

March 2020

The Friendly News

San Antonio Quakers

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March Calendar

SUNDAY Mar 1	10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:15—Potluck Lunch and Conversation 12:30—Reading Group: “What Friends Do in Silence”
MONDAY Mar 2	4:30-5:30 pm—Yoga with Greg 5:30-6:30—Community Engagement Committee
TUESDAY Mar 3	7-8 pm—“A Course in Miracles” discussion (weekly)
SATURDAY Mar 7	Quarterly Meeting—9:30am-4pm
SUNDAY Mar 8	9am—Religious Education Committee, Library 10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:30—Fellowship with Quarterly Mtng attendees
WEDNESDAY Mar 11	7-9pm—Quaker Orientation: “Worship”
THURSDAY Mar 12	5-6pm—Peace & Social Concerns Committee 6-7 pm—Soup and Conversation 7-8pm—Mid-Week Meeting for Worship
SUNDAY Mar 15	10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:30—Meeting for Worship w/ Attn to Business
MONDAY Mar 16	4:30-5:30 pm—Yoga with Peggy 5:30-7pm—Refugee lunch preparation
WEDNESDAY Mar 18	7-9pm—Quaker Orientation: “The Light”
SATURDAY Mar 21	9am-1pm—LARA: Workshop on Transformative Dialogue 9:30am-2:30pm—Workday; bring a bag lunch
SUNDAY Mar 22	10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:30— FORUM: “Holding in the Light” w/ Gary
WEDNESDAY Mar 25	7-9pm—MID-WEEK WORSHIP at Joni & James’ home 7-9pm—Quaker Orientation: “Origins & Beliefs”
SUNDAY Mar 29	10 am—Meeting for Worship 11:15am—March Birthdays! 11:30— FORUM: “Long Range Planning Dialogue”

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- Sign up for Opening, Greeting, & Closing
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Note: Children may join in worship for the first 10 minutes then go to the children's program



March Query

As part of the whole creation, how can we assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own?

March Events:

Forums – March 22nd & 29th 11:30am

March 22: Forum topic: “Holding in the Light”, led by Gary. What do Quakers mean when we say we are “holding someone in the Light”? Join us to share our various answers.

March 29: Forum topic “Long-Range Planning Dialogue”. What do we want for Meeting over the next 5 years? Or the next 10? Join the Long-Range Planning Committee for a conversation about the possibilities – and about what we need to do now to plan for the future.

Last Wednesday Midweek at Joni & James’ home – Mar 25th

Ongoing Events



1st & 3rd
Monday
of the Month

4:30 - 5:30pm



6pm - 7pm
Soup

&



7pm - 8pm
Silent Worship

2nd Thursday of the 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. Now meeting every Tuesday (March 4th, 11th, 18th, & 25th) 7-8pm. In the Library.

Meetings for Weeding:

There will be no Thursday weeding this month. The Saturday weeding will be on March 21st.

Upcoming Meeting Events

Quarterly Meeting on March 7th

Cielo Grande Quarterly Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 7th, at our Meetinghouse. Quarterly Meetings stand mid-way between Monthly Meetings (like FMSA) and Yearly Meetings – in our case South Central Yearly Meeting (SCYM: www.scym.org). Cielo Grande includes Friends from meetings in Dallas-Ft. Worth, Waco, Georgetown, Austin, San Antonio, Hill Country, and Coastal Bend. We usually meet every year, though it has been two years since our last gathering.

Schedule:

- 8:30am: Simple breakfast at the Meetinghouse (*optional*)
- 9:30am: Meeting for Worship
- ~10:15: Morning program on “Building Community”: based on queries, Quaker Dialogue, and shared experiences. With a mid-session break.
- noon: Simple lunch
- 1:00pm: Afternoon program on “Working with the Wider Community”
-- break --
- ~2:30pm: Meeting for Worship with Attention to Quarterly Business: focused on how to Reorganize the Quarter after our long hiatus.
- ~ 3:15pm: Meeting for Worship
- ~ 4:00pm: End of formal sessions

As the way opens, some Friends may wish to go out to a local restaurant with those visiting Friends who choose to join us.

