

March 2019

The Friendly News

San Antonio Quakers

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March Calendar

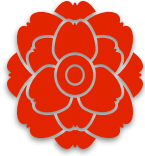
SUNDAY Mar 3	10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:15—Potluck Lunch and Conversation 1:00pm—Quaker Reading Group in Library
MONDAY Mar 4	4:30-5:30 pm—Yoga with Greg
TUESDAY Mar 5	7-8 pm—"A Course in Miracles" discussion
SUNDAY Mar 10	10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:30 FORUM: "Issues in Public Health: Health Equality/Healthcare Equality" with Debbie P.
THURSDAY Mar 14	4 pm—Meeting for Weeding 6 pm—Soup and Conversation 7 pm—Mid-Week Meeting for Worship
SATURDAY Mar 16	9am-3pm—Workday at the Meetinghouse. Come for all or part; bring a bag lunch.
SUNDAY Mar 17	10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:15— March Birthdays!! 11:30—Meeting for Business
MONDAY Mar 18	4:30-5:30 pm—Yoga with Peggy
TUESDAY Mar 19	7-8 pm—"A Course in Miracles" discussion
SUNDAY Mar 24	10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:30 FORUM: "What about the Nones?" with Rick McC.
WEDNESDAY Mar 27	7-8pm—Mid-Week Worship at Gary & Vivian's
SUNDAY Mar 31	10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:30 Worship-Sharing about Spirituality with Gary W.

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

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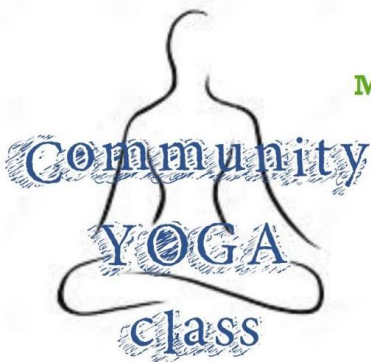
March Query:



Do we listen to others, even beyond words, being sensitive to their personal needs and difficulties???

Upcoming Events:

Subscribe to our Announcements list at our website. This is a separate list from our Newsletter list. You can subscribe to both on the website: the 1st and 2nd items in the right-hand column of any page.



**1st & 3rd
Mondays of the Month**

~
4:30 - 5:30pm
~

March 4th & 18th
April 1st & 15th
May 6th & 20th
June 3rd & 17th



6pm - 7pm
Soup

&



7pm - 8pm
Silent Worship

2nd Thursday of the Month

March 14th
April 11th
May 9th
June 13th

Future Forums – Mar 10, 24, & 31 11:30am

Mar 10: Debbie P. will lead forum on health equality and healthcare equality. She is a public health professional (PhD from University of Washington) who has been based in San Antonio for the last two years. Come learn about the current state of public health!

Mar 24: Rick McC. will lead a forum called “What About the Nones?” Though the newsletter editor has not received a description of this forum, the sociologist in him supposes that it is about the growing percentage of the U.S. population that does not identify itself with any religion. That is now 23%—more than twice what it was 20 years ago. Come to the forum and find out!

Mar 31: Gary W. will lead a worship-sharing on spirituality. Come share your experiences and listen to others’

Quaker Reading Group

Dear Friends: you are invited to the Quaker Reading Group which will hold its organizing meeting on Sunday, March 3rd, following pot luck lunch. You can help decide the regular day and time and what kinds of reading we'll be doing. Come to the Meeting room at 1:00. Margarita McA.

Work Parties at the Meetinghouse

The Property Committee has scheduled a work party at the Meetinghouse from 9am-3pm on Saturday, March 16th. Come whenever you want and stay as long as you like. Please bring a bag lunch.

There will also be a “Meeting for Weeding” starting at 4pm on Thursday, March 14th, immediately before our 6pm Soup and Conversation and 7pm Midweek Worship.

South Central Yearly Meeting: April 18-21

This is the annual gathering of Friends from our sister states; worship together, workshops, worship sharing “Home Groups,” singing, star-gazing, puzzles, books to buy, and occasional business sessions. At Greene Family Camp, Bruceville, TX. **This year's theme is “Knowing, Being, Doing”. Workshops will focus on Knowing and Doing while the overarching theme will be about Being (turning inward to the Light).** We draw from the queries in the Home Groups, Epistles that are read, Worship Sharing as well as much attention to Worship in general. A good place for our children to meet other Quaker kids in supervised activities. For the full monty, surf over to SCYM.org and register. Financial assistance is available in the registration.

