

March 2021



# The Friendly News

## San Antonio Quakers

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

Message Phone: 210.945.8456

Website: [www.sanantonioquakers.org](http://www.sanantonioquakers.org)

Facebook: @saquakers

Dear Friends:

February was quite a month! San Antonio finally got cold, with the unseasonable weather (for Texas!) causing power outages for most Friends and broken pipes for many. The weather has begun to warm enough that we can begin to think about holding hybrid Meetings for Worship on Zoom and on the Meetinghouse porch. **We'll send out a notice, so be sure to sign up for our Announcements mailings at the bottom of each page of our website.**

While you're there, you can also sign up for our Community Bulletin Board. It's a separate list where we announce civic events and local/national volunteer opportunities that arrive between newsletters. Please let us know of any events that you'd like us to post: [newsletter@SAQuakers.org](mailto:newsletter@SAQuakers.org).

We have two special events in March. **On Wednesday, the 10<sup>th</sup>, Gretchen Haynes will lead a forum on "A Non-Theistic Understanding of Jesus' Last Week in Jerusalem"**. See page 3 for details. **March is the time for South Central Yearly Meeting.** It will be a virtual meeting again this year, from March 28<sup>th</sup> to April 4<sup>th</sup>. It features a keynote by Eileen Flanagan, a Quaker author, teacher, and non-violent activist, who helped lead Earth Quaker Action's successful campaign to withdraw funding from mountaintop removal in Appalachian coal country. See details on pages 3-5.

Inside, you will also find inspiration, poetry, an account of two Friends' recently begun project, and other news from the wider Quaker world. For other Meeting events and Zoom details, click on the items on our website's redesigned calendar page: <http://bit.ly/3rK61CV>

-- Jim S. & Megan G., Newsletter Co-Editors



## March Query

**How have events of the past year caused you to change the way that you direct your talents and energies at work, at school, or in other areas of life?**

## Regular Events (by Zoom)

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

- **Meeting for Worship – Sundays 10-11am**, followed by check-in and discussion:
  - [CLICK HERE](#) to join by Zoom  
ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
  - **Special Virtual Potluck after Meeting on March 7<sup>th</sup>!**
- **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**
  - March 10<sup>th</sup>: “A Non-Theistic Understanding of Jesus’ Last Week in Jerusalem”, led by Gretchen Haynes
  - [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 March 17<sup>th</sup> 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

- **Virtual Potluck after Meeting for Worship on Sunday, Mar 7<sup>th</sup>** – same address as Sunday Meeting for Worship, above
- **March 10<sup>th</sup> Forum:** “A Non-Theistic Understanding of Jesus’ Last Week in Jerusalem” **See p 3.**
- **South Central Yearly Meeting – March 28 to April 4, 2021**
  - Theme: Loving in the Light; Quaker Engagement in Times of Crisis, Part II
  - Keynote Speaker: Eileen Flanagan
  - Join SCYM Friends for worship, fellowship, business, and fun!  
**See pages 3-5 for more information.**

## Contents

- p 2: March Query  
Weekly & Special Events
- p 3: March 10<sup>th</sup> Forum
- pp 3-5: South Central  
Yearly Meeting
- pp 6-7: News from  
Friends
- pp 7-8: The Wider  
Quaker World
- p 9: Inspiration
- pp 10-11: Food for  
Thought

## Coming Events

### March 10<sup>th</sup> Forum: “A Non-Theistic Understanding of Jesus’ Last Week in Jerusalem”

Led by Gretchen Haynes

As we look forward to Easter (April 4<sup>th</sup> this year), I propose looking more closely at Holy Week and its context. I take my inspiration from the 2006 book *The Last Week: A Day-by-Day Account of Jesus's Final Week in Jerusalem* by two Bible scholars: Marcus Borg, a Lutheran, and John Dominic Crossan, a Jesuit. Booklist writes of the book:

“Borg and Crossan parse [The Gospel of] Mark’s reportage (so to speak) on the days from Palm Sunday to Easter to demonstrate the challenges Jesus made to Roman and Herodian-temple rule. They point up Jesus’ insistence on justice, especially equitable distribution of necessities, and such too-little-noticed matters as Jesus’ great popularity, attested by the crowds who hang on his words and his adversaries’ fears of angering those crowds; so fearful are they that they must find a traitor, seize Jesus at night, and whisk him through the courts.”