Please fill out the registration form at the FMSA website:

<https://sanantonioquakers.org/quarterly-meeting-registration/>

This will help us plan for food, children’s program, and any needed hospitality for Friends who come from a distance.

*Please see See Greg K., Val L., or Jim S. for details,
or write Jim at clerk@saquakers.org*

Making Lunch for Refugees on Monday, March 17, 5:30-7pm

Mar 17th will be the next lunch preparation for asylum seekers, following yoga. The new time will enable Friends who are working to join the fun. Last month, five volunteers took 45 minutes to make and bag 40 lunches. David H. is now coordinating the project, so if you would like to join in, just let him know. The more the merrier, and faster.

Workday at the Meetinghouse on Saturday, March 21, 9:30am-2pm

The Property Committee has organized a “Meeting for Weeding” at the Meetinghouse. Bring gloves and a bag lunch.

LARA: Using Nonviolence for Transformative Dialogue, A Workshop led by Peace & Social Concerns, March 21, 9am-1pm

By Bonnie Tinker

(edited by Val Liveoak)

We live in world so violent that even our speech is militarized. We can change this on an individual level and in the process transform ourselves. When we speak nonviolently, we also open the possibility of a nonviolent response from those who disagree with us.

Love Makes a Family,* developed a simple method for centering ourselves in nonviolent, transformative speech.

The theory is simple. Nonviolent action and speech, convey the message, “I will not harm you.” The workshop was originally named “Opening Hearts and Minds” because we recognized that you can’t have change unless you are open to it. Change usually happens in this order: first hearts, then minds. The most important point is that you can’t really change anyone else. All you can do is open yourself so that change becomes possible.

The method is based on the simple belief that most people share our intentions to do good and make the world a better place. A simple acronym creates a framework to help us identify this goodness and change our habits of verbal aggression.

LARA: Listen. Affirm. Respond. Add. is a new acronym, but it is not a new method. It came to me through the oral culture of generations of spiritual leaders and social activists who believe peace is possible. It is simply a description of what our best peacemakers do naturally. For those of us raised in a culture of violence and domination it can be difficult to live the nonviolence that we hold dear. LARA is a tool to pull us back from fear and anger so that we can open our hearts while engaging in honest dialogue.

My Dad, who ran AFSC’s Vietnam Summer door-to-door education project when I was a teenager, said that when you open up a dialogue with people, you have changed their expectation. They expected a fight and were prepared to treat you as an enemy. If you have shown that you are a friend, they have a different expectation of you. They need some new words, a place to hang their new feeling. The added information gives them a place to hold this new feeling.

The LARA method was developed in 1992 to empower people to use their own experience to work against anti-gay ballot measures throughout the Pacific Northwest. At that time, very few people in Oregon had been actively seeking to talk to those who disagreed with them about civil rights and sexual orientation. Quakers were one the few groups that intentionally engaged in the difficult dialogue.

Our strategy differs markedly from most political campaign practices. Instead of telling people what to think, we focus on teaching people how to remain centered so they can use their

* A group in Portland, Oregon that apparently no longer exists.

own truth in the way that seems most effective to them in any given situation. The impact of the method is immediately apparent to those who use it, . . . and we eased some of the hostility between people with passionately different viewpoints.

FMSA will hold a half-day training and practice workshop on the LARA technique on March 21, 9:00am -12:30pm at the Meetinghouse. Registration is free but is limited to 20 people. Contact Val, Katherine, or Ben at peace@saquakers.org, or sign up on the sign-up sheet in the Community Room.

Bonnie Tinker was a counselor and founder of Love Makes a Family that served LGBTQ families and worked for LGBTQ rights in Oregon and among Friends. She died in 2009 shortly after giving a Plenary presentation at Friends General Conference.

