

# YARDLEY FRIENDS MEETING

## NEWSLETTER

March 2020

find us on  
facebook



65 North Main Street, Yardley PA 19067  
<http://yardleyfriendsmeeting.org/>

Meeting for Worship 10:00–11:00  
First Day School 10:15–11:00

Peg Smedley and Ted Taylor, Co-Clerks  
Ed Snyder, Newsletter Editor

### *This month at YFM*

#### **Mar 1**

Committee Meetings following rise of Meeting

#### **Mar 8**

Women's Group meets at 8:30

Men's Group meets at 8:30

Business Meeting following rise of Meeting

#### **Mar 12 (Thursday, 7 PM)**

David E. McCraw, Deputy General Counsel at The New York Times, will discuss his new book *Truth In Our Times: Inside the Fight for Press Freedom in the Age of Alternative Facts*

#### **Mar 15**

Adult education following Rise of Meeting – EQAT (Earth Quaker Action Team)

#### **Mar 22**

Adult education following Rise of Meeting; TBD

#### **Mar 29**

Adult education following Rise of Meeting - Sidney Gibson will discuss her trip to Japan.

### *Looking ahead*

#### **Apr 4**

FCNL Priorities Potluck. Details immediately below.

### *Around the Quarter/PYM*

#### **Mar 16**

Bucks Food for Friends, Fallsington. 5:30-7:30

### *Looking ahead*

#### **Jul 29-Aug 2**

PYM Annual Sessions

-----  
For more details and to see info on more activities in the Quarter, see the latest Quakerphernalia at [quakersbucks.org](http://quakersbucks.org).

If you have articles or announcements for Quakerphernalia, please contact Wendy Kane, the coordinator, at [quakersbucks@gmail.com](mailto:quakersbucks@gmail.com).

### **Your Francis and Betty Irwin calendar inspiration for the month**

Love is a friendship set to music.

Joseph Campbell

YFM Friends and Attenders will have an FCNL Priorities Potluck at the Meetinghouse on Saturday April 4, 2020 at 6 pm. After dinner the group will carefully choose 7 Priorities that represent what we feel to be the most important national issues for FCNL's lobbying and public education work during the 117th Congress (2021-2022).

Newsletters can be found on our website at <http://yardleyfriendsmeeting.org/news/> Email articles, pictures, book reviews, events to [ed@mrppplansinc.com](mailto:ed@mrppplansinc.com).

### Query 3. Deepening Our Faith: Spiritual Nurture

How does the meeting encourage the use of spiritual practices that deepen our faith, enhance the excitement of shared religious discovery and increase the possibility of spiritual transformation?

What is the nature of our shared experience of the Divine and how do we nurture our collective spiritual growth and transformation?

In what ways do we support each other in our spiritual journeys, in our search for God's will and in our efforts to increase understanding of humanity's relationship to life on earth?

How do we recognize, develop and nurture the spiritual gifts of all in our meeting?

*How do I incorporate into my personal and family life those daily practices that focus on continued spiritual growth, including worship, reflection and engagement with writings that nurture the soul?*

*How does my spiritual life integrate an understanding of a well-ordered relationship with the earth and deepen my reverence for the interconnectedness of all life?*

---

### PASTORAL CARE

The Pastoral Care committee is the group that meets in the conference room, right? Sometimes called "Care and Concern," this committee exists in most if not all Quaker meetings and takes on a variety of tasks. One of the most important is helping members and attenders who have physical, emotional, financial or spiritual needs. Sometimes this involves connecting someone with a care provider or a service. Sometimes it's stepping up to provide food or child care or a break for an exhausted caregiver. Sometimes it involves financial support. If someone in need of help feels a sounding board would be helpful, the Pastoral Care Committee can set up a small group to meet with that person privately. And sometimes it just involves checking in with members who haven't been around lately, or who are known to be dealing with serious personal issues. A sympathetic ear can be all that's needed.

I doubt this is news to most of you. But look again at those kinds of support. Most of us can do most of those things, at least to some extent. The responsibility of caring for one another in a community without a paid pastor rests in the hands of each of us. Most of us know at least one or two other members/attenders a bit beyond the "hello how ya doing" level. When you make a deeper connection, you provide a sympathetic ear (and you find one, too). You can huddle in the social room or on the benches outside the meeting room and have a private chat. Sometimes a hug is called for, a shared tear perhaps. An offer to help with a project or provide a ride somewhere can be balm to someone who is struggling. And if you're still at the "hello how ya doing" stage, there are opportunities to extend your friendship to another level by something as simple as asking a few questions, sharing a cup of coffee, having a laugh, remembering a name (or reading from the tag) and greeting the person with a welcoming smile.

Friends, this is all pastoral care, and in a healthy faith community everyone has a role and a responsibility. So yes, Pastoral Care is the committee that meets in the conference room—but it's also you, and me, and all of us. How cool is that?

*Submitted by the Pastoral Care Committee*



## Monthly tips from the Peace and Social Action Committee:

To continue with our goal of reducing our carbon footprint, the New York Times suggested three simple yet effective things we all can do to make a small difference:

1. **DON'T** rinse your dishes before you put them in the dishwasher. Sixty-five percent of dishwasher users still pre-rinse (including me), but it is not necessary and wastes thousands of gallons of water, to say nothing of dozens of kilowatt hours of heated hot water.
2. **HANG** your clothes out to dry as often as you can. Everyone should have a "solar" dryer or clothesline, and use it. If you forgo using your electric or gas dryer completely, you will save about \$90 a year, depending upon your utility costs and the amount of laundry you do.
3. **TURN OFF** the ice maker in your refrigerator. Using it costs your refrigerator 12 to 20 percent more energy. Ice cube trays accomplish the same end result with no extra cost.

