

July 2020



The Friendly News

San Antonio Quakers

7052 N. Vandiver (at Eisenhower)
San Antonio, Texas 78209

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Dear Friends,

COVID-19 is spreading rapidly in San Antonio, so we are still meeting by Zoom. We have begun to explore what it would take to have in-person Meetings for Worship, but the conditions are clearly not yet right. See page 3-4 for a short version of our talking, with a link to a longer report.

Here are the direct links for our weekly events. You do not need a Zoom account to join.

- **Meeting for Worship – Sundays 10-11am**, followed by check-in and discussion:
 - Join URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87952863787>
- **Course in Miracles discussion – Tuesdays 7-8pm**; led by David Hayes
 - Join URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82876792511>
- **Midweek Forums – Wednesdays 7-8pm**
 - Join URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83760992196>
 - July 1: “Deepening Meeting for Worship” (see page 2)
 - July 8: “Racism in America: How Do We Respond” (see page 2)
 - July 15: “Being a Quaker” (see page 2)
 - July 29: Topic TBA
- **Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business – Wednesday July 22 7-8:30pm**
 - Please read agenda & reports BEFORE MfB at <https://bit.ly/2BoFt4Y>
 - Join URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83760992196>

(Instructions for calling in by phone on our website: <https://SanAntonioQuakers.org/calendar/>.)

Sign up to receive an email when this newsletter is posted at the Meeting website.

Write us at newsletter@saquakers.org if you wish a snail-mail copy.



July Query

Has your view of social equality changed in recent months, years, and over the course of your life? If so, what do you intend to do now?"

Wednesday Forums

Since April, a group of Friends has been meeting on Wednesday evenings to talk about their lives, how they are dealing with the pandemic, and other topics as they emerge. That group has now decided to disband. Ministry and Oversight has decided to use that time for discussion forums on topics of Quakerly interest. Forums, potlucks, and other activities were very popular when we met in the Meetinghouse of Sundays. We put these on Wednesdays for two reasons:

1. Many Meetings for Worship are now followed by spontaneous and meaningful conversations. We do not wish to interrupt these for a scheduled program.
2. Wednesday discussions give us a chance to engage with each other a second time each week, without Zoom fatigue.

We envision these as conversations, not didactic session. Some will be formal worship sharing; others will be facilitated discussions. Many will have things for you to read or view beforehand if you have time.

Here are the first three planned sessions:

- **Wednesday, July 1st**: “Deepening Meeting for Worship” — led by Jim Spickard
 - This forum will be an opportunity to talk about our experiences in Meeting for Worship: what we are seeking, what we find, and how we can deepen our spiritual lives.
 - **In preparation, please read the short passages on the “Silence, Vocal Ministry, and Faithful Listening” page of this website and view the QuakerSpeak video “Listening to God Online” embedded there. <https://bit.ly/2Al4EVC>**
- **Wednesday, July 8th**: “Racism in America: How Do We Respond” — led by Peace & Social Concerns (*see the resources on page 8 of this newsletter*)
 - We will send an announcement with details a few days before the event.
Be sure to sign up for the Announcements email list on the website.
- **Wednesday, July 15th**: “Being a Quaker” — a worship-sharing led by Jim Spickard
 - We will send an announcement with details a few days before the event.
- **Wednesday, July 29th**: Topic TBA — led by Religious Education
 - We will send an announcement with details a few days before the event.

Please share your ideas for future forums with Ministry and Oversight or with the Clerk

Our Quaker Community

On Resuming In-Person Meetings for Worship

We had a meaningful conversation at the June 24th Business Meeting about what would have to happen before we resumed in-person Meetings for Worship at the Meetinghouse. We intentionally came to no decisions. The first intention was to lay out the issues that we will need to address before we do so. The second intention was to listen to each other's concerns. We accomplished both, though we will have many more conversations about this as we move forward.

