

July 2021



The Friendly News

San Antonio Quakers

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Dear Friends:

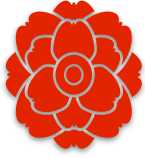
It turns out that editing the newsletter is not as easy as Jim made it look! Two months in, and I'm already running late. Two items of note before we jump into the news.

- First, **the Ad Hoc Committee on Reopening the Meeting Room** has been hard at work with developing a proposal to open the Meeting Room as quickly and safely as possible. It has just sent recommendations to Ministry and Oversight, which will review them and pass its own recommendations to Meeting. Expect additional information this month and possibly a called Meeting for Business.
- In the meantime, **please join us for Meeting for Worship** in the Community Room or on Zoom. See Val's essay on page 4.
- Second, the **Newsletter** will be a little short this month. I had spent all of June monitoring emails as they came in and marking them for newsletter inclusion, thinking I had tons of content. It turned out that not everything was newsletter related, and I had less copy than I anticipated. Lesson learned! I will pay closer attention in the future and develop a better system for tracking copy.

On that note, remember to send newsletter contributions to newsletter@saquakers.org. I'd especially love to read reflections from Friends who attended Gathering (perfect for the August newsletter). Thank you to Friends who contributed to this month's edition.

-- Kellie P., Newsletter Co-Editor

*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

What does love require of us?

Regular Events (by Zoom)

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

- **Blended Meeting for Worship – Sundays 10-11am**, followed by check-in and discussion: *Zoom and In-Person*
 - **In-Person and in the Community Room at the Meetinghouse** (*masked and distanced*)
 - [CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#) ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
 - **Course in Miracles discussion – Tuesdays 7-8pm**; led by David
 - [CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#) – ID # 988 3173 6394; passcode: 724708
 - **Midweek Forums – Wednesdays 7-8:30pm**
 - [CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#) – ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
 - Check for forum updates on the Meeting Calendar: <http://bit.ly/3rK61CV>
 - **Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business – Wednesday July 21st 7-8:30pm**
 - Please review the agenda at <http://bit.ly/2BoFt4Y>
 - [CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#) – ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
 - **Friday Morning Meeting for Worship – Fridays 8-8:30 am**
 - [CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#) – ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
- For ALL Zoom Meetings: by telephone at +1 346 248 7799, then enter ID#*

Special Events

- **Meeting for Weeding (and other activities) at the Meetinghouse:** July 10th, 8am-noon
- Send August events to newsletter@saquakers.org

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Meeting News

Help Us Reinvigorate Children's Programming and Other Religious Education Projects!

By Greg K.

The Religious Education Committee is in the early stages of planning for the reintroduction of Children's Programming when the Meetinghouse reopens for Meeting for Worship. We are also re-organizing and re-imagining our Library and planning for future Forums and other Adult Education programs.

As such, we will need a variety of support and assistance from all corners of the Meeting community.

Our three Affinity Groups are:

- Children's Program - We will need volunteers to assist with the care and development of programming for our young people. This may include care for small children, leading storytelling and other activities for older kids and teens, or simply serving as an extra helping hand.
- Library - This affinity group will help organize and maintain the library collection, identify and procure new acquisitions, and process the borrowing of items by community participants. Help us explore ways to make the most of this excellent resource and the under-utilized room it occupies!
- Adult Education - When the Meeting starts meeting in-person, we will begin to redevelop our "Adult Education" program. Historically this has included Forums, Reading Groups, and the Quaker Orientation series. Help us re-energize these and other new ways to connect with the community and learn about the dynamic history and present of Quakerism.

If you feel led to help us in one [or all] of these crucial ministries, please consider joining us on the committee or signing up to be a resource for an affinity group that matches your interests and talents!

Two easy ways to contact us:

- Email: Contact the committee directly at religious_ed@saquakers.org
- Direct Contact: Simply ask at after a Zoom or Community Room Meeting for Worship if anyone from the Religious Education Committee can talk with you. Some of the current members of the committee include Joni Mize, Karen Ball, Oliver Gerken, Gary Whiting, and Greg Koehler.