---

**One can enjoy a wood fire worthily only when he warms his thoughts by it as well as his hands and feet.**  
- Odell Shepard (1884 – 1967; American professor, poet, and politician)

I think it began when Marshall Schmidt made an encouraging comment as I approached the fireplace in the meeting room on last First Day, February 23rd. I was trying to be proactive, and at 9:55, with minutes to spare before the appointed 10 AM settling-in time, I went to light the stack of wood carefully prepared by Jeff Bishop earlier in the week. If I am one of the first to enter the meeting room on First Day I have found myself taking on the role of chief fire-starter.

Paraphrasing Marshall, I was coached in my task: “the fire is what makes this meeting special.” I replied with brief words of agreement as I cranked open both flues and then lit the match to the wads of newspaper that Jeff had stuffed strategically into spaces between the logs. In seconds the fireplace was blazing, and closing the mesh fireplace screen, I began to settle into my experience of worship.

But the blaze sputtered and dimmed. And by the time Sandy Gibson seated herself to be warmed by the anticipated glow, the last flame licked itself out. Only smoke and half-hearted embers remained.

Remembering how important this fire is to not only Marshal, but to all of us in worship at Yardley Friends Meeting, I got up from my pew and headed to the pile of newspapers, choosing a thin stack that I then crumpled and stuffed underneath the smoldering pile. Satisfied, I relit the pile of logs, drew the curtain, and went back to my seat, noticing that a healthy group of Friends populated the meeting room, offering me a silently encouraging audience.

Once again, the blaze crackled, burned bright. And then it quickly abated – back to smoke and thin sparks.

A second time, maybe with more hope than skill, I tried the same effort, though this time I did juggle some logs around with a prayerful hope that all that was needed was a more creative use of space between each. I was aware of my audience as I tried this, hoping to make my work seem liturgical and sacred, and as Quakerly quiet as possible.

Similar process, and a similar result: a smoldering wood pile. Looking back to Ed Snyder, one I know to be able to help me out of previous Friendly tight spots, I silently pleaded for help. Ed, looking back at me with a sense of “sure, I’ll give it a try” bounded up to the front of the room. He armed himself with rolled paper logs, more loose newsprint, and settled himself on the hearth, determined to make this project a success. I watched him

insert the rolled logs in strategic nooks, liberally apply wadded newspaper, and with a touch of magic, sprinkle shards of wood kindling over the pile.

He didn't leave his perch on the fireplace sill until the fire was fully blazing, heartily cracking, and offering radiance that I was sure was finally warming Sandy, the closest patient observer.

At 10:10, with a fire finally lit and staying so, I was able to settle into worship, wondering how many of us were connecting the dots between the unusual difficulty of getting this fire to stay ablaze and any number of metaphors of finding success after repeated attempts.

Afterthoughts, at the rise of meeting, allowed our newest YFM member Rick Durham to offer his insight on how the fire-lighting drama that opened the morning's worship hour spoke to him. He vocalized what I had also been pondering: that it may take time before a new work or idea catches fire. I had been mulling over how many of us were needed to get to the end result. Jeff Bishop, our pyre builder (who, arriving later in the hour missed all the fun, and who also copped to forgetting to add kindling); me, our frustrated initial igniter; and Ed, who planted himself fire-side with determination to make our worship space what Marshall hoped it to be. Success in any worthy endeavor may not belong to the initial builder, or subsequent workers. But with the right tools, the right skill, or the patience to persevere, we can make it happen.

That's what makes our meeting special, along with our spectacular fireplace. We are a community of Spirit-led individuals, with loving hands and hearts, that make our spiritual journey together a success.

*Ted Taylor*

---

## **BOOK REVIEW**

### **ALMOST EVERYTHING: NOTES ON HOPE**

By Anne Lamott

By now, Anne Lamott is well known as a writer of spiritual essays and autobiographical memoirs. She writes with honesty and humor in her various books of her struggles as a person of faith dealing with addictions, poverty, dysfunctional family, dieting, self-image, death and other ever so tiny little issues, as she might put it. In her latest book, *Almost Everything*, she focuses more on finding the small evidences of hope amidst bleak times. It may sound like a downer, but this woman has a wonderfully light touch with such heavy subjects. And she does find hope. She opens with this statement: "I am stockpiling antibiotics for the apocalypse even as I await the blossoming of paperwhites on the windowsill in the kitchen."

And her conclusion is equally paradoxical, and equally hopeful: "Against all odds, no matter what we've lost, no matter what messes we've made over time, no matter how dark the night, we offer and are offered kindness, soul, light, and food, which create breath and spaciousness, which create hope, sufficient unto the day."

This was what I need to hear, and I need it over and over again.

*Betty Steckman*

### **Desperately seeking...Minutes!**

Rose Koch is spearheading an effort to catch up with our Minute recording at Swarthmore. We know they have Minutes through 1976, and we've found quite a few starting with 1993 (albeit a bit spotty through 1996). We have a big gap from 1977 to 1993; if anyone has any ideas, please contact Rose.