

**“Know one another in that which is eternal.”** *George Fox*

**SEYM Gathering 2022**

## **Worship Sharing**

**Quotes & Queries 1 • Thursday, April 14**

**“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”** *Ephesians 4:2*

“...A family should be a learning community in which children not only learn skills and values from parents, but in which adults learn new ways of experiencing things and seeing things through young eyes. The family is a place to practice being ‘valiant for the truth’. We can live lives of integrity, letting both ‘yes’ and ‘no’ come out of the depth of truth within us, careful of the truth in all our dealings, so that our words and our lives speak the same message. We cannot expect our children to be honest with us or anyone else if they hear us stretching the truth for convenience or personal gain.”  
*~Elizabeth Watson*

“Slowly we learn that we are all broken, all less than perfect, and that God loves us, each one, wonderfully even so. Slowly we learn that the real love for one another we crave is not the ideal love of my personal façade for your façade but the imperfect intent to love that my flawed self can offer to the real you.”  
*~Lloyd Lee Wilson*

“Our task is to bind up the broken-hearted, to be a cup of strength in times of agony, to set [people] on their feet when the foundations seem to be caving in.”  
*~Rufus M. Jones*

“The real question is: who has the responsibility to uphold human rights? The answer to that is everyone.”  
*~Madeleine Albright*

“These are unprecedented times, both in the wider world and in our Quaker communities. The pandemic has touched every part of our lives. The unjust racist underbelly of our wider society and in our own communities has become even more exposed during this time. There is grief in all of this, just as much as there is potential for healing and a deepening of community. Our Quaker faith, if we can truly and deeply live into it, invites us into anti-oppressive ways of being. For one, we believe in continuing revelation and listening to the next thing we are led to do. This means to be faithful is to move towards change, rather than maintaining things as they are. We also believe that we cannot have the entire truth until we seek it collectively and gather all the different voices. And we believe in our interconnection and dependence on each other, seeking way forward not as individuals but collectively.”  
*~LJ Boswell*

“We’re living in the midst of many crises, much fear and anger, and so much injustice. Many of us don’t have the kind of inner reserves we used to. Our weariness has us struggling to remain resourceful, patient, and resilient. Even small things are harder. It’s urgently important that we go gently—being patterns and examples, activists, workers for justice, givers and healers, artists, nurturers, elders, parents, friends, witnesses to the Light all the while being ready to receive moments of grace, joy, hope, or comfort. This is a time for practicing compassion in every step.”  
*~Gretchen Baker-Smith*

### **Queries**

1. How open are we to learning from the young?
2. How does integrity inform our relationships as Friends and our witness to the wider world?
3. What are ways we can be our true selves rather than project a façade to others?
4. What can we do to stand up for human rights when “foundations seem to be caving in”?

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# Worship Sharing

Quotes & Queries 2 • Friday, April 15

“Love one another.” *John 13:34*

“A Quaker family, whatever its configuration, is rooted in the wider community of Friends. We believe that through the family we learn that the source of human love is God's love for us. The foundation of spiritual life is laid in the family. As members of the family foster their own spiritual growth, children come to sense the presence of God. This foundation gives them an assurance and security that helps them order their relationships with God, with others, with nature, and with themselves.”  
~*Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association*

“Briefly stated, the principle of the Inner Light is this: In every human soul there is implanted a certain element of God's own spirit and divine energy. The element, known to the early Friends as ‘that of God in everyone,’ or the ‘seed,’ or the ‘seed of Christ,’ or the ‘seed of Light,’ means to them in the words of John ‘the Light that enlightens everyone who comes into the world.’”  
~*Mary K. Blackmar*

“We have a long way to go. So let us hasten along the road, the road of human tenderness and generosity. Groping, we may find one another's hands in the dark.”  
~*Emily Greene Balch*

“Our capacity to love our neighbor is diminished because we don't do such a good job of loving ourselves...the more mercy that you have for yourself, the more you will have for the next person. The more patience and tolerance that you have for the aspects of yourself with which you are not comfortable, the more patience and tolerance you are going to have for the next person.”  
~*John Calvi*

“The thing I hold on to, is that when I am experiencing or witnessing oppression, the harm is already in the room. Naming it is the first step in both stopping it and healing it. We can't heal what we can't talk about or express. I don't want my naming to simply transfer pain to another, I want it to interrupt the transmission of harm in ways that not only create the space for something different in that moment, but create shared futures with less harm, with less oppression. I will forever be learning how to do this. As a Religious Society whose core theology is that of the Living Christ/Light/Spirit/Divine in each person, this stepping in with each other is the truest form of prayer I know. How can I better express my utter faith in your divinity than to step in with you when I see your actions deny the humanity and divinity of another? How can I ever hope to live God's promise of unconditional love in this world unless you are there to step in with me when I act or speak from anything other than that love? How can we learn to love without each other modeling all the myriad ways love can be? Our collective capacity to be Friends grows when we do the individual and interpersonal work of naming and addressing all the ways the world has taught us to not be Friends with each other.”  
~*Lisa Graustein*