Now is the Time ...

By Val Liveoak

For the last few Sundays, I have had a taste of both my pre-Covid experience and a version of a possible future at FMSA—attending Meeting for Worship in person at the Meetinghouse. It feels good to get back to a routine that was vital to my spiritual life 15 months ago and continues to feel important.

While we are not in the Meeting Room, after a month or so of Meeting on the porch, we started blended Meetings for Worship in the Community Room because of the increasing temperature and the disturbance of street noise. While Gretchen set up the entrance and bathroom hygiene stations and the HEPA filter, I set up the technology for the Zoom connection. During the first two Meetings, only one other Friend (a different one each week) attended worship, and there were around 15 Friends on the Zoom



Photo by Jim Spickard

connection. Frequently on both the porch and in the Community Room, we had more visitors than Friends who previously attended regularly.

Though more have now joined us, I don't know why more Friends do not feel led to attend, either on Zoom or in person. Perhaps my understanding and experience of being a member of the Religious Society of Friends is different from others', but I believe that the Meeting for Worship occurs when two or more Friends gather in the presence of the Spirit. It doesn't matter what space that occurs in, only the worshipful spirit each Friend brings.

In the first generations of Friends, children of imprisoned parents met and worshiped in the street after their homes were confiscated. I've worshiped with a hundred or so Friends in a sheep pasture at Firbank Fell in Britain, a site where George Fox famously preached to a multitude.

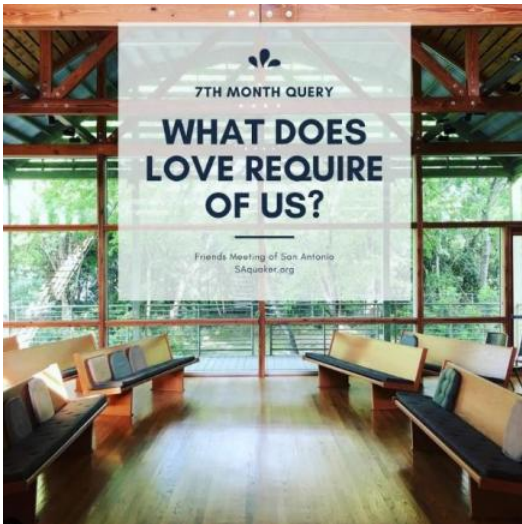
Before the Meeting Room was built, Meeting for Worship was held in the Community Room. During that time, we would often have 20 or so Friends in that space, and later take out our tables and chairs for potlucks and other activities. Before that, the Meeting met in rented spaces in several places, and even earlier, met in Friends' homes.

My point is that the Meeting Room, however special it feels to us, is no sacred place in the absence of the Meeting, the gathering of Friends in worship.

I am somewhat discouraged by the dwindling numbers of attenders of Meetings for Worship, both on Zoom and in person. I would agree that it seems less easy to feel the presence of the spirit when attendance is sporadic and scanty. Are Friends waiting for the opening of the Meeting Room? If so, I hope Friends will reconsider and begin (and for some, continue) to attend in the way that works best for them (and for those who previously attended in person, come on back!) because:

Now is the time for all good Friends to come to the aid of their Meeting!

Getting Social on Media



FMSA has a new Social Media specialist! Suzanne C.S. has been posting away on Facebook and Instagram, working hard on ensuring our content reaches people and is timely and relevant.

Do you have an event or other content that you'd like featured on FMSA social media? You can send the info to Suzanne.Cole.Sullivan@gmail.com). Please give Suzanne at least 3-4 days to create the content.

Find the accounts at:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SAQuakers>
- Instagram: [@saquakers](https://www.instagram.com/saquakers)

Food For Thought

Grieving What We Have Lost

By Jim Spickard

The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown have been hard on all of us. Some of us got sick. Others worried about friends and loved ones – or even lost them. We all got kicked out of our routines, had to give up our favorite activities, and had to stay away from friends. We coped, often by repressing our feelings, sometimes by sleeping a lot, sometimes by overworking. We couldn't wait until things "got back to normal" – but we worried they never would.

