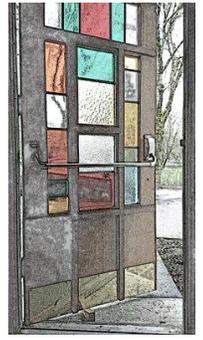


Thresholds

Opening Doorways to Connection, Clarity, and Transformation



Events

Wed, Feb 1, 6-8 pm

High School Youth Group

Thurs, Feb 2, 7 pm, WHF

Fifth Day Worship Group

Sun, Feb 5, after worship and snack

Kindling Conversation: Aging and the Village Movement in Portland

Mon, Feb 6, 10:30-12

Biblical Tensions and Toddler Chaos

Tues, Feb 7, 6-8 pm

Middle School Youth Group

Tues, Feb 7, 7 pm

Welcoming Ways meeting

Wed, Feb 8, 7 pm

Worship-Sharing

Sat, Feb 11, 8:30-4 pm, WHF

Living Our Ministry Retreat

Sun, Feb 12

Business Meeting

Wed, Feb 15, 6-8 pm

High School Youth Group

Thurs, Feb 16, 7 pm, WHF

Fifth Day Worship Group

Sat, Feb 18

Youth Group Golf Outing

Tues, Feb 21, 6-8 pm

Middle School Youth Group

Wed, Feb 22, 7 pm

Taizé-style worship

Sun, Feb 25, after worship

Potluck

Sun, Feb 25, 2-6 PM, Hillsboro

Friends Church

Discussion on new Yearly Meeting

Tues, Feb 28, 6:30-7:30

Youth Group Starbucks and Quakers

Book Discussion

West Hills Friends Church, www.westhillsfriends.org, 503-246-7654

NWYM Reaches Decision to “Restructure” into Two Yearly Meetings

**See page 6 for the full text of the Administrative Council
announcement, published on 1/28/17.**

Shall West Hills Wave This Flag?

By Lynsley Rollins

On February 12, at our monthly business meeting, we will decide whether to display in front of the church a red, white and blue sign shaped like an American flag, emblazoned with eight progressive values. Anne Anderson proposed doing so, and Jayne Calkins shared that the sign was designed by friends of hers.

If, in accord with Quaker process, you'd like to weigh in on whether to display the sign, where to place it, how long to leave it up, whether to serve it with root-beer floats, or anything else, then show up for the February meeting.



A Seed Waiting to Sprout?

An Update on the WHF Benefit Concert from Jim Nail

The idea of a benefit concert originated with a conversation I had with Claire shortly after the election. It was further kindled when I met with Adam Sweeney and we named a date: Friday, January 13. John Munson hopped on board with a lot of good ideas, especially about the recipient of the benefit funds—American Friends Service Committee, empowering the local immigrant population.

But I began to get a leading that we were rushing this, and indeed, the weather on January 13 proved my leading correct. Now we are locked [\[more on page 2\]](#)

Youth Group News: Creating Space for our Teenagers on Sunday Morning

by Mark Pratt-Russum

“How do we get our teenagers more involved in the life of the Church?” It might be one of the most consistent questions asked in faith communities throughout the world. It is a question that I have wrestled with since my first weeks at WHF six years ago. What are we doing to help answer this question?

Often churches start with what seems easiest: more electric guitar on stage, maybe change the aesthetic of the worship space, encourage the pastor to wear jeans. That might get them in the door, but once the novelty disappears (and it does, quickly), what is left? When I think about why our teens consistently come to youth group, it is because of one thing: community. Simply put, our teenagers look forward to being with one another.

On Sunday mornings, the window of time for connection is brief. Over the last few months, parents and youth have talked about what it would look like to create more time for connection with one another. Our hope is that in the coming weeks we will have something new for our teenagers.

The idea is fairly simple. Following the message on Sunday morning, our teens would be invited into a time together during the duration of open worship, joys/concerns, and announcements. During that time, they would reflect on the queries presented at the end of the message and spend some time checking in with each other in a structured way.

One adult will accompany the teens to their gathered space and do their best to hold the intention of the time with them. We are currently looking for folks who would be interested in helping in this way! Our hope is that this will be a time for us to expand the sense of connection the adults have to our teens at WHF, and to build community across generational lines. If this sounds interesting to you, let’s go grab some coffee and talk about it!