Spring Quaker Orientation

The popular series will meet again this spring for six weeks of exploration, explanation, and illumination. It will start on Wednesday, March 11 (from 7 to 9) and will continue each Wednesday until April 15. Following the valuable feedback from participants in the Fall series, it will include short readings in advance and ample time for questions and discussion.

Topics this month are:

- 1) Worship, on March 11, led by Gary W.
- 2) The Light, on March 18, led by Joni M.
- 3) Origins and Beliefs, on March 25, led by Gretchen H.

In April, we will have sessions on 4) the Quaker way of Doing Business, 5) Living in the World [Quaker Testimonies], and 6) Quakers in the Wider World.

While we know life can intervene, we hope that if you sign up, you'll try to make every session. And if you missed a session in the Fall, please come for that one now.

A full program and sign-up sheet are posted in the Community Room, on the Religious Education bulletin board.



State of the Meeting Report:

Each year, we write a State of the Meeting Report, summing up our sense of where we are in our collective spiritual journey. We send this to South Central Yearly Meeting, as do other meetings in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. We also use it as a means of reflection. Here is this year's report, which was approved at a special called Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on March 1st. It and previous reports can be found on the FMSA website at <http://bit.ly/2TbZzFu>

State of the Meeting, March 2020

As the Texas Spring rears her tender head, our Meeting – like our garden – is suffused with Light and life.

Every First Day, our property bustles with activity. Members join attenders, long-standing and new, in worship and fellowship. Of late, Friends have no shortage of hands to shake at the rise of Meeting: we are frequently gathered three or four to a bench! Adult attendance averages thirty-eight (38), an increase of ten over last year. Not only do we have more young adults, but we now have more children. This is welcome. Their noisy feet and peals of laughter brighten the space between silences as only youth can. To the grown-ups, their frank innocence is a lesson in Light. We learn from them as we are able.

But as a tree grows, so too are its fruits sometimes carried away to lay roots anew. Several members and attenders have moved away this past year.

In November, attenders Colin Malone and Debbie Passey left San Antonio for their new home in Salt Lake City. We miss Debbie's serenity and kindness, as well as delicious confections which for so long enriched our fellowship. We miss Colin for his thoughtful testimonies and F/friendly disposition, and also for his meticulous care of our library and his wealth of historical knowledge. They took with them the Meeting's warmest wishes and now attend Salt Lake Meeting. Their lemon tree, Auggie, which they left in the care of attender Oliver Gerken, is coming into bloom.

In December, the Randles family left for their next adventure in North Carolina. Member Jillian is missed for her warmth and welcoming spirit, which she demonstrated monthly by conducting birthday celebrations for Friends, complete with homemade cakes. Attender Joshua's absence leaves us short his measure of wit and wry humor. Son Liam, who served as the youth representative to the Religious Education committee, is missed for his thoughtful contributions and ample empathy. His younger brothers, Brendan and Whitman, are missed for their playfulness, exuberance, and kindness. We wish the entire family the best that Light and life have to offer as they live the testimonies of simplicity and stewardship in their new Tiny Home.

Member Suzanne Wright-Crain also left for Kentucky with her husband Glynn. She has been a pillar of Meeting, both in ministry and service. We are promised visits as she is able.

On a happier note, this year the Meeting took under its care the marriage of attenders Katherine Fitzgerald and Ben Hernandez. They wed on May 25, 2019, in a beautiful ceremony on the Meeting House grounds.

This year we also welcomed into membership Greg Koehler and Jillian Randles (before she departed for North Carolina). Julie Crum also transferred her existing membership to our Meeting from her meeting in Virginia.