Jim S., as Clerk, prepared a six-page report about three questions that we will have to answer before we can move toward reopening. Those questions are:

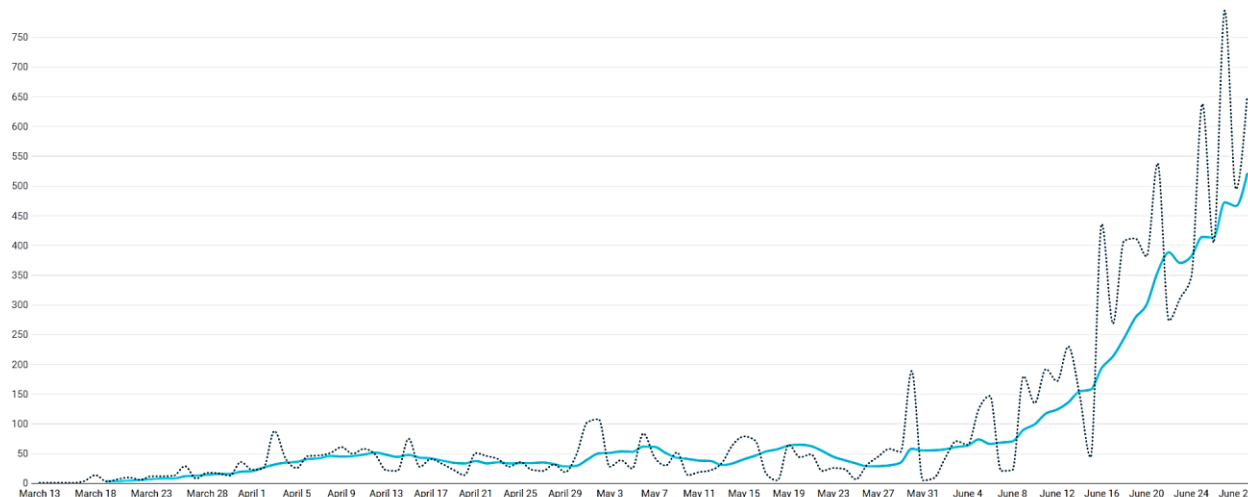
1. How much is SARS-COV-2 currently spreading in the San Antonio area?
2. How safe is an activity like Meeting for Worship for people of various ages and with various preexisting health concerns?
3. What adjustments to our normal Meeting for Worship are necessary and possible to prevent it from endangering the participants and those with whom they would come into later contact?

You can read the full summary at <https://bit.ly/3dNWUJa> but the answer to Question 1 is that the virus is now spreading rapidly, as indicated by this graph of the new incidents of infection:

Seven-Day Average of New Coronavirus Cases

Daily increases in new coronavirus cases compared against the average of the prior seven days. Cases first appeared in Bexar County on March 13.

.... Daily Cases — Seven Day Average



As for Question 2, Quaker Meeting is relatively safe, compared to other religious services, so long as we do not crowd together. We (usually) don't sing, we don't jump, and we don't get our hearts and lungs pumping. On the other hand, a large percentage of our attenders are older and less robust than the general population. The chart at the top of the next page shows how

epidemiologists determine who is most safe returning to work. Though Meeting for Worship is not work, it still demands caution.

		Age-Related Risk Tiers		
		High (≥70)	Intermediate (50-69)	Low (<50)
Health-Related Risk Tiers	High (significant burden of organ-system disease)	A	B	C
	Intermediate (generally healthy)	D	E	F
	Low (healthy; no chronic medical conditions; no activity restrictions)	G	H	I

A simple COVID19 Risk Stratification Matrix. A more sophisticated matrix- with many more cells- could be developed by factoring in a wider array of risk considerations, such as sex, location, biomarkers, social determinants of health, and so on.

Cell **A** requires the strictest interdiction policies- sheltering in place- to prevent viral exposure due to very high risk of adverse outcomes. Cells **B** and **D** represent the next level of requirement, warranting strict social distancing, mask use, and active monitoring. Cells **A**, **B**, and **D** would not return to the worksite until the *all clear** is sounded. Cells **C**, **E**, and **G** can return to the worksite, but with social distancing and personal protection practices encouraged or mandated, plus monitoring. Cells **F** and **H** can return to the worksite with discretionary use of social distancing, personal protection. Cell **I** can return to the worksite with no precautions. Arrows represent opportunities to migrate from higher to lower risk tiers with health promotion / lifestyle medicine interventions.