If you want more information about youth group, please speak to Mark Pratt-Russum, or email: mark-at-westhillsfriends-dot-org

Continued from page 1, Concert

into winter mode, with our concerns tending toward frozen pipes and broken bones from slipping on the ice. But spring is on the way, and I, for one, am surging with music that longs to be heard and put to good use. I suspect there are others. This has been a good lesson in waiting and listening. This can't come from my willful energy. It has to emerge like the green buds and sprouts now so dormant.

Maybe *Thresholds* is a good place to send out the call. Are you out there? Do you want to do this? Choose your preferred conduit of communication and let's see what happens!

Discussion Groups Forming

Alyss is organizing discussion groups!

As a first step, she would like to hear from anyone willing to host. If you'd like to host a gathering, please contact Alyss Broderick, alyss05-at-yahoo-dot-com

Each group will meet six times to read and discuss the “Come to the Table” discussion guide. <http://www.westhillsfriends.org/table1.pdf>

Who’s Who at West Hills Friends: Leaders, Committees, and Groups

Pastor:	Mike Huber: mike-at-westhillsfriends-dot-org	Kitchen Coordinator:	Rachel Hampton
Pastor (Youth):	Mark Pratt-Russum: mark-at-westhillsfriends-dot-org	Music:	Jim Nail
Presiding Clerk:	Doreen Crail	Newsletter:	Mark Pratt-Russum
Recording Clerk:	Dover Norris-York	Nominating:	Margie Simmons
Treasurer:	Mitch Bixby	NWYM reps:	Julie Peyton, Keri Kimberly
Elders:	Keri Kimberly (Clerk), Jayne Calkins, April Vanderwal	Pastoral Care:	Mike Huber
Ushers:	Mark Guenther	Peace Concerns:	Kay Ellison
Decorations:	Kara Romero	Retreat:	Tim Crail
Directory:	Sally Gillette	Story Committee:	Sally Gillette
Earth Care:	Julie Peyton	Stewardship:	Frank Verhoorn
Hunger Concerns:	Dana Hawkins	Social:	Dover Norris-York
		Traveling Ministry:	Jen Seamans and Terri Beardsley

Quaker Ink: Mark Pratt-Russum

I now have four tattoos on my body, each marking a significant “threshold” moment in my life. There are times where I know I’ve walked through a door into a new understanding of myself. Marking those moments feels important to me. The largest tattoo I have on my body is a piece honoring both the transition into fatherhood and the transition out of my understanding of God as father.

During the months that my wife Beth was pregnant with our son Kade, I was going through another phase of disillusionment with “God the Father.” As I continued to unpack my own complicated relationship with my father, it was clear that the image I had of God was important for my ongoing relationship with him/her. Yet, my evangelical upbringing was making it hard to fully abandon this now-unhelpful image of God.

As Beth’s belly continued to grow, and we started to prepare to welcome Kade into the world, I began taking notice of how inspired I was by Beth. During our birthing classes, I learned a lot about the relationship between mother and baby during pregnancy and the hours and days following the birth. The word “nurture” continued coming up, and I was continually drawn to both the soft images of mothers and the strong images of mothers in the birthing process.

On the day Kade was born, I cried and cried. Something so clearly had changed for me. Having witnessed that miraculous transition—from pushing out new life to instantly cradling it—was so profound that words still fail me. I know that is true of many of these “threshold” moments—we just need people to trust that we are different, especially when no explanation is possible.

That is why, when people point to the tattoo on my left arm and say, “What is the story behind that tattoo?” I often stumble with my words and feel as if I’ve failed at expressing myself. The Madonna and Child imagery replicated throughout art history has always drawn me in. So I decided to use a similar style for this tattoo. I wanted this to be a marking of how my experience of witnessing the mothering journey finally allowed me to see the way in which God as Mother serves me well. My image of God has a nurturing, loving, soft side to it now, as well as unspeakable and inspirational strength.