I offer my understanding from the perspective of a nontheist Quaker, to explore this “background of high-priestly collaboration with Roman imperial control” of Palestine (p.viii). I will leave plenty of time for comments.

### South Central Yearly Meeting: Online March 28<sup>th</sup>-April 4<sup>th</sup>

Despite our reputation for disorganization – *cf.* the joke: “I don’t believe in organized religion; I’m a Quaker” – Friends do have an organizational structure.

- FMSA is what we call a “Monthly Meeting”. Yes, we meet weekly, but we have a Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business once a month. Thence the name.
- Several nearby Monthly Meetings get together as “Quarterly Meetings”. Some of these meet four times per year (thence the name), though Cielo Grande Quarterly Meeting typically meets once a year, alternating between San Antonio and Austin.
- Monthly Meetings also belong to “Yearly Meetings”, which cover wider areas. South Central Yearly Meeting includes Monthly Meetings in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. It meets every year over the Easter weekend. This year, we are meeting virtually. We will have a short opening meeting on Sunday, Mar 28, evening events Monday-Thursday (Mar 29-Apr 1), events all day on Fri & Sat (Apr 2-3), and a half-day meeting on Sun, Apr 4. **Full information on the next 2 pages.**





## Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) SOUTH CENTRAL

# Yearly Meeting News

*Friends in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma & Texas*



**February 2021**

for

**Yearly Meeting**

**2021**

March 28-April 4

## Loving in the Light: Quaker Engagement in Times of Crisis, *Part II*

*From Yearly Meeting Planning Committee*

The theme for YM 2021 is *Loving in the Light: Quaker Engagement in Times of Crisis, Part II*. In line with current conditions, the entire Yearly Meeting will be held electronically. Connection information will be published as soon as possible. **Please be alert for this information.** The schedule is included in this document.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt lives and nations, the sense of "living in dark times" (YM 2020) challenges Friends to examine our faith for answers. The 2021 Theme and keynote speaker continue from YM 2020 to study methods of engagement in the Testimonies and community. Friends are still faced with challenges of climate change, political and social polarization, and the increasing suffering and burdens on the already downtrodden. Unprecedented events in the United States Capitol threaten stability. We seek to determine how we can best serve family, friends,

Friends, community, nation and God in this political, social and health environ, living lives of truthfulness and integrity.

Our 2021 keynote speaker is **Eileen Flanagan**, a Quaker author, speaker, and online teacher, whose lessons on spiritually-grounded non-violent activism have reached thousands.



As clerk of Earth Quaker Action Team for five years, she helped to develop and execute the strategy that pressured a \$4 billion-a-year bank to stop financing mountaintop removal coal mining. In Fall 2020, she coordinated Choose Democracy trainings, preparing 10,000 people in nonviolent strategies to prevent potential coup.

A former Pendle Hill teacher, she carries a minute of religious service from Chestnut Hill Meeting in Philadelphia and is now working on a book about the intersection of race, climate, and spirituality. Read more or join her newsletter at [eileenflanagan.com](http://eileenflanagan.com).

**You are invited to the 2021 Spring SCYM sessions Zoom meeting. Register by going to [www.scym.org](http://www.scym.org) after March 1.**

## Call for Workshops *Submission Deadline: February 24, 2021*

Last year we endeavored to explore the spiritual source and supports that lead to Quaker engagement. This year we explore the activism that grows out of our spiritual engagement. Our keynote speaker will be noted Quaker activist Eileen Flanagan. Her Plenary title is "Strategy and Spirit: A Quaker Approach to Engagement in Times of Crisis."

While we live in a much more hopeful time than just a year ago, there is still much work to be done to address the many issues our communities, nation and world face. We are looking for workshops that speak to this historic time we live in.