**The "all clear" is achieved with herd immunity and near-zero viral transmission, whether due to native infection or vaccination.*

Some of the younger Business Meeting participants (in Group I) said that though they greatly value in-person Meeting, they would not attend, for fear of inadvertently infecting older and sicker Friends.

We will clearly need to provide a Zoom or other remote option for attending Meeting for Worship for the foreseeable future, perhaps forever. We can, however, begin to envision meeting outside after the current spike in infections has declined. We would need to meet in small numbers, masked, in widely spaced chairs, with special disinfected surroundings. We would need to have a setup to include Zoom attenders with one or more microphones, video cameras, computer, and projector.

You can read the details in the full report <https://bit.ly/3dNWUJa>.

Get to Know Your Friends

Last month, Peggy D. began a series on getting to know your Friends. This month, she brings us Val Liveoak. Many of us know Val, but I suspect that most of us don't know all these details.

get to know your Friends

Friends Meeting of San Antonio

Val Liveoak is a member of the Religious Society of Friends. She is an active in FMSA, currently, serving as Clerk of M & O Committee, and has served in a number of other positions including Clerk. She's been involved with numerous Quaker organizations, and is active with SC Yearly Meeting. She co-founded Friends Peace Teams, in 1993 and coordinated the *Peacebuilding en las Americas* initiative. She now serves as Clerk of the Working Group for that initiative and on the FPT Council. She has worked with the Alternatives to Violence Project since 1993. She lives in Southeast San Antonio with her dog, Flash.



What was your favorite childhood toy
Roller skates

How many states and/or countries have you lived in?
4 states ~ California, Virginia, Pennsylvania & Texas
18 countries ~ USA, Japan, Guam, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Burundi, Columbia, Bolivia, St Croix, St. Kitts, Ecuador, Mexico, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda

Where did you attend your first Quaker Meeting?
Austin, in 1983, after returning from Sri Lanka, where I experienced the beginning of their civil war juxtaposed with a Buddhist silent retreat.

Which of the Quaker testimonies speaks to you?
I came of age in the '70s peace/anti-war movement so originally Peace appealed most. However, what most speaks to me is the practical mysticism of Quaker worship and practice, of which all the testimonies are a part.

Name one positive outcome from your Corona experience.

"Recognizing the need to appreciate and adequately compensate the work of the 'essential workers' who keep everything going. Understanding that a realignment of our economy and society must be made to support them and their work."

1

Peaches or Strawberries

GEORGIA PEACHES

2

Book or Movie

BOOK

3

Pancakes or Waffles

WAFFLES

4

Winter or Summer

SUMMER

A Message from the Treasurer, Bill S.

*(The Newsletter Editor revised this from the January 2020
Newsletter to take our new Meeting circumstances into account.)*

In my brief time as Treasurer, and even before, I have been asked about the Meeting and money. Obviously, we don't take up a collection of money during services as is usual among most Christian denominations. So how do we keep the place running?

When we were meeting in-person, people could (and did) deposit cash and checks in the (small!) donation box to the left of the door as you exit the Meetinghouse, above the fire extinguisher. They could (and did) also hand them directly to the Treasurer. Those techniques are no longer possible – unless you have figured out a way to reach through your computer screen and across to mine, in which case patent it and make yourself a bundle.

You can, however, mail checks to the Meeting at 7052 N Vandiver, San Antonio, TX 78209. Our mailbox is locked, so this is safe. I pick them up once or twice a week. If your financial institution participates, you can use the Zelle app to send a donation addressed to treasurer@saquakers.org. Zelle sends a "do you accept \$X from person Y?" email to the Treasurer, who clicks "accept" and the transfer occurs nearly instantaneously.

Are there other, non-monetary, ways to contribute? Of course! You can:

- Join in Meeting for Worship and our informal and formal discussions (*see page 1*)
- Serve on a committee.
- Write for the newsletter or the website or Facebook or Instagram.
- Pull weeds or do other landscaping tasks during announced workdays - or on your own!
- Organize the library. Etc., etc.