In a Word: Programmed or Unprogrammed—That is the Question

By Julie Peyton

A few words about me: After 35 years of programmed worship in other denominations, I came to Quakers seeking (and hoping) to hear God speak to me in the silence. At my first visit to a Quaker meeting (Davis, California; 1992) I heard that Voice. Back in Oregon, I was not seeking a programmed meeting, certainly not an Evangelical one, but that was where I felt led. Yet I crave the unprogrammed experience, so I have always sought out the other Friends, through the Pacific NW Quaker Women’s Theology Conference, the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), a weekly Bible study at an unprogrammed meeting, a midweek unprogrammed meeting for worship, and the Convergent Friends. This coming year I’ll be doing a lot more cross-Quaker work as part of FWCC’s “traveling ministry corps.” The hope is that Friends’ meetings will invite one or more of us to visit and talk about our tradition and Quaker experience, finding the common ground and challenging each other to go deeper into this *way of life*.

The obvious difference between programmed and unprogrammed meetings is in the form: programmed worship is pre-planned with song leaders, a sermon, etc.; unprogrammed Friends gather to wait in silence [\[more on page 5\]](#)

LIVING OUR MINISTRY IN A SECULAR WORLD

Saturday, Feb. 11, 2017 8:30 AM-4:00 PM

West Hills Friends 7425 SW 52nd Ave. WHF Phone 503-246-7654

A one-day retreat

Co-led by Marge Abbott, Terri Beardsley,
Glee Love, David Peyton, Julie Peyton,
and Joe Snyder.

Friends have believed the Spirit can guide our words and actions in a way that will help create a more loving, just society. Noticing and attending to God's call to ministry—to the service that is there for each of us to take up-- is at the heart of life among Friends.

During this day together we will have time to reflect on and share about our personal sense of calling and consider how our faith brings us into the realities of a too often hostile world.

Together we can consider how we recognize our callings and how we communicate with others, through words or simply by being, about the way our actions are grounded in the Spirit.

- Considering My Calling In The World
- Being In The World, Not Of It
- Shifting Language and Images For Encountering the World
- Naming My Calling In The World

Many of us think of “workshops” as events where you show up with your note-taking muscles ready to work. In other words, we come expecting to be offered lots and lots of information. Marge Abbott's workshops offer primarily an experience that arises from those who show up. (Do not fear; there will also be some information.) With the theme of Living Our Ministry, Marge & Co. expect to process how each and every one of us (who believe there is “that of God” in all) lives faithfully in this world. From Godly bus drivers to stay-at-home dads to spirit-filled musicians to cat-herding middle-school teachers—all of us have something to bring. You can expect to learn a language to help you talk about your Work, to be encouraged to name what it is you do, and to worship in the manner of Friends.

Cost of the workshop is \$0-\$10 at the door, as you are able! Lunch and childcare included!

Pre-register for the workshop by e-mailing marge_abbott@earthlink.net by February 1st. In that e-mail, please indicate: 1) Food requirements/restrictions; 2) If childcare will be needed, number of children and their ages.

Continued from page 3, Programmed

for the Holy Spirit (or Inward Light, or Divine Presence, or Living Christ) to prompt a song or other words, but a completely silent meeting is not unusual. That said, the important differences are much deeper than the forms, and they follow the faultlines in the Religious Society of Friends.

Background

“But as I had forsaken the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those esteemed the most experienced people; for I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. When all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do, then, oh, then, I heard a voice which said, ‘There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition’; and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy.”

George Fox, from his Journal

“Give over thine own willing, give over thine own running, give over thine own desiring to know or be anything, and sink down to the seed, which God sows in thy heart, and let that be in thee and grow in thee and breathe in thee and act in thee, and thou shalt find by sweet experience that the Lord knows that and loves and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of life, which is God’s portion.”

Isaac Penington, from Some Directions to the Panting Soul

“...his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.”