“While our meeting houses were closed, Friends quickly adapted to digital worship, but I didn't attend. Much of the time I was too tired. I didn't want to open myself in expectant waiting to meet with the Divine. I didn't want to find God. Instead, I wanted to curl up tight and coat my soft and broken heart in hard layers until I was safe, like a turtle in its shell. To worship in the manner of Friends is to make yourself exquisitely vulnerable. To be part of a worshipping community is to share that vulnerability with others who are equally open. And I could not take the risk of being vulnerable; I didn't want to share my bruised and broken self with others. So, I packed the pain deep down and stayed away.”  
~*Bre-anne Brown*

### Queries

1. How clear are we on why Friends in the margins of our community may not be fully engaged?
2. Do I step up, step in, or step away regarding oppression? Am I able to name it when it occurs in families or among Friends?
3. How have I extended tenderness toward myself?
4. How do the ways I love self-God-neighbor intersect?

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Quotes & Queries 3 • Saturday, April 16

**“Don’t forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it.”**  
*~Hebrews 13:2*

“Black and Third World people are expected to educate white people as to our humanity. Women are expected to educate men. [LGBTQIA+ people] are expected to educate the hetero[normative] world. The oppressors maintain their position and evade their responsibility for their own actions. There is a constant drain of energy which might be better used in redefining ourselves and devising realistic scenarios for altering the present and constructing the future.”  
*~Audre Lorde*

“The Society of Friends is not a misnomer. We need each other. None of us has the whole picture, but all of us have that of God within us. On any given day, I may be nudged along by a 3-year-old’s joy, a middle-schooler’s passion, a young adult’s intentionality, a parent or adult’s generosity or humility, or an elder’s long view and grace. Each of us adds to the richness and layers in the meaning-making, the Seeking, of this life.”  
*~Gretchen Baker-Smith*

“Quaker belief that ‘there is that of God in everyone’ and ‘that of God in me speaks to that of God in you,’ are statements of our faith that we are connected or bound to one another just as we are bound to God. Our mutual interest in the life of the Spirit creates relationships, each to each and each to the whole.”  
*~Lynne Phillips*

“I hope that in the time to come, when those people gather, they will say that we cried. I hope they will say that we allowed our hearts to be broken open. I hope they will say that in the midst of such absence, we sought to be present with each other, to our neighbors, and to the Presence that accompanies our days. I hope they will say that we allowed ourselves to be changed by the recognition of the injustice in our society, by the ravaging of Creation, laid bare in new ways for some of us by the pandemic. I hope they will say that we celebrated birthdays, that we married, that we mourned. I hope they will say that we sought to serve. I hope they will say that we loved, and that this loving helped others to know how deeply they are beloved, no matter the weight of suffering, or isolation, or oppression any of us may experience. And I hope that our living helped make this more real. I hope they will say that we loved. Because the truth is this: whether we are a gathered people goes far beyond our capacity to be physically together. The reality of the gathering Friends have testified to transcends time and space. It transcends death.”  
*~Noah Merrill*

“Many of us seek community solely to escape the fear of being alone. Knowing how to be solitary is central to the art of loving. When we can be alone, we can be with others without using them as a means of escape.” *~Bell Hooks*

“For people living at a distance, people with social anxiety, people who don’t drive, don’t drive at night, people who are traveling, or are in any number of circumstances in which being in-person is hard, being able to join a committee, a meeting for worship, a meeting for business, worship sharing, and other meaningful opportunities remotely is a treasure beyond what you may imagine... I am worried that at some point people will say, “Ah, now we can get back to normal and be together in person!” Normal is such a cutting word. It’s also a word that carries projection and privilege in some cases. I’ve been trying for the last couple of years to substitute “common” for “normal” in conversation. It seems to leave more room for me to grow. Maybe at this time, I will also start swapping ‘familiar’ for ‘normal’ if it fits; as in, ‘I want things to go back to being more familiar’.”

*~Jennie Isbell-Shinn*

### Queries

1. How can I seek to ‘answer that of God’ in others who have a different sense of privilege and inclusion?
2. How can we expand our sense of gathering to include those on the edges as well as the cloud of witnesses?  
How will we know?
3. How is our community inclusive without putting the burden on others having to explain how they fit?
4. What does “know one another in that which is eternal” mean to me?