We invite Friends to share their gifts with others through an hour-long Zoom workshop. Presenters will have some help from our Zoom technical staff for facilitating breakout rooms and managing screen displays if needed. If you would like to offer a workshop, please submit a written description of your topic to [workshops@scym.org](mailto:workshops@scym.org).

**Pre-YM Issue  
Volume 59  
Number 1**

# South Central Yearly Meeting 2021

## Loving in the Light: Quaker Engagement in Times of Crisis, Part II

All sessions will be held virtually via Zoom..

Sun, March 28,	2:00-2:30	YM Opening/Roll Call #1/Worship	Sat, April 3, 2021	9:00-10:15	Home Groups 2
Mon, March 29	2:30-4:00	Peace & Justice Forum		10:30-11:45	Keynote speech
Tues, March 30	7:30-9:00 pm	Business Meeting 1		11:45-1:30	Lunch/Community Time
Wed, March 31	7:30-8:45 pm	Workshop 1			Breakout rooms:
Thurs, April 1	7:30-8:30 pm	SCYM Meeting for Worship			SCYM Connections,
Fri, April 2	7:30-9:00 pm	Business Meeting 2			Peace & Justice,
	9:00-10:15	Home Groups 1			children's story, etc.
	10:30-11:45	Workshop 2		1:30-2:45	Workshop 4
	12:00-1:30	Lunch/		3:00-4:30	Fireside Chat
		Breakout rooms:		4:45-6:00	Business Meeting 4 -
		SCYM Connections,			incl.Nominating & Registrar's
		Peace & Justice, exhibits, etc.			reports
	1:30-3:00	Business Meeting 3		6:00-7:30	Dinner/Community Time
	3:15-4:30	Workshop 3			Breakout rooms:
	4:45-5:45	Breakout rooms:			SCYM Connections,
		video committee reports,			Peace & Justice, etc.
		reading of the Passion,		7:30-8:45	Variety Show
		exhibits, etc.		8:45-11:00	Community Time
		Dinner/Community Time		time?	Night Owl Worship
	6:00-7:30	Breakout rooms:	Sun, April 4 (Easter)		
		SCYM Connections,		7:00-8:00	Easter Sunrise Service
		Peace & Justice,		9:00-10:30	Business Meeting 5 - epistle,
		exhibits,			birth/wedding/memorial minutes
	7:30-8:00	Eileen with Young Friends, etc.		10:45-12:00	Concluding Worship
	8:00-9:15	Roll Call #2		12:00-1:30	Lunch/Farewell
	9:15-11:00	Panel Discussion			
		Community Time,			
		Virtual Campfire (Bring your own			
		s'mores!)			
		Night Owl Worship			
	time?				

During meals, the Zoom line will be left open for Friends to share fellowship, with the opportunity to split into smaller groups in breakout rooms.

## News from Friends

### An Online Community for Self-Reflection

by Katherine Fitzgerald Hernandez

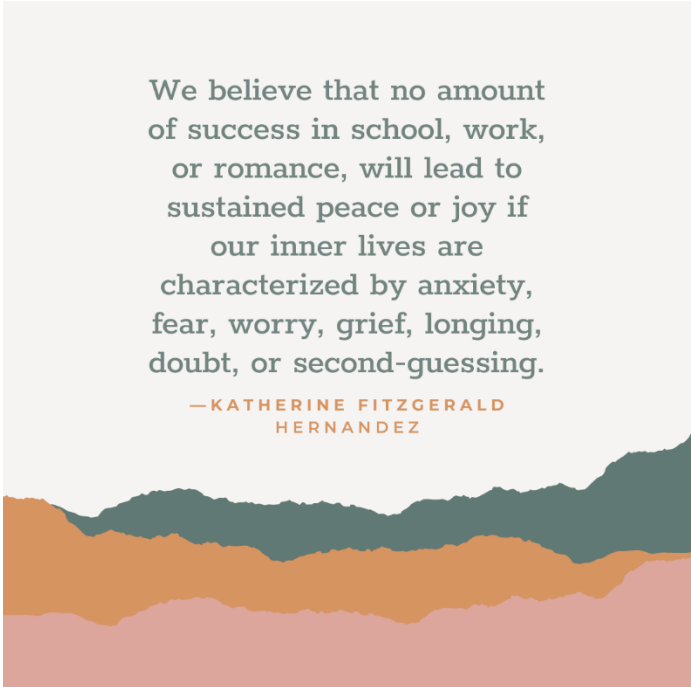
As long-time regular attendees of the San Antonio Meeting, my husband Ben and I have been particularly challenged over the last year by the loss of our spiritual community. We created a social networking site, *Go Within, Go Beyond* partly for this reason, and partly because our budding nonprofit project, Follow Through. Follow Through focuses on practical guidance for the obstacles young people face in the transition from high school to adulthood, and we realized we needed to supplement that with a resource for guidance for the inevitable internal obstacles they face.