We came together as a community this past month to reflect on the year gone by. Blessings were counted, gratitude offered, and concerns were raised. The spirit of the Meeting was discussed, with Friends providing in their own brief words what they noticed most about our shared experience. Among

their phrases were: “Joy in the morning,” “warm silence,” “creative, happy kids,” “lots of support... if we ask,” “a spiritual home,” “enjoy fellowship,” “warm welcoming,” “home,” “nurturing,” “full of Light,” “connected,” and “a safe, welcoming place where each is welcomed for their gifts.” These signal a growing sense of wholeness in our Meeting. They are evidence that together we continue to coax new vigor into the flame burning in our hearth. It falls now to us to keep tending that fire by appreciating our blessings and attending to our concerns.

Here are some of our other blessings. We have more opportunities for interaction and fellowship. These include spiritual discussions, “meetings for weeding”, and two monthly evening mid-week worships, one preceded by potluck and conversation. We put on events in our neighborhood. This year we held a free movie night, our annual Quaker Fair, and a neighborhood yard sale.

We continued our tradition of silent retreats at Lebh Shomea near the Texas coast. New attenders were able to join us this year. And we continue to host other organizations, mostly religious and spiritual, which enjoy our meetinghouse and grounds.

We are thrilled to have many more children now, so we are working on enriching our children’s program. Friends renovated the playroom this past year to aid our newly implemented Faith and Play curriculum. It is now a serene, organized, and simple place. Friends also renovated our Community Room, giving it a much more welcoming feel.

Now, to our concerns. One grows out of a blessing: our increase in new attenders, particularly those who are entirely new to Quakerism. We are so fortunate to have among us fresh new faces with new experiences and perspectives to share, but these newcomers admit to being somewhat baffled by Quakers practices and traditions. To this end, the Religious Education Community led a six-week Quaker orientation last fall. It was well attended and positively received. We will repeat the course this coming spring. Through such orientations, plus regular Sunday forums, we hope to help people learn about Quaker ways – and make their own contributions to them.

A second concern is the demographic homogeneity of our current leadership. Most of our experienced Friends are over sixty and many are over seventy. We need to help younger people learn how to clerk in the Quaker tradition. We have had one successful workshop on clerking and will have more. We are also encouraging those who are able to shadow more experienced Friends. At the same time, we recognize that people are differently called at different stages of life. We do not wish to burden either members or attenders, but to encourage them to take up tasks for which they feel a true call.

This is not to say that Friends are not eager to participate in our many activities. There is no shortage of gregarious individuals who step up to do the needful when needs arise. The willingness of even some of our newest attenders to weave themselves into the Meeting’s latticework of support has strengthened our communal bonds and enriched our worship. This time of freshness and growth provides an opportunity for long-time members and attenders to help strengthen, support, and train newer people in Quaker ways.

A third concern is an ongoing one for our Meeting: just how we are to express Quaker witness in the wider world. San Antonio has seldom directed its collective energy towards any single cause, as some meetings do. We have long supported individuals’ leadings, and continue to do collective work to aid refugees, but we have not taken up a collective cause. There is some wish among us to do so.

That said, we have reached out to our community in several ways. We participated in the Martin Luther King Dream Week by sponsoring a film on civil rights open to the public. We marched, as usual, along with tens of thousands of other San Antonians. We continue to support refugees through participation in the Interfaith Welcome Coalition. We support organizations that aid LGBTQ youth, both financially

and through individual work. We put on twice-monthly yoga classes, using the money raised for social causes.

A fourth concern is our financial resources. As present, our contributions are barely sufficient to meet the Meeting's intentions for the care and stewardship of our immediate community, let alone of our wider world. The bulk of donations come from a small number of families. Yet not everyone can contribute financially, and many contribute to the life of the Meeting in other ways. As we move forward through this year, we will explore ways to demystify the process of donation for our newcomers, and to modernize and simplify the process of donating.