Jesus, speaking of himself as The Good Shepherd (John 10)

All Quakers have this in common with Evangelical Christianity: we expect Christ to be present to us, we expect unmediated access to God, we expect to recognize that Voice when we hear it. The earliest Friends (such as Fox and Penington quoted above) therefore put aside the forms, the program, the noise, to give time and space for God to speak directly. *They gathered to listen instead of to speak.* “The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.” (Habakkuk 2:20)

The first deep splits among Friends occurred over theology about 200 years ago. Broadly speaking, one group wanted to enforce more clear adherence to orthodox Christian theology; the other group wanted to keep the no-creeds tradition, staying away from what the early Friends considered “notions”¹ and allowing diversity of thought. The more orthodox kicked out the more liberal, with the predictable result that the kicked-out Friends resented the Christian orthodoxy of the kickers.

The unprogrammed form was maintained by Friends until roughly 150 years ago in the USA, when some of the more explicitly Christian Quakers began adopting the forms of the churches around them that were experiencing a renewal of faith and vitality. Along with the hymn-singing and the sermons and the pastors came the creeds, and from there came more splits over theology and practice. The more liberal Quakers kept the silent, waiting worship even as they moved farther from the Christian tradition. A third major branch, Conservative Friends, have kept both the centrality of Jesus and the Bible, as well as the unprogrammed meeting for worship.

The programmed Friends and unprogrammed Friends have continued to drift apart and away from the ideals and expectations of the first Friends, who held both the form of expectant worship and a profound faith in the voice that said to George Fox, “There is one, even Christ Jesus, who can speak to thy condition.”

Over the last maybe 80 years, there have been attempts to heal the schisms. A few yearly meetings on the East coast have reunited. FWCC was created in the 1930s to get Friends from all branches together to talk. In recent years, with the advent of blogging, Quakers have found each other asking the same questions about this way of life, about what it means to live as a Quaker in this present world. Their conversations led to the formation of Convergent Friends; there is a lively group in the greater Portland area that meets on the last Sunday of the month.

¹ From the WHF website, “Friends would rather know God than know *about* God. Consequently, we have been skeptical of creeds and theological abstractions. Human ideas are sometimes called ‘notions,’ (or even ‘airy notions’) as a reminder that their value is limited.”

To: Northwest Yearly Meeting

Date: January 28, 2017

From: Administrative Council, Brad Holton, clerk

Since the end of 2016 Yearly Meeting sessions, the clerks, along with the Superintendent and the Administrative Council, have labored and wrestled together over the issues currently dividing NWYM. Following the called representatives meeting on December 9 and 10, the clerks and Superintendent separately and together discerned that the Yearly Meeting is so evenly divided that consensus around the human sexuality issue is not likely in the foreseeable future. These leaders also agreed that without some decisive action, the Yearly Meeting would fracture one, two or four churches at a time, but it would fracture.

Possible options were discussed by the Administrative Council in retreat on January 12-14. The AC prayed, discussed and through clear discernment made a decision and presented it to the representatives at mid-year board meetings.

At the representatives meeting held this January 27 and 28 in Newberg, the clerks and Administrative Council announced their decision to guide the Yearly Meeting through a restructuring process. The restructure is as follows:

Newly Formed Yearly Meeting	Northwest Yearly Meeting
<p>This yearly meeting would embrace a revised <i>Faith and Practice</i>.</p> <p>This group would be composed of meetings that have decided to practice and/or have recorded an affirming stance.</p> <p>This may include churches who have internal disagreement but have agreed to align their practices with the newly formed yearly meeting <i>Faith and Practice</i>.</p>	<p>This yearly meeting would be composed of meetings who align with the current Northwest Yearly Meeting <i>Faith and Practice</i>.</p> <p>This may include churches who have internal disagreement but have agreed to align their practices with the current NWYM <i>Faith and Practice</i>.</p>

A transition team, formed of Elders, AC members, Trustees, and other at-large members will facilitate the creation of a newly formed yearly meeting. Churches who hold an affirming statement may be a part of the newly formed yearly meeting or may choose to be independent. It is the intent of the Administrative Council that churches becoming part of the newly formed yearly meeting or separating from NWYM during this restructuring process may retain ownership of their church property, along with any indebtedness. All other issues of property, assets, and related organization connection questions raised because of the restructuring process will be addressed by that transition team. The transition team will be approved by the AC and report to them.

This process will be a lengthy one, and the AC is committed to completing the transition with dignity and honor for all churches. Our goal is to complete this transition process on or before June 30, 2018.