We believe that no amount of success in school, work, or romance, will lead to sustained peace or joy if our inner lives are characterized by anxiety, fear, worry, grief, longing, doubt, or second-guessing. Obviously, these difficult emotions can be limiting for people of any age. One of our goals with *Go Within, Go Beyond* is to provide a safe place where users from any age and background can connect with others and find support and resources in their journeys toward self-reflection and self-exploration to help them uncover the internal obstacles they face, discover the things that really matter to them, and align their lives to those values.

Ben and I have realized that as tempting as it is to feel (at times) like we've got some things "figured out," understanding ourselves and why we do what we do is a lifelong process. We've been supported in this process by our spiritual practices, our voracious reading, and through conversations we've had at the Quaker house, as well as in other communities dedicated to sharing Truth. Our hope is that *Go Within, Go Beyond* will find the audience it needs to become a thriving platform where users can extend these types of conversations and experiences to support a larger online community.

We decided to create our own social network so our users could experience a dedicated space for sharing and supporting one another in self-reflection, rather than sift through post after post of other types of content which is not always useful or helpful. While we view it as something that will evolve as it's intended to, we see it less as a place to debate differences, and more as a place to share and support each other on our individual journeys. It's a collective community of seekers, a place where we honor all types of experiences and hold space for all.

Go Within, Go Beyond is hosted by Mighty Networks and is accessible via the website <https://www.gowithingobeyond.com/>. For



We believe that no amount  
of success in school, work,  
or romance, will lead to  
sustained peace or joy if  
our inner lives are  
characterized by anxiety,  
fear, worry, grief, longing,  
doubt, or second-guessing.

—KATHERINE FITZGERALD  
HERNANDEZ

Go Within, Go Beyond members, it is also accessible via the Mighty Networks app. Members can share their insights and knowledge, start small group discussions on topics that interest them like Anti-Racism, Parenting, or Anxiety, as well as organize book studies, among many other activities and events. We invite anyone who is intrigued or interested to join the conversation, find support and community, and share your knowledge, skills, and resources.

### *In Memoriam: Ruth Margaret Casillas*



Mother of San Antonio Friend, Greg Casillas, Ruth Margaret Casillas passed on February 11, 2021. Ms. Ruthie was born April 22nd, 1925 in Paola Kansas. She grew up in Nichols Junction and Springfield, MO and moved to Tulsa in 1945. She soon met her husband Paul and together they had 7 children, 13 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren and 8 great-great-grandchildren.

Greg shared a few stories about Ms. Ruthie at Meeting, and she was an inspiration to many through her wit, smile and consistently positive outlook. She would often say, "it's much easier to smile than it is to frown."

## *The Wider Quaker World*

### *FNCL Conversations*

Friends Committee on National Legislation is sponsoring twice-monthly online conversations about social & political issues. Led by various FCNL staff, recent conversations have included:

- Presidential War Powers
- Saving the Environment
- Public Health and Welfare
- Racism & Policing
- etc.