Friends Fair and Garage Sale: May 11

Our 5th annual neighborhood celebration of all things Quaker. Now's the time to begin clearing those storerooms of all that you no longer use, but others would be glad to take home – for a reasonable price of course. And your books ready to recycle. You can reserve a space in the parking lot for \$10 or donate to Meeting for the general sale. Bring your donations to Meeting from April 28. We'll feature a bouncy house, supervised, and children's activities while their parents meander with hearts and purses open. Also new this year is our bar-be-que, staffed by the Thrive Youth Center and offering vegetarian options as well as the standard fare. Our big seller has been “Home Baked Goodies,” this year produced in a certified kitchen as per S A Dept. of Health. All this activity takes many hands, starting with set up at 8 am through take down at 2 pm. You can volunteer on the list posted in the Community room. Be a part of history!

Friends General Conference Gathering, June 30 – July 6:

Theme: Peace in Our Hearts/ Justice in the World

This year, the FGC international Quaker bash in Grinnell, Iowa – practically in our own back yard. Registration begins April 1 for workshops at the [website \[fqcquakers.org\]](http://www.fqcquakers.org).

The 2019 Gathering has received a generous donation to support family and youth attendance this year!

- Children and Teen's Program Fee WAIVED
- 50% of Children and Teen's Meals COVERED
- MORE SCHOLARSHIPS available to Families and Teens
- For more details on assistance, workshops, etc.: [fqcquakers.org/gathering](http://www.fqcquakers.org/gathering)

Funds are also available from SCYM and FMSA.

Recent Meeting Events:

Forum on End-of-Life Concerns

Joni M. led a forum on the things to think about as we approach life's end. Here are an attendee's notes (edited for length):



“This is a difficult topic for us to face and particularly to raise with our next of kin. Joni approached it with thought-provoking quotes from Quaker sources emphasizing that our planning now will relieve our loved ones of pain and confusion in the future. By making others aware of our intentions, we express our love and care for them. Our Friends community can provide support in fulfilling our intentions.

- What does our Quaker faith and spirituality offer us as we face decline, diminishment, and death?
- What can we say, as Quakers, with regard to dying and death as a personal and spiritual experience?
- Is there a Quaker way of dying? How do we, as Quakers, do this? Katherine Jaramillo writes in [Friends Journal \(August 2017\)](#) that ‘a Quaker approach would be a mindful, conscious, and prepared approach, with an excitement—or at least a willingness—to enter the mystery of death.

Joni pointed out that we need to make many choices. Among them: Who do we want involved? Who do we not want involved? Do we want a care committee or not? How do we want our remains disposed? What do we want for a memorial or funeral? Do we want an obituary; a eulogy? What would we want said in our memorial minute?

To help us begin to make these choices, Kellie presented a number of documents and their purpose. Copies are now available in the library. Our website, sanantonioquakers.org will soon have a link to the Texas site with electronic versions of all the documents. These include a Notification List, a Medical Power of Attorney, a Durable Power of Attorney, a Directive to Physicians and Family or Surrogates, and a Declaration for Mental Health Treatment.

San Antonio Climate Action Plan



The Climate Action and Adaptation Plan is our city's response to cancelling the U S participation in the Paris Climate Accord. Bill S. and Meredith McG. served on the public committees that developed the plan. They drafted an analysis of the Plan's strengths and weaknesses that FMSA approved and sent to the Mayor, the City Council, and the San Antonio Office of Sustainability.

Friends Meeting of San Antonio (Quakers) appreciates the Mayor and City Council for resolving to meet the objectives of the Paris Climate Accord and the process, involving many individuals from many sectors, which informed this draft plan. We also appreciate offering to the whole community the chance to comment on the draft plan, thereby bringing in even more viewpoints into its finalization.

Recognizing the severity of our situation and the need for swift, strong action, we emphatically urge the City Council to adopt the CAAP promptly, and then to act decisively and rapidly to implement this plan. The following comments are meant to clarify and strengthen the CAAP, but we ask for its adoption even in its present form.

We are very pleased to see the emphasis on equity in the CAAP. Quakers have been known for over three centuries as advocates for the dispossessed and marginalized. However, our experience, not unique, is that goals such as equity, that are hard to quantify and all but impossible to monetize, often rank far behind the quantifiable and the financial. The Climate Equity Screening Mechanism (Appendix III) asks good questions but it is not clear how the responses will be incorporated into the actionable decision in a significantly meaningful way. We would like to see some consideration to implementation be presented.