Thanatologist **Cole Imperi** has a word for this: "Shadowloss", which she describes in a TedX talk [HERE](#). It is like a death, but there's no body over which we can mourn. In this pandemic, we have lost routines, dreams, expectations, and hopes. We've lost the things that comfort us and the things we looked forward to. Even if we can identify our feelings, our society has no formal ways to help us work through them to bring joy back to our lives.

Cole was recently featured on Alie Ward's ["Ologies" podcast](#) on the current state of COVID, vaccinations, quarantines, and our emotions about what we've gone through. The full interview with Cole starts at 1:04:45. Here is a rough transcript of some of the wise things she had to say.

Now that things are "going back to normal", [you find that] for some reason you aren't happy about it. Maybe you don't want the thing that you originally wanted so bad, and it surprises you. That is because you've changed. All loss is change, whether it's a big death or a shadow-loss. And at this point, we're so far into the pandemic, it's actually not possible to go back to where we were before. And in fact, I don't think we really want to. ...

My friends in the emergency management field are so brilliant, because after a disaster, their goal is restoration, rebuilding, and reshaping -- not returning to normal. It's not possible to go back because, well, normal died. ...

I do have some good news. There are three things that each of us get to see kind of grow and develop within ourselves, after a loss. These are learned skills. So, after a disaster, a trauma, a loss, what we see in people is the development of resiliency, empathy, and presence.

Ask yourself to identify ways that you have been resilient. This past year, how have you like fallen off the horse and then gotten back up. How have you done that that is resiliency.

These three qualities make us better people. And if we all are developing these three qualities more and more, the good news is that I think we will see a kinder, more caring society.

As COVID declines and we go back to our 'ordinary' lives – our relationships, our work and play, and our Meetinghouse-based Quaker community, I hope we can remember that we still need to grieve what we have lost. 'Normal' has changed. We need to restore, rebuild, and reshape, and we need to do it with empathy. I hope we will have the presence to be easy with one another and resilience to learn to do things in new ways.

Wider Quaker World

FCNL Information

Friends can find out more about the analysis of current events by the Friends Committee on National Legislation, by following these links –

Toward a More Just Economy: Analyzing President Biden's Recovery Plans

<https://www.fcnl.org/updates/2021-05/toward-more-just-economy-analyzing-president-bidens-recovery-plans>

How does Biden's Budget Align with Our Work on Peace and Justice?

<https://www.fcnl.org/updates/2021-06/how-does-bidens-budget-align-our-work-peace-and-justice>

Vital Friends: What Bayard Rustin's Life and Activism Can Teach Us About Finding Common Ground

By Marta Rusek (*reprinted; read online at: <https://bit.ly/3ynJL4p>*)

We are living in a time of intense division, and many Friends may be wondering how it is possible to "answer that of God" in people whose beliefs are so different from our own. Fortunately, there is one man whose work helped inspire cooperation and compassion across communities that we can turn to for inspiration - Bayard Rustin. Here are a few lessons from his career in nonviolent activism that can help bridge the divide:

Approach advocacy as an ongoing learning process. Being raised with Quaker values by his maternal grandparents, he continuously sought out opportunities to hone his skills as an advocate for human rights. He travelled to India in 1948 to attend a conference on pacifism, and there he was inspired by the nonviolent strategies used by Mahatma Gandhi and his supporters. Bayard put those lessons into practice back in the United States, and he is credited with introducing them to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. After the civil rights movement, he adapted his nonviolent activism to support labor movements in the southern U.S., campaigned for equality in South Africa during Apartheid, and brought greater attention to the AIDS crisis and the havoc it wreaked on the LGBTQ+ community. As oppression and the systems that uphold it evolve, the tools for promoting advocacy and reform must adapt as well. (Source: "Who Designed the March on Washington?")