Don't know what to do? Ask! Offer your talents!

And whatever else you may do, pray/hold the Meeting and its people in the Light. Be demonstrably supportive and appreciative of the labors of others, just as you recognize that of God in them.

How, or for what, is the money used? Getting a bit into the weeds, the Finance Committee drafts an annual budget based on regular bills and requests from the Meeting's several committees. They present the draft budget at the December Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. After consideration and discernment of the vision, leadings, and responsibilities of the Meeting and the resources of individuals, the budget is adjusted and approved at the January Business Meeting.

Because Business Meeting is open to all, like all Meetings for Worship, the decision is a covenant among the community (the "Meeting") that holds us all to covering the budgeted income. The committees and officers are responsible for spending funds as shown, in part, in the budget. The Treasurer has no authority to expend funds other than for Treasurer duties, such as buying checks. All other expenses are paid at the direction of committees, other officers, or a minuted decision of Business Meeting. The Treasurer reports on the Meeting's financial status, including the approved budget, at every month's Business Meeting. You can find these reports in each month's minutes.

Now you know.

The Wider World

Issue #1: Friends Meeting Minutes Support of the Rural Health Care Modernization Act

by Gretchen Haynes, Convener of the Community Engagement Committee

Friends Meeting of San Antonio has approved action in support of legislation currently stalled on Congress: S 1037 and HR 2788. With so many vital issues crying for action in this time of crisis, why should we focus on this one? Here's a quote from "Raising Rural Voices," a report of NETWORK, Advocates for Justice Inspired by Catholic Sisters.

Health care is a critical issue for everyone in the United States, regardless of whether they live in cities, suburbs, or rural areas. While concerns of quality and affordability are universal, rural communities face unique challenges when it comes to access and availability of general and specialty services.

The House and Senate bills are bipartisan, low cost and noncontroversial. We urge Friends to contact their senators and representatives in support of these bills. Following are some talking points for letters.

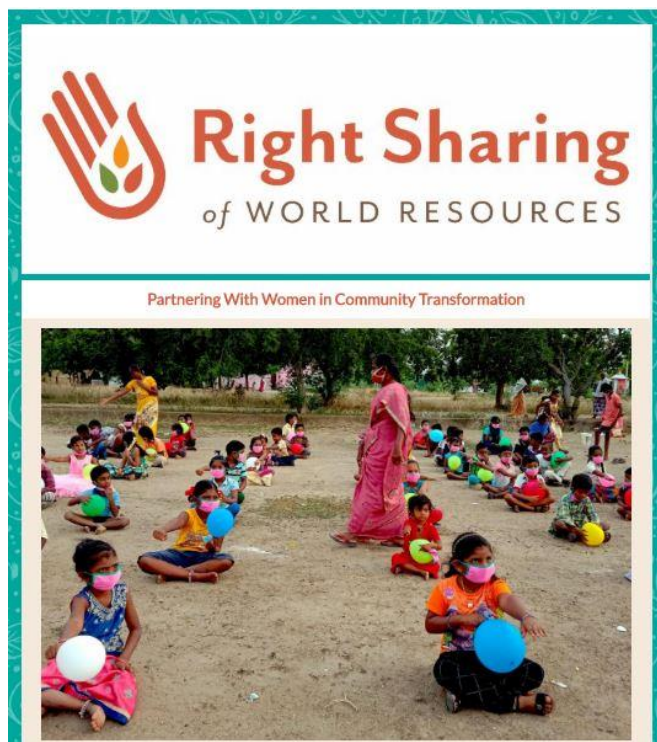
Title: Rural Health Clinic Modernization Act of 2019. S 1037 & HR 2788

- These bills would amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act, relating to health care facilities not directed by a physician.
- They would allow flexibility to contract physician assistants and nurse practitioners.
- They would allow rural clinics to be distant sites for telehealth visits.
- The bills would update the reimbursement scale set in 1988 to \$105 per visit in 2020, \$110 in 2021 and \$115 in 2022 per visit.
- The lack of health care facilities in rural areas has increased in the past with 160 rural hospitals closing since 2005. The rate is increasing as the COVID-19 crisis has mandated that elective surgeries be curtailed, further limiting the income to these facilities. Even with an easing of the COVID crisis, rural hospitals will continue to close.
- Clinics staffed by physician assistants and nurse practitioners offer a sensible solution to the problem.