Speaking of costs, in the Strategies sections, the presentation of implementation costs is quantified in defined dollar ranges, e.g., greater than \$1 billion, whereas the co-benefits are presented only as a yes (checkmark) or no. This presentation skews the emotional or psychological reaction towards, "wow, that's a whole lot of money" versus "hmm, well, OK, that's nice". We recognize that estimating the value of co-benefits is difficult as it requires assumptions that may be debated and challenged. However, without "apples-to-apples" comparison, conclusions and decisions are likely flawed.

The timeline for the co-benefits is not entirely clear to us. Does it extend only until 2050? The science has told us for at least a half century that the climate responds slowly, at least slowly on a human scale. What are the co-benefits – and benefits – after

that timeline, especially those born after the timeline. Obviously, this is hard to quantify, or even in wide ranges, but the issue should be clearly identified. Included in that analysis should be estimates of the later costs of adaptation and mitigation of doing little or nothing now. Analyses have shown sharply rising costs the longer significant action is not taken. Indeed, the costs can far, far exceed the ability to pay. This should be explicitly recognized in the report.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Adopted by our Meeting community in Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, February 17, 2019

Val Liveoak, Co-Clerk

Gretchen Haynes, Co-Clerk

Meeting Misc:

Far-Flung Friends

The farthest flung is Emil Barondeau from Corpus Christi who attends when he is visiting San Antonio a couple of times a month. Next farthest are the three who come from Kerrville on a regular basis, Mari Montemayor, Rebecca and Daniel Bigott. Slightly closer, but still far is Julie Crum who comes from Canyon Lake. And of course, Greg Casillas from New Braunfels. There's a nod to those from Bulverde, Converse and Universal City. As our sign says, "Wherever you're from, you are welcome here"!

Keeping Meeting Afloat

As noted in the February newsletter, over 85% of last year's contributions to Meeting came from 14 individuals and families. The Finance Committee provided more detailed information, as follows:

The 2019 Budget, including replenishing our Sinking Fund (which covers major repairs and unexpected expenses), is approximately \$36,000. Quakers do not tithe, nor do we inquire about anyone's financial situation. There is no requirement that people donate, nor do we often talk about money. We do, however, have expenses, and some people have both the means and the leading to contribute to covering them.

- If you are led to make contributions in person, there is a small box to the left of the foyer door [going out]. You can deposit checks or cash.
- You are welcome to mail checks to the Meetinghouse: Friends Meeting of San Antonio, 7052 North Vandiver, San Antonio, TX 78209
- If you wish to donate electronically, you can use the "Bill Pay" function at your financial institution. You will need our address (above) plus the following information:
 - The routing number for Frost Bank is 114000093.

- The FMSA checking account number is: 520156434

Please identify yourself somehow in the payer information. For example, add your initials to the address so the treasurer can credit your donation properly. Also, send an email to treasurer@saquakers.org explaining that you plan to donate electronically. If possible, also say how much you plan to contribute if it is a recurring donation.

Food for Thought

“Worship” is an Odd Word

by Gretchen H.

Worship is an odd word for what we do in the silence. Webster defines it: “a reverence offered a divine being or supernatural power; a form of religious practice with its creed and ritual...” Really?

We inherited the word from the original Quakers and nothing else quite works. Meeting for Waiting? Meeting for Listening? Who would want to sit with us on a Sunday morning if that was what we offered.

So what can we offer the 47% of San Antonians who check “None” in the Religion box on the questionnaire. Healing. Solace. Fellowship. These are some of the outcomes of what we actually do when we sit together in silence.

We put aside the To Do Lists and we Wait. We Listen. Sometimes we feel the stirrings of divine Spirit. Sometimes we find the answer to a question we weren’t even aware of asking. Sometimes we hear our thoughts expressed by someone else.

When someone reaches over and shakes our hand, we are brought back into the room. What? Already? We make up for the hour of silence with so many announcements, afterthoughts, questions. We have just “Worshipped.” Without a creed or ritual, defying Mr. Webster.

We resolve to be back next week to see what might happen.

The Thinking Heart

by Noah Merrill

At night as I lay on my plank bed surrounded by women and girls ... who often told me during the day, "we don't want to think, we don't want to feel, otherwise we are sure to go out of our minds," I was sometimes filled with an infinite tenderness, and lay awake for hours ... and I prayed,
"Let me be the thinking heart of these barracks."