Fun Fact: More than 40 years after his life was changed by Gandhi's teachings during a pacifist conference in India, Bayard Rustin delivered the keynote speech at the dedication of the Gandhi statue in New York City's Union Square Park on October 2, 1986. (Source: NYC Parks)



Listen to the people who disagree with you, then search for a common value or goal. Bayard learned the importance of listening to others early in his career as an activist. After making a speech at a meeting in Indianapolis in 1941, Bayard stopped in a diner for a meal. The owner (a white woman) refused to serve him because she was afraid that her customers would stop eating there if she offered service to a black man. Bayard listened to her concerns, then asked if she would join him in conducting an experiment: she would make him a hamburger and set it in front of him, though he would not eat it for 15 minutes. If no white customers came into the diner during that time, he told her he would leave. She agreed, and was amazed to observe that several white customers came in but barely noticed the lone black patron sitting at the front of the diner with his untouched meal. Pleasantly delighted by the outcome of the experiment, she made him a hot fresh meal. From that day forward, the diner served customers of all races and backgrounds. (Source: We Are One – The Story of Bayard Rustin)

Be loud and proud about who you are and where you come from. Bayard was open about being a gay man throughout his life, which put him at risk of harassment, discrimination, and bodily harm, especially during the civil rights movement. In spite of the dangers he faced, he embraced the Quaker values that had been instilled in him by his grandparents and became the embodiment of integrity. By living his truth, he shattered stereotypes for individuals who had never known or befriended a gay person before. Friends, neighbors, and even people we disagree with are more likely to stand up against hatred and injustice when they personally know someone from a community that is under attack. Bayard, as well as openly gay public figures like Harvey Milk, also likely inspired some the activists who launched the Gay Rights Movement of the 1960s.

Change through nonviolent activism doesn't happen overnight. It is a gradual process that requires compassionate, patience, and the ability to make space for others, especially when you disagree with them. Bayard Rustin understood that, and he embraced the power of small steps to pave the way to larger movements.

[Pendle Hill's Illuminate Summer Speaker Series](#)

Join Pendle Hill starting Monday June 14 for a series of discussions with authors of the Barclay Press Illuminate Friends Bible study summer curriculum on Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Speakers will share insights from their studies as they prepared this summer's lessons and "Friendly Perspectives." The Illuminate curriculum is used by Friends groups all over the country.



Pendle Hill Quaker Retreat Center

Photo by Jim Spickard

A copy of the Summer 2021 study guide – A Community of Belonging – can be purchased when you register or ordered separately.

From the Illuminate study guide:

The letters to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians are considered Paul's prison letters, written while under arrest for preaching the good news of Jesus, a message that was good news to many who were marginalized within the Roman Empire. Written in a particular time and place, these letters also speak across the years, bringing to mind imprisonments experienced by early Friends in the 1600s and Civil Rights leaders in the twentieth century as they lived Jesus' message as good news for the poor, stood for equality, and rejected empty religious practices. How will the Spirit speak to Friends through these letters today?

Join the whole series or just for one, two, or however many lectures you can! Read more and register here: <https://pendlehill.org/events/illuminate-summer-speaker-series/>

Session 1: June 14 ~ Ephesians 1, with Cherice Bock and Sammy Sanders

Session 2: June 28 ~ Ephesians 4, with Jennifer Higgins-Newman and Sara Beth Terrell

Session 3: July 12 ~ Ephesians 5, with Jaimie Mudd and Melinda Wenner Bradley

Session 4: July 26 ~ Philippians 1, with Cherice Bock and Dennis Edwards

Session 5: August 9 ~ Philippians 4, with Dennis Edwards and Carolyn Jordan

Session 6: August 23 ~ Colossians 2, with Brian Drayton and Rhiannon Grant

Our "Opening the Bible Today" programs are possible in part by funding support from the Bible Association of Friends in America and the Friends Foundation for the Aging.

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