Sign up to join the conversation at

<http://fcnl.org/twfjoin>

View past conversations at

<https://bit.ly/3dZIKd0>

Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Lobbying with Quakers

JOIN US FOR  
**Thursdays**  
WITH *Friends*  
4:00-4:30 P.M. EST

Our twice monthly online conversation about the political topics that matter to you, hosted by FCNL General Secretary Diane Randall

RECENT TOPICS INCLUDE  
Racism and Policing in America • Public Health and Healthcare • What Should the 117th Congress Do? Our Elections, Our Democracy • The State of Native America • The Rise of Guns During the Pandemic 75 Years After Nagasaki • Environmental Rollbacks and Climate Change

### [FCNL Actions: Dream and Promise Act](#)

Even though they came to this country as children and grew up in our communities, approximately three million Dreamers, including individuals with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status, have been forced to live in the shadows as the administration, courts, and Congress debate their fate. Congress must pass legislation to create a path to legal status for many of these young people.

Please write your members of Congress and urge them to publicly support re-introduction and passage of the Dream and Promise Act, or similar legislation. Access the email letter template here: <https://fcnl.quorum.us/campaign/28605/>

### [Pendle Hill Retreat Center Reading Group](#)

**Wednesday, Mar 10, 2021, 5:30-7:00 pm (Central Time)**

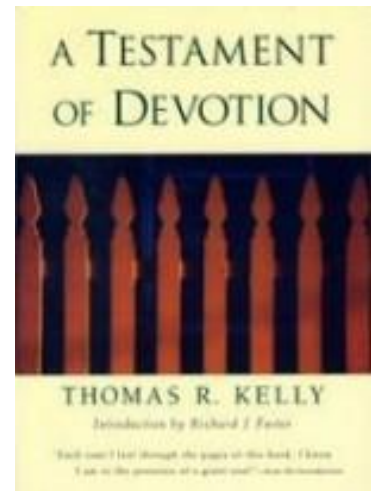
Hosted by Janaki Spickard Keeler via Zoom

Free and open to the public!

Register online at <https://bit.ly/2OgninY> to reserve your spot).

Call for more information: 610-566-4507, ext. 137

Our newly-formed reading group focuses on a mix of Pendle Hill pamphlets and other Quaker materials, gathering monthly to consider queries about the reading in a spirit of worship sharing. March's selected text will be Thomas R. Kelly's *A Testament of Devotion*. You can purchase this book from Pendle Hill's bookstore at <https://bit.ly/3r4tMVH>



**Janaki Spickard Keeler, M.S.S., L.C.S.W.** is a life-long Quaker, writer, and family therapist. As a clinical social worker, she unites writing with sacred change, helping people re-author the narratives of their lives in a direction that better fits their deep truths.

Janaki stewards the Pendle Hill Pamphlets series of essays on Quaker perspectives on contemporary themes, and blogs occasionally at <https://quietistquaker.wordpress.com/>. She is a member of Chestnut Hill Monthly Meeting (PYM).



Pendle Hill Retreat Center – photo by Jim Spickard

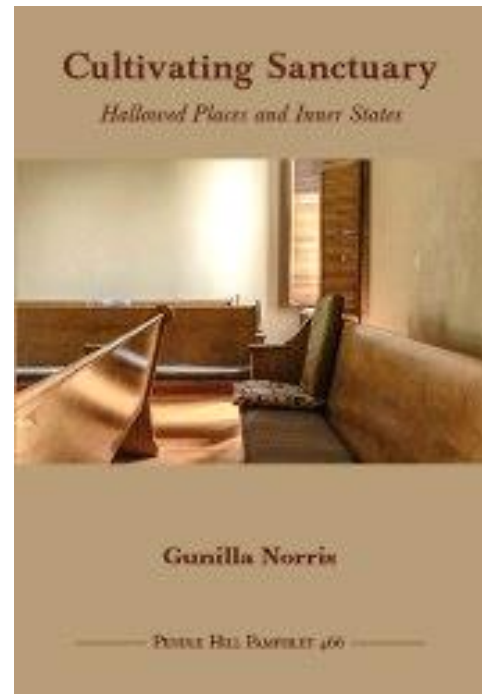
## Inspiration

### A Poem



Pendle Hill Retreat Center – photo by Jim Spickard

### Cultivating Sanctuary



In scary times, there is a deep need to have a sanctuary, a place for rest, renewal, and comfort. We have such a place inside, but, when we're afraid, it's hard to know it and feel it. If we dare to trust what has already been given to us by Spirit, we will discover an inner place of grace to return to again and again. In it we can find a connection with Spirit, hope, each other, and life itself. To cultivate such a sanctuary we need to honor our essence and be in solidarity with it. And we need to share that common depth with one another in our Quaker meeting houses and places of worship. This pamphlet is offered in the hope it can be of use in helping us become sanctuaries for each other and for our aching world.

