

community *

equality *

harmony *

integrity *

simplicity

OAK PARK FRIENDS **NEWS**

December 2011



Oak Park Friends Meeting – Religious Society of Friends
720 Chicago Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois 60303
708-445-8201

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT www.oakparkfriends.org

Meeting for Worship each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

Clerk – Helen Dickinson
Recording Clerk – Judy Erickson
Treasurer – Valerie Lester
Newsletter Editors – Pamela Timme and Bob Southworth
(<mailto:ptimme@hotmail.com>)
Submission deadline – 25th day of the month

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations to Adrian Fisher, who is starting her new position as Sustainability Coordinator at Triton College! This will be an exciting continuation of her environmental concerns.

Paz is available for hire for jobs such as stenciling, signwork, yardwork, tuckpointing, brickwork, stonework, interior and exterior painting, and other odd jobs. Please contact him at 773-844-2977 for more information.

Christina Timme is available for babysitting, cleaning projects, etc. If interested, please contact her at 224-935-2065.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please see the meeting website at www.oakparkfriends.org for further information.

Sat, 12/3 at 2pm and 7pm, and Sun., 12/4 at 2pm – OPFM’s own Heidi will be performing in “Babes in Toyland” at the 19th Century Club, 178 Forest Ave., Oak Park IL. This holiday operetta will be performed by the Chicago Folks Operetta and the Children’s Operetta Workshop. Tickets are \$10 for children, \$12 for seniors, and \$15 for adults. For tickets visit www.chicagofolksoperetta.org or call 708-383-2742. Tickets may also be available at the door.

Sun, 12/18, Noon, Annual Christmas Potluck & Singalong at Wil and Dean’s home, 3237 S. Home Ave., Berwyn, IL

Thurs, 12/29, Rosalind Larsen, former member of OPFM, plans to be visiting the Chicago area. She would like to get together with F/friends at Healy’s at 7321 Madison, Forest Park. Time to be determined.

Fri, 12/30, 6pm, OPFM serves Public Action to Deliver Shelter (PADS) dinner at Saint John Lutheran Church, 305 Circle Ave., Forest Park. Contact Valerie Lester to volunteer or donate.

Fri–Sun, 1/6–8/2012, Adult Young Friends Retreat, Evanston Monthly Meeting of Friends.

Sat, 1/7, MCGM Standing Committee meeting, Evanston MM.

Sat–Mon, 1/14–16, Annual Quake That Rocked the Midwest, Evanston Monthly Meeting. For all Quaker High School Friends (and their parents), all Yearly Meetings. More information to follow.

UNICEF Halloween Collection

OPFM donated over \$15 to UNICEF. Thanks to all contributors, and especially to the First Day School young Friends for collecting the contributions in their beautifully-decorated boxes.

Community Resources Information from the Community of Congregations

Oak Park Food Pantry

The Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry, located at the First United Church of Oak Park, 848 Lake Street, Oak Park, served 15,723 families in need this past fiscal year, 27% more than it served the previous year. Beginning in January, Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry will adjust the boundaries of its service area to focus its resources on areas where food needs are not being met by other pantries. Rising food costs and reduced commodity support from The Federal Emergency Food Assistance Program means that food allotments are stretched ever more thinly across a client base that has grown nearly 130% since 2008. For further information, visit www.oprffoodpantry.com

Emergency Clothes Closet

The Emergency Clothes Closet, 931 Lake Street, Oak Park, IL 60301 (Calvary Memorial Church), opened its third season on Saturday, November 5, 2011 and served 123 clients in its first two Saturdays of this season—providing coats, boots, thermal underwear and other emergency clothes to those in need in our community.

The Closet will be the recipient of coats donated via coat drives sponsored by two retailers – REI and Burlington Coat Factory. See details on The Closet website (www.emergencyclothescloset.com).

The Closet Committee and its volunteers are asking all neighboring churches and community organizations to support The Closet in the form of financial or material donations. We are suggesting that donations of clothing be limited to gently used or new boots and coats only (the greatest need from a sizing perspective is Large, XL, XXL and larger). Your support is greatly appreciated. If you have questions or concerns regarding The Closet, please contact Jeb Ellenwood at jeb@emergencyclothescloset.com.

Kids Klostet

A free children's clothing closet is being established in an effort to assist families with limited resources. They are collecting sturdy, gently-used, clean children's clothes, including outerwear, backpacks and footwear. At

this time, they are accepting donations and will begin distribution when they have a sufficient inventory.

Donations can be dropped off Monday–Friday from 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. at First United Church of Oak Park, 848 Lake Street, Oak Park. Distribution will be at First United Church of Oak Park on Saturday mornings from 9:30–11:00 a.m.

If you have any questions, please contact Susan Zaruba at sjzaruba@yahoo.com.

