgender. Thrive has been instrumental in changing the hostile attitude of many Haven staff, and has ultimately changed Haven policies, particularly with regard to transgender youth.

F/friends who wish to make individual contributions to these organizations might consider donating \$30. That amount provides a Welcome Basket of items needed to set up home in the Thrive apartments. It also helps pay for gas for the pro-bono attorneys who travel to the border for the Migrant Center. And \$30 will help Esperanza in their local organizing for No Se Vende. A donation in any amount for any purpose is always welcome.

November 24th Forum on Gratitude

Peggy led a forum on the importance of gratitude for both personal and social health and well-being. Research shows that changing out mindset from 'scarcity' to 'abundance' increases our ability to be happy while spreading happiness around us. She led us through some exercises and sent us out with a concrete plan. We were grateful for her presentation.



Three Parables from Lebh Shomea

By Gretchen Haynes

A parable is a story that contains a lesson. The story is open to interpretation, depending on the lens of the reader. In the Worship Sharing during the November retreat at Lebh Shomea, participants told each other stories that I later recorded as parables. I invite you to come up with your own interpretation of each and to consider the common thread that connects them.

The Nylghai*

A yearling nylghai wandered into the cemetery, but then could not find his way out. He began to trot back and forth along the fence. Danielle came upon him and tried to show him the gate that was wide open. The nylghai panicked and began to race wildly. Danielle stood by the open gate waving her arms around to attract his attention. The yearling crashed into the fence and Danielle withdrew. Next Terry came along and tried to direct his racing in the direction of the gate. He only crashed his head into the closed half of the gate. Terry withdrew. Then Lee and David approached slowly holding out grass to him. Slowly his pace slackened, and he began to trot along the fence until he found the open gate and raced away to find his mother.



The German Dog

John and Gretchen were on a ramble along a small stream in a forest in Germany. They passed a party on the opposite bank having a picnic. A small dog detached himself from the group and began to follow them. John told the dog, "Go back. Go back there." The dog did not move. Gretchen said, "It's a German dog. He doesn't understand English." She said "Rausch!" but the dog still didn't move. They continued along the stream to the next town and found a café. They pointed to the dog to the owner, saying, "He followed us here." "Ah," said the owner, "That's Hans, the town dog. He just wants you to feed him." So John bought a sausage and gave it to Hans. When they finished their beer, Hans was gone.

The Homeless Man

Wiley waited for his train in Pennsylvania Station in New York City. He noticed a man who appeared to be homeless. He was holding an empty bottle to his ear and talking to it. He appeared to be imagining himself as part of a group of men sitting around in a bar joking and laughing. The man was animated. Then he looked over and saw Wiley watching him. He put the bottle down, his shoulders slumped, and he sank lower on the bench.

* Nylghai, or nilgai, are the largest of Asian antelopes. Also known as a blue bull, they can be 3 ½ to 5 feet at the shoulder, with a sloping back, deep neck and small head. They are hunted at the King Ranch but protected at the Kenedy Ranch – the site of the Leab Shomea Retreat Center.

A Grand Night for Storytelling!

By Pam S.

The San Antonio Storyteller's Association put on an event at our Meetinghouse on November 23rd. Pam went. Here's her description.

It was a beautiful evening to be out and about. Seeing the Meetinghouse glowing in the distance in the parking lot gave a good feeling of anticipation as we approached the walkway. The main parking lot was full, so we hurried down. There was a paper program with a brief bit of info on each of the evening's storytellers. A lone mic with a single stool hinted at the coming tales. We were certainly not disappointed. A number of Texas tales were told including a first hand tale about Lyndon Johnson as a boy. Soon we were transported to Germany for folksy tale of a very smart Bürgermeister. Then our very own Veronica told a Chinese story of the singing harp tree.



There was even a scary Texas tale. Last but not least, a young fellow named Mark told the tale



that I just loved. He told it in Cajun-accented English with bits of Cajun French thrown in for seasoning. We laughed a lot during his story.

I highly recommend a night of storytelling as an antidote to too much TV and computer viewing. We even heard the song "Whiskey for Breakfast in Texas" sung live and in person accompanied by guitar AND harmonica!

Life in our Meeting:

A Note from the Treasurer

End of Year Planning: If you itemize deductions on your income tax, donations must be made and the check cashed, by the end of the calendar year. Given heightened activities around the holidays, contributions received after the end of Meeting on Sunday, 22 December may not be credited to this year. Thanks for your cooperation.

Vision of an Interfaith Potluck

Imagine if we had an Interfaith potluck and every religion brought its best “dishes” to the table. **What would Quakers offer as our best faith and practices?** Please send your offering marked Vision to newsletter@saquakers.org to be published in the January newsletter.

Orientation Feedback

We seek responses from anyone who participated in the recent Orientation series by way of an evaluation sheet. It has been emailed and copies are available in the Community room. This will help us decide whether and how to offer the series in the Spring.

Quarterly Meeting Planning

San Antonio Meeting is part of the Cielo Grande Quarterly Meeting, along with meetings in Austin, Dallas, Georgetown, Hill Country and Fort Worth. The Quarterly Meeting did not meet last year, but it is important to for us to gather to share our activities and concerns. A group of Friends has been meeting by telephone to consider the best date and ideas for a program. Val Liveoak is requesting an ad hoc committee to advance these plans. Greg K. has volunteered, and Jim S. and Gretchen H. have been involved in the calls.



November Morning at the Meetinghouse