December 2021: \$7.50 at

<https://bit.ly/3b8qOKf>

## Food for Thought

### Am I a Christian?

By: ReyLo

I'll answer that, but first, I need to know what you mean by "Christian"?

For the last several decades, I've been on a predictable expedition. I traversed well-worn paths blazed by so many before me, living the life of a suburban, politically conservative, middle-class husband, father, and God-fearing citizen of the best nation in the world. I was blissful in my ignorance until the day I wrestled with the betrayal of a local church I'd given my life to, evangelical support for Donald Trump, and a divorce, all of which fundamentally shifted everything I thought I knew.

As the dismantling of my life unfolded before me, I knew I would never be the same. Everything was gone, and it left me wondering if all was lost. It quickly became apparent that my circumstances had activated a "reset" button. It was time to start over.

As I slowly, piece by piece, reconstructed life in my new reality, everything was up for grabs. No part of who I am was left unaffected, including my spiritual life.

If by "Christian" you mean someone who wants to dig deep into what Jesus meant when he equated a love for God with a love for the people around you, then yes. I am a Christian.

-REYLO

Today, if someone asks me if I'm a Christian, I answer with a question...several questions, actually.

By "Christian," do you mean a person whose belief in Jesus Christ presupposes conservative political views, sees social issues in black and white, and for whom Biblical inerrancy and a literal interpretation of Scripture are hills on which to die? Someone who insists the God who created the universe is best understood via the constraints of a human-made theological framework? If by "Christian," you mean those things, then no. I am not a Christian.

If by "Christian" you mean someone who longs deeply to know what exactly it was the early followers of Jesus Christ experienced, what it was to hear him speak, perform miracles, or huddle together after his death, then yes.

If by "Christian" you mean someone who wants to dig deep into what Jesus meant when, in response to the religious gatekeepers of his day, he equated a love for God with love for the people around you, then yes. I am a Christian.

I've been around the Evangelical subculture enough to know what will be thought of this. Words like backslide, apostate, and maybe even heretic come to mind. However, I'm secure enough in my faith not to care too much about any of that.

These days, a quote from Donald Miller resonates with where I find myself.

“My most recent faith struggle is not one of intellect. I don’t really do that anymore. Sooner or later you just figure out there are some guys who don’t believe in God and they can prove He doesn’t exist, and there are some other guys who do believe in God and they can prove He does exist, and the argument stopped being about God a long time ago and now it’s about who is smarter, and honestly I don’t care.”

I have met people who are similar to me, and we’ve determined to huddle close as we work through the hurts, doubts, questions, and unexpected twists of life and how they impact faith.

As for me, I don’t know where I’m going, but I know well the culture of white, patriarchal, conservative Evangelicalism, where I spent three decades. I know I can’t go back there, and I don’t want to.



## Calling all artists!

Seeking writers, poets, photographers, or those with thoughts to share.

Our newsletter is now accepting contributions in the form of:

- photographs 📷
- drawings 🖋️
- poems 📖
- blog-style writing, no more than 500 words 📝
- other artistic forms
- suggestions of podcasts, books, or articles to peruse.

**Topics:** Meeting news, activism, spirituality, social justice, and/or other Quaker-related content. We welcome contributors of all backgrounds, so recommend your f/Friends!

If you are interested, e-mail: [newsletter@saquakers.org](mailto:newsletter@saquakers.org)

Friends Meeting of San Antonio  
7052 N Vandiver  
San Antonio, Texas 78209

Subscribe by joining the Newsletter list at [SanAntonioQuakers.org](http://SanAntonioQuakers.org) and responding to the verification email.

---

*Sign up to receive an email when this newsletter is posted at the Meeting website.  
Write us at [newsletter@saquakers.org](mailto:newsletter@saquakers.org) if you wish a snail-mail copy.*