



Yearly Meetinghouse, McNabb, Illinois

ILLINOIS YEARLY MEETING

of the Religious Society of Friends
(Quakers)

Consisting of 21 Quaker Meetings and Worship Groups
in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Wisconsin

June 2013

To Friends everywhere:

Using the theme of *Joy: a gift of the Spirit* we welcomed some 200 Friends (children and adults) to the green grass and tall trees, thankful that the heavy rain of three weeks earlier had left the surrounding corn and soybean fields returning to life.

Visitors from two other yearly meetings commented on the large number of children present who are laughing a lot. During the 7th day meeting for worship we heard memorial minutes from many of our monthly meetings relating the stories of Friends who have died during the last year who have given us joy for many years.

We each find the language to express our joy of being held in the love of God: the Spirit, the Light, the living Christ.

We learned that our Administrative Coordinator who has served the yearly meeting so effectively for many years will be taking up new pursuits. We are grateful for her good work and wish her joy in her new work. Our Treasurer who has simplified the way we look at financial reports has finished her term and we thank her for offering us joy in reading spreadsheets!

There is both joy and challenge in the issues we face with our buildings which are old and not energy efficient. We come here to feel the prairie wind, see stars, lightning bugs, trees and native plants as well as to take care of the business of the yearly meeting. Much of the year, the campus and buildings are not used. How do we envision wider use of our historic site, and how do we find the resources with which to do it?

We are being asked to be more welcoming and inclusive to everyone within our yearly meeting community. We wrestled with welcoming the LGBTQI community members who are part of us. What is the language we want to use that would convey our commitment to diversity among us? Do we commit to educate ourselves about what may seem to be indifference and ignorance? And do we commit to finding the language and educating ourselves?

Another expression of joy from a parent whose child is just four years old: feeling overjoyed that this child feels free to play with all of the other children and be cared for by all of the caring adults. "No committee meeting or worship sharing happens without the joyous sounds of children in the background."

Brian Drayton, author of *On Living with a Concern for Gospel Ministry*, addressed us on 7th day evening to challenge us to find joy in difficult times. Helene Pollock shared her creative gifts of joy on 4th day evening.

We send our greetings to Friends around the world, and look forward to joining you in The Joy of the Spirit.

Illinois Yearly Meeting

Adult Young Friends Epistle

Greetings from the Adult Young Friends of Illinois Yearly Meeting (ILYM) to Friends everywhere,

Our epistle arises in the context of a considered minute in our Yearly Meeting's Annual Meeting for Business in "support of LGBTQI people and Marriage Equality for sexual minorities." While our Yearly Meeting has not as of this writing reached unity on this minute, we would like to offer our testimony:

Adult Young Friends (AYF) has heard with loving concern the discussion that has taken place surrounding the minute from Northside Friends Meeting. We know that we as Friends can stumble over words, and each other, in the process of discernment. Friends historically have been on the forefront of working to welcome many marginalized groups. However, we often forget the messiness of this process. AYF asks that Friends hold each other in loving kindness, keeping in mind that "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

At ILYM this group of AFYers has experienced the radical love that Quakers can give, and are aware that others in our Meetings do not feel fully welcome. We believe that at this time, love that is implicit needs to be made explicit. There may also be other times; Why do we have to be worried about a longer list of people whom we love? While words can never fully express the spirit of Friends' testimonies, where they are given, we may use them. AYFers will continue to educate ourselves in order to create spaces for continuing discernment for our Meetings and the Yearly Meeting as a whole.

With love,
The Adult Young Friends of Illinois Yearly Meeting

High School Friends Epistle 2013

We came on Wednesday Three new teens in the cabin We welcomed new Friends	Mark
Spent the night bonding Played card games and big wind blows Watched movie with kids	Sean
We brought back clearness We had no clue so Rose helped Newcomers were cleared	Claire
Made paper outside Pondered our community Rode in a hayrack	Mason
Failed canoeing Too much rain & scary storms Tradition upheld	Christina
Business meeting (yawn) Square dancing on the lawn Confusing but fun	Raffy
Ava drew first blood In the friendly game of wink Bruises next morning	Annie
We went to Starved Rock Hiked a lot and slipped in mud Waterfalls were great	Gavin
Tie-dyed Quaker shirts Messy color everywhere My hands are still dyed	Mark
Walked to the graveyard Heard fearsome coyote sounds T'was awfully freaky	Sean
See saw is no more The old man finished it off Children mourn its death	Claire

ILYM 2013 Epistle from Young Friends aged 10-14

Greetings from the Illinois Yearly Meeting middle school age 10-14 group. Our program centered on the theme of joy.

