

Clerk's Call

Pacific Yearly Meeting, 2024

Unprogrammed Quakers, beginning with George Fox, have claimed the concept of being “an experimental” tradition. We try out ideas, leadings, insights in community. George Fox said: “*And when all my hopes in them (the priests and preachers) and in all were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me nor could 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,’ then when I heard it my heart did leap for joy...And this I knew experimentally.*” --paragraph 11 in George Fox’s journal.

The theme for our annual session in July, 2024, will be **Transformation**. That doesn’t mean we know where we are headed, but we are invited to seek, to ask questions, to map where we have been, and to see if we can chart a path forward together.

“I pin my hopes on quiet processes and small circles, where transforming events take place,” --- Rufus Jones. <https://qfp.quaker.org.uk/passage/24-56/>

We will be blessed by a key note speaker, “.O” (see listeningheartlove.org) who will be zooming in from Philadelphia to be with us. To address both environmental and social justice issues, .O has made health and well-being their life’s purpose. S/He has worked for over 25 years as a practitioner and educator in the areas of body work, self-care, social services, and health care support. S/He is a seasoned facilitator and leads workshops for individuals and groups to support their goals of healing our society’s legacies of racism, sexism, homophobia, and class privilege in order to build healthier and stronger relationships and organizations. Drawing on their Quaker values rooted in love, peace, and social justice, .O’s practice embraces a care-based, trauma-informed, healing justice approach to community organizing in support of social and environmental justice. .O is a staff member and spiritual midwife of Philly Thrive, a Philadelphia-based environmental justice organization focused on improving the health and well-being of the city’s residents and supporting a just transition to a cleaner, healthier future. S/He is a founding member of Alternatives To Gun Violence, a community healing collaborative committed to social justice in the Philadelphia area. A longtime Quaker, .O is a member of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, and leads *Love and Respect Transform*, a ministry that focuses on deepening our understanding and experience of alternatives to social and environmental violence by exploring the transformative power of love.

When we talked with .O about the difference between “experience” and “experiment” they lifted up “experiment” as having to do with knowledge, the ability to observe and test the mind’s formulations and “experience” as a reality check, gathering the bodies’ wisdom and synthesizing the information into holistic action. .O describes themselves as a very somatic, a person who “lives in their body,” literally experiencing what is real somatically.

As we head into this transformative journey, the positive news is we will not all agree on the state of our yearly meeting, or where we want to go. We will have different visions and different priorities. The question is *Where is Spirit leading us? What does listening to each other and Spirit look like? What changes might we need to undergo in order to act on what we discover?*

“Listening another...into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another. Douglas Steere, 1955, [On listening to another : Steere, Douglas V. \(Douglas Van\), 1901-1995](#)

“The only promise Life makes is this: Things will change. And when they do, we can try something new. We will still be we. But we will be different. We might not fit together as well as we once did, or maybe we’ll fit together even better.” Mary Klein, Editor, [Western Friend](#), November 2023

Come join us on this new chapter of our adventure as a faith community. We will be meeting in a new space, on the Whittier College Campus, in Whittier, California, and with Friends online in a more robust hybrid format. More spaces will have zoom capacity, and students from the campus will help facilitate these hybrid encounters.

We shall not be able to rebuild our shattered world until we recover our faith in eternal realities, and we shall not do that until we discover spirit within ourselves. Rufus Jones, Page 8 Christian Mystics, 1999-2014

We come together celebrating our diversity across many differences and open to learning from each other about others and about ourselves. Where are we headed as a community? What are we bringing to the broken world around us and to the earth as she attempts to teach us her ways, her wisdom?

“A worshipful community is a healing community in which we reveal ourselves without fear, trusting our vulnerability to that Spirit which alone knows our hearts. There is a dialogue of soul with Spirit and the sharing of that with each other. In these ways we lift each other up tenderly.”
– Shirley Ruth, *Friends Bulletin*, July 1982

Laura Magnani, presiding clerk
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