We will reach out to other Friends meetings and religious organizations to write the relevant congressional representatives. If you have questions or other suggestions, please contact the Community Engagement Committee, the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, or Gretchen at jmhaynes@earthlink.net.

Issue #2: Right Sharing of World Resources

Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR) is an independent Quaker not-for-profit organization for equity through partnerships around the world. They give grants to women in Kenya, Sierra Leone, and India to fund microenterprises. Here is their latest emailed newsletter. You can visit them at <https://www.rswr.org/>



Dear Friend,

These children, just like you and me, are experiencing unprecedented changes touching every moment of daily life. Here they are sitting in Thirumangalam Tuluk, India, having received a bit to eat, a mask, a lesson about social distancing, and a balloon to enjoy from their mother's RSWR Self Help Group. Thank you for helping make this moment possible.

In these last few months, what is essential has been coming into focus in new ways - food, health, safety, relationships, community. With the support of RSWR the mothers of these children are rebuilding their small businesses and finding new ways of being in community. How are you sharing God's love today? What bal-

loon of joy has come to you as you embrace new ways of being in community?

With each choice we make, we make a difference in someone's life. Thank you for making a difference - in the lives of these children and their families, in my life, and in each life you touch.

With abundant love and gratitude,

Jacqueline Stillwell
General Secretary



Issue #3: FCNL Call-for-Action on Police Reform

Friends Committee on National Legislation asks us to contact our representatives in support of meaningful police reform. FCNL supports the Justice in Policing Act (H.R. 7120). The legislation would ban the use of chokeholds, institute a national “necessary” use of lethal force standard, and implement other badly needed police reforms as important steps. You can easily send letters to Senators and Congressional Representatives by email here: <https://bit.ly/2NEAsb4>

Resources to Support Engagement and Action on Racial Injustice

from New England Yearly Meeting Newsletter

Learning together

- For a deeper dive into how leaders and organizers can balance patience and urgency in times of change, check out this Pendle Hill talk by Ricardo Levins Morales at <https://bit.ly/2NGupm7>
- For tools on exploring racial justice from the heart, check out Philadelphia Friend and racial justice mentor Dr. Amanda Kemp’s website: <https://bit.ly/2BNZL7P>
- For resources on selfcare for people of color, see this blog post from Jasmine Banks. <https://bit.ly/3eNTnw1>
- For introducing a conversation about how recent weeks' events relate to bigger issues, consider Megan Ming Francis' Ted Talk called “Let’s get to the root of racial injustice” <https://bit.ly/3ijsfXW>
- A new website from New England Friend Rachel Carey-Harper offers a wide range of tools for spiritually grounded racial justice work gathered over many years. <https://bit.ly/2Zo4y8a>
- Amesbury (MA) Friends Meeting is maintaining a collection of anti-racism resources at <https://bit.ly/3eOCHEH>
- If you have not yet engaged with New England Friend Lisa Graustein’s 2019 virtual plenary series on white supremacy and spiritual practices for anti-racism work, you can watch and listen to these videos at <https://bit.ly/2YMIXIH>