We watched the movie *Billy Elliot*, about a boy who followed his dream to be a ballet dancer in spite of his community's expectations that he be a coal miner.

We read the graphic novel, *Drama*, by Raina Telgemeier, about a girl who accomplished a personal goal of stagecraft.

Both book and film shared the following themes:

1. You can't experience joy unless you be yourself;
2. Reaching goals involves fighting for the right to pursue that goal as well as hard work, sacrifice, and perseverance to accomplish it;
3. Self discovery. Callie found she didn't need to always like a boy. Jesse discovered he was gay. Billy Elliot did not like boxing at all yet loved to dance. Michael discovered he was gay.

Drumming was an activity where we all made something cool together. It kept us present, and we felt included and creative.

We learned three ways to program ourselves to feel joy. The first is to make a gratitude list. The second is to list our "wins," our small, everyday accomplishments. The third is to put a pencil or toothbrush across our mouth to guarantee a smile.

We practiced circus tricks such as juggling, stilt walking, diabolo, and plate spinning. The tricks were fun and made us laugh. Accomplishing a skill feels good and cancels out feeling useless.

We are Amal, Camille, Daniel, Eloise, Kaitlyn, Kaleigh, Kiva, Liam, Marlena, Nathan, Quinn, and adults: Bill and Meredith.

ILYM 2013 Epistle from Young Friends aged 8-9

We are the eight and nine year olds of Illinois Yearly Meeting: Anya, Tiegan, Riona, Faith, Heidi, Lily and Jasmine. Our teacher was Sebrina who invited several guests to share stories and information with us. We met every day from 9am to Noon.

On Thursday we talked about the lessons from Jonah the Prophet, recycled envelopes and hung them on the bulletin board in the Meeting House, and explored the lower level of the barn. We wrote a story: "The Mystery of the Barn."

On Friday we learned how to write our names in Arabic, wrote to the students at the Friends School in Ramallah and learned about how eight year old children travel to school in Palestine. Later, during a walk we learned about many of the plants in the prairie. We ended our time together by cleaning the women's restroom in the campground.

Saturday we went back to the barn and, with the help of several adults, we explored the loft in the barn. We learned that the beams came from maybe Wisconsin about 150 years ago. After our snack, we helped clean out the storage area in the old shed. Most of the stuff had to be thrown away because of mice infestation but we were able to recycle some of it.

We ended our time this year by making jewelry with beads.

We had a good time.

We thank the following adults for sharing their time with us: Contessa Miller, Sandra Tamari, Noel Pavlovic, Chris Goode, Dennis McQueen and Joy Duncan.

ILYM 2013 Epistle from Young Friends aged 5-7

Dear Friends around the world,

We are writing to you from Illinois Yearly Meeting in McNabb, Illinois. On the first day we were "The Detective Girls"!!! We discovered milkweed and grasses and a poisonous flower. We found crystals in geodes and they were so pretty. And we even traded some. We had fun.

On the second day we talked about that Earth is the only home we have. We went to our special spot that had lots of milkweed. We counted five plants. We built houses with blocks. There was a new student and his name was Hunter.

On the third day we had two new students named Signe and Gwen. We made a sundial and traced the shadows. We made a snack in a solar oven. We went to our special spot again where we saw shiny blue-black little bugs. There was no wind.

We are thankful for Yearly Meeting and the cooks and everyone who helps make it a good time.

Gaby, Lorelei, Zara, Hunter, Signe, Gwen

ILYM 2013 Epistle from Young Friends aged 3-4

Dear Friends Everywhere,

We are the 3 to 4 year old children of Illinois Yearly Meeting. This year we had so much fun with our friends. On Wednesday, we made boxes – happy boxes. We put things we enjoy in the boxes like flowers, seashells, and dinosaurs. On Thursday, we read books about the wind. We listened to the wind. We made kites. We were playing with our kites and running. On Friday, we heard a story about a baby floating in a bubble. Then we blew lots of bubbles. Every day we sang "Good Morning, Jak sie macz, Bon jour, Aloha." We danced. We had snacks. We had apples. We saw spiders. We read books and listened. We made books. We played with My Little Pony. We played with stickers and Play-doh. We sang, "Thank You Lord for giving us Life" and other things like breakfast, cars, and stars. We did ALL these things because they make us feel happy.

From, Sam Davis, Elias Drew, Griffin Jager-Cash, Thomas Jager-Cash, Niall Duncan, Hannah Laird, Sophia McQueen, John McQueen, Collin Sues