—from the diary of Etty Hillesum

Dear Friends,

This week marks the presidential order in 1942 that led to the internment of Japanese Americans. It's the one-year anniversary of the killings of high school students in Parkland, Florida. In a season of "emergencies" both real and imagined, of walls and separation, of hatred and division, we mourn the suffering and loss of so many to violence, injustice, and the lack of moral imagination. I know I'm not alone in struggling to live faithfully in the face of it all.

Through the gift of a friend, I've found guidance and encouragement in *A Life Transformed*, a biography including the diaries and letters of Etty Hillesum. A radiant and challenging voice, Etty was born in a secular Dutch Jewish family, growing up in her twenties in Amsterdam during the Second World War.

Living a self-described life of personal chaos, insecurity and disorder, on the precipice of the Holocaust Etty had a powerful experience of conviction and transformation. Without any formal religious background, she learned to pray through direct spiritual experience. Etty was driven to her knees in prayer on the rough floor of an untidy bathroom. This moment reordered her life toward the ground of reality she discovered within her, a presence she came to call "God." She came to volunteer as a caregiver—and to bear witness—in a transit camp from which thousands of Jews and those deemed "other" were loaded onto trains for Auschwitz. In time, her whole family was forced to board one of those trains—including Etty.

In the face of terror and dehumanization, Etty chose to cultivate an inward freedom. She dedicated herself to safeguarding deep within the resilient hope beyond despair, grounded in Love. Faced with lies, oppression, and evil, she chose to live as if the Truth is true. She found refuge in that knowing, in the active practice of what she calls the "thinking heart" of God. Her witness calls me to consider how I—how we—might live in ways that more fully bear witness to the truth of Love she discovered and trusted until death and beyond.



In a moment of shattering recognition, she prayed:

Dear God, these are anxious times. ... We must help You and defend Your dwelling place inside us to the last. There are, it is true, some who, even at this late stage, are putting their vacuum cleaners and silver forks and spoons in safekeeping instead of guarding You, dear God. And there are those who want to put their bodies in safekeeping but who are nothing more now than a shelter for a thousand fears and bitter feelings. And they say, "I shan't let them get me into their clutches." But they forget that no one is in their clutches who is in Your arms.

I'm increasingly convinced that one of the greatest gifts we can offer to the condition of our world today is the quality of grounded love that we cultivate and bring into relationship. We can love and feel and hope for those who are unable as yet to love and feel and hope—and we can do this for each other when we're the ones unable to love and feel and hope. We can strive to protect our cherishing of divine presence within each

person—and in ourselves—in the face of the countless voices that would close the ears of our hearts to Grace.

The growing resonance of that loving and feeling and hoping can open the way for new breakthroughs, fresh possibilities, bold emergences in our communities, cultures, and institutions. In ETTY's words: "Somewhere deep inside me is a workshop, in which Titans are forging a new world."

ETTY's presence and practice as the "thinking heart" of the transit camp barracks calls me to question my own capacity and commitment to Love. Her testimony challenges me to renew my participation in relationship with fresh intention and initiative. I hear the echo of ETTY's midnight prayer: to be an instrument of presence, to bring forth this radical, witnessing, self-aware, resilient loving even in the midst of unimaginable suffering—and I'm drawn to imagine how that resonance might be more fully expressed in my own life, and in our corporate life as Friends.

Might we find the courage to be thinking hearts of the voyage on which our own desperate, divided society is sailing? Might we discipline ourselves to be the thinking heart of a demonstration; of a workplace, of a family crisis; of a chance encounter on our daily commute; an intervention with an addicted friend, neighbor or stranger; a vigil at a detention center or a bedside? Through patience and dedication, might we be the thinking heart in the worship of our local meeting, radiating love and witnessing presence to all who surround us?

I give thanks for all the ways members of our Quaker communities are working alongside so many others in this powerful practice of presence, and I give thanks for the Spirit provoking us to deeper Love. Wherever we might encounter God in ourselves and one another—may we remember ETTY, and her witness to the power of the thinking heart. And may we, like her, be filled and freed by the infinite tenderness that is stronger than death.

In faith and service,



Noah Merrill*
Secretary
New England Yearly Meeting of Friends (Quakers)

*This article originally appeared in the February, 2019, issue of the New England Yearly Meeting newsletter (<https://nev.org/newsletters/email/february-2019-thinking-heart>) Creative Commons 3.0: BY-NC-SA