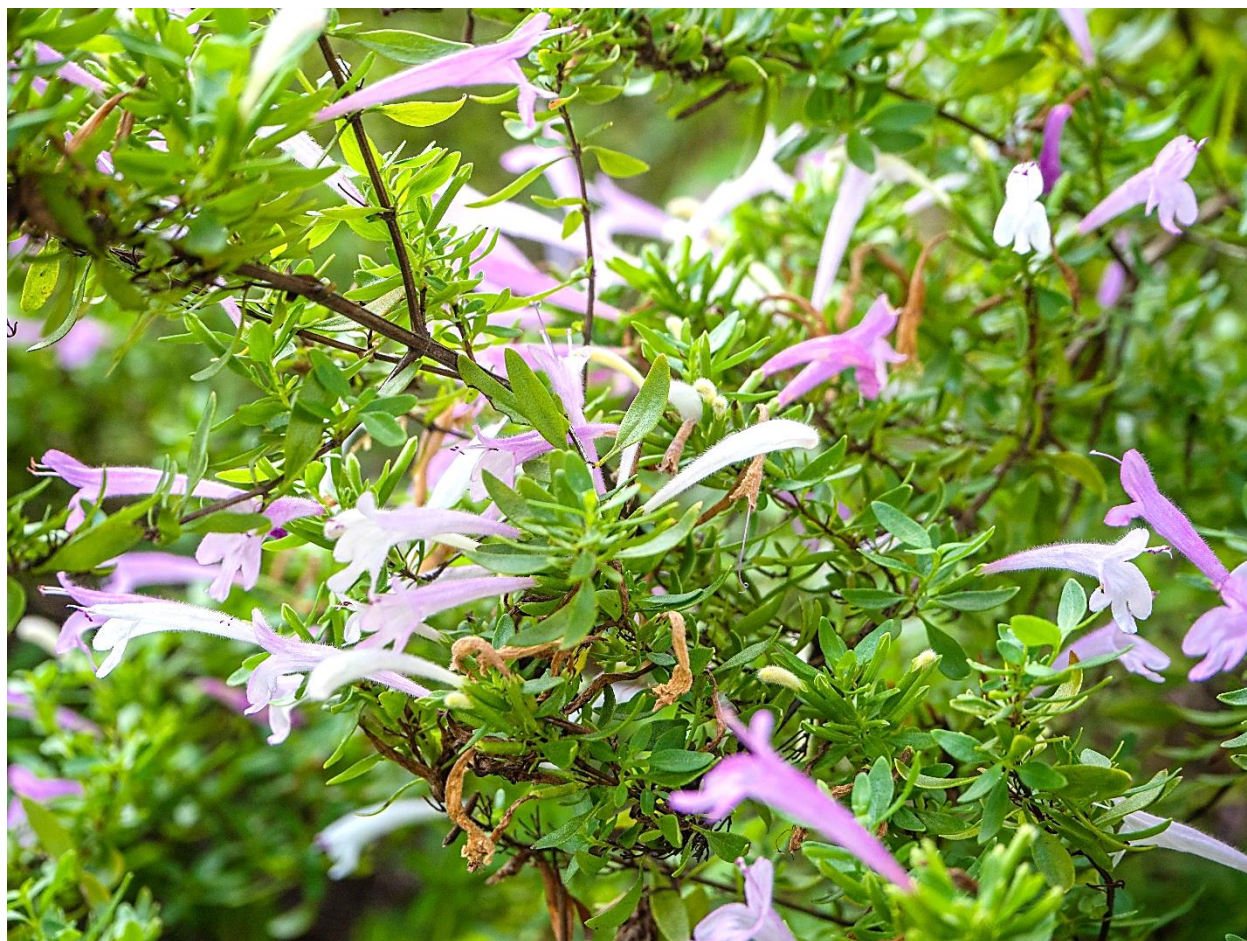
Advocate

- For tools to advocate for meaningful police reform legislation now, check out the Friends Committee on National Legislation’s recent action alert at <https://bit.ly/3ij48so>

- For tips for white Friends attending Black Lives Matter protests, see this resource from the American Friends Service Committee <https://bit.ly/2Zrr4qa>
- A number of local meetings are supporting the work of local groups advocating for racial justice including SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice): <https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/>

Discernment & Next Steps

- For individuals or groups considering action, check out this guide from Quaker Voluntary Service to next steps: <https://bit.ly/2YMhiq0>
- Meetings and individuals may also find it useful to draw from this detailed discernment guide, which invites users to prayerfully consider social implications of their actions. From Unitarian Universalist minister Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen in Boston: <https://bit.ly/2NFRwxxp>
- You may also find this guide to the many different roles we can each take in social action useful as you seek to use your gifts in these times. From lawyer and racial justice advocate Deepa Iyer. <https://bit.ly/3dHJZbS>



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