The Meeting took some other steps into modernity this year. We finally installed Wi-Fi at the meetinghouse, in the context of simplifying our telephone system. For Friends living in a digital age, this new Internet access comes as a much-needed improvement to our already beautiful property. We purchased off-site solar generation, mainly to reduce our city's fossil fuel use but also to cover most of the cost of our electricity. We continue improve our use of social media (Facebook and Instagram) and our website to make ourselves known to our surrounding community and plan to do more. Publicizing our work, witness, and warmth across various platforms also provides Friends, both near and far, the opportunity to learn about our Meeting's activities.

The last technological gap noted by Friends is perhaps the most urgent one, as until it is remedied, there will be Friends who cannot participate fully in our worship. Several members and attenders are hard of hearing. As such, they frequently are unable to absorb the messages offered by Friends during worship or hear announcements and introductions. We last explored this technology ten years ago and found it wanting. We hope to see if things have improved.

No concern, however, is insurmountable for a community as rich in Light and life as ours. Previous generations of Friends sowed the seeds of what is now a ripe and splendid orchard. Their efforts have borne fruit and the newcomers among us can only express our gratitude by eagerly offering our own gifts to continue the cycle of care. Our Meeting faces challenges, both spiritual and practical, but we approach them with all the optimism that a new year can bring. If Light is the bread of all things, not one among us will go hungry.

Quakers at Pub Theology, February 5th, 2020



You can see more photos online at <http://bit.ly/2vONexQ>

Art and Inspiration:



Joni Mize was inspired to paint this picture during last November's silent retreat at Lebh Shomea.

Thoughts:

"Whether or not we stand on the shoulders of giants, we stroll on the topsoil into which the past has decomposed, and some seeds planted then are sprouting, and even blooming, now."

-- Rebecca Solnit, Feb 29, 2020 <http://bit.ly/2PD8wWu>

"We are like sailors who on the open sea must reconstruct their ship but are never able to start afresh from the bottom. Where a beam is taken away a new one must at once be put there, and for this the rest of the ship is used as support. In this way, by using the old beams and driftwood the ship can be shaped entirely anew, but only by gradual reconstruction."

Otto Neurath, "Anti-Spengler", 1921

Miscellany:

Support for Caregiving Friends:

Ministry and Oversight Committee has offered to organize a Caregivers' Mutual Support Group for Friends who are dealing with issues of caregiving of whatever kind. Please see Val L. or write the committee at ministry@saquakers.org.

COVID-19 Coronavirus:

We encourage all in our community to follow the recommendations of health officials to protect against the spread of this respiratory illness in much the same way they take measures to prevent the flu. The World Health Organization suggests the following tips to care for your health and to protect others:

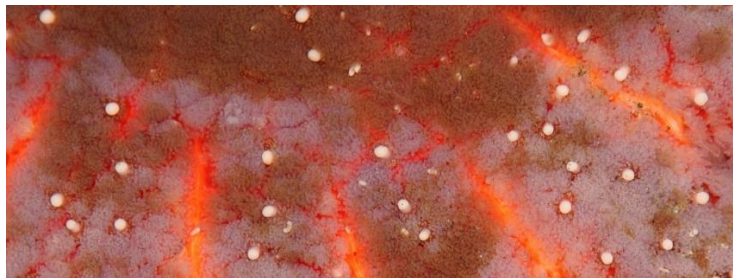
- Stay at home if you are unwell.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Maintain distance (at least 3 feet) from individuals who are coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze and dispose of tissues immediately.
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early.
- Stay informed and follow the advice given by your healthcare provider.

These simple tips can help decrease the spread of many illnesses and should be practiced regularly.

Community Solar Report:

Our investment in community solar panels has begun to bear fruit. We received a credit of \$71.41 on our February CPS bill for the amount that our panels generated between mid-December and mid-January. That's about 40% of our electric bill for that period. CPS does not report KWH savings.

Mystery Solved:



Last month's photo was a close-up of an 11-legged starfish, in an Oregon tidepool.
No winners this time around, though there were a few guesses.

Friends Meeting of San Antonio
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