[Interfaith Thanksgiving Service](#)



Ascension Catholic Church in Oak Park hosted the Community of Congregations' annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service this year on Sunday, November 20th. Blessings, prayers, music and a sermon were delivered by representatives of various religious traditions. Helen Dickinson represented the Quaker tradition with two minutes of silent worship. A collection was taken to help the Community of Congregations buy holiday meals for those in economic need in our community.

Drury Lane Outing



A sizeable group of OPFM Friends went to see “The Sound of Music” at Drury Lane Theatre in Oak Brook on Sunday, November 27th. Thanks to the Children’s Religious Education committee and especially to Sarah Shirk for organizing this event. Friends agreed that the show was great – here they are in front of the Christmas tree in the lobby. The CRE looks forward to future group events – suggestions always welcome!

Notes from Direction of the Meeting

On November 6, OPFM gathered for its annual Direction of the Meeting discussion. Friends broke into small groups to respond to a list of queries, which are listed below, and then reconvened to share their thoughts.

Queries used for Direction of the Meeting

Worship: Is the spirit of our worship together one that nurtures all worshipers? How does our Meeting respond when the vocal ministry seems inappropriate, or when the meeting for worship consistently is not gathered? Does worship deepen my relationship with God, increase my faithfulness, and refresh and renew my daily life, both inwardly and in my relationship with others?

Meeting for Business: Is our meeting for business held in the spirit of a meeting for worship in which we seek divine guidance? How do we respond if we notice the meeting has lost an understanding of the presence of God? Do we recognize that we speak through our inaction as well as our action? Am I open to personal transformation as the community arrives at the sense of the meeting?

Spiritual Nurture and Ministry: How does our Meeting recognize, develop, and nurture the gifts of our members and attenders of all ages? Is there opportunity in our Meeting to share the excitement of religious discovery and the possibility of religious transformation? Does our Meeting provide opportunities for all in the Meeting to learn about the Inner Light, the living Christ within, the Bible, the writings of Friends, our Christian heritage, other religious traditions and their respective roles in the history and formation of Friends' principles; the common testimonies of Friends; the variety of expression Quaker faith takes today?

The Meeting Community: Are avenues for exploring differences kept open? When conflicts exist, are they faced with patience, forbearance, and openness to healing? To what extent does our Meeting ignore differences in order to avoid possible conflicts? How does our Meeting keep in touch with all its members?

Social Responsibility and Justice: How does our Meeting work to overcome social, legal, economic, and political justice, locally and in the wider world? Does our Meeting serve the community through action on concerns for civic improvement? When a member has lifted up a concern, how does our Meeting respond?

Outreach: What are we doing to invite persons not in membership to attend our meetings for worship and to encourage their continued

attendance? How does the Meeting welcome visitors? Are we sensitive to the needs and hesitations of each visitor? Do we feel prepared to share our faith and beliefs with others?

Judy Erickson submitted the following notes from the discussions about the queries:

MAJOR TOPICS DISCUSSED

OUTREACH

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY, WORSHIP, COMMUNITY NURTURE

SPIRIT: PRACTICE OF WORSHIP

GIFTS OF MEMBERS/ATTENDERS

GENERAL

OUTREACH

There was a newcomer in this group. Her welcome was positive. We should continue with a greeter each week. For newcomers, when is a notion ministry? Clearness committees should be done for people who are leaving as well as those who are joining.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY, WORSHIP, COMMUNITY NURTURE

Worship & vocal ministry should be spiritually refreshing. This will help develop our spiritual relationship with the Divine. One spoke about meeting should not be for politics, but politics could arise from meeting. Meeting community: some become uncomfortable when there is talk of God while others want that. How can we bridge between worship & our Quaker community? Sharing spiritual journeys would be helpful: Where they have been, where they are, where they are going?

– Adrian will do this on the first Sunday of December

Talk about different aspect of Quakerism, but not necessarily a formal Q101.

OP & RF's wider community, community of congregation, everyone knows at least one Quaker. We get around!

Explore what our society is and has been.

VOCAL MINISTRY

There are inappropriate messages; how to deal with them. How it feels when ministry comes to us. Our meeting seems to tolerate/ignore individual inappropriate messages. Resounding yes to the last query. It is a practice, process, & discipline to be part of this deep listening, centered group and that can be carried out into the world to help us be centered in the world with others who are not this way. We can bring this sense of centeredness out to the world.

One group talked a lot about people's gifts. If we listen carefully, God has given each of us particular gifts. Can Nom Com help with this? With ad hoc members between appointments?

GENERAL.

Worship: It is welcoming to all beliefs, we feel free to think and speak for ourselves. We prefer if someone who is speaking would stand. (That way we know when you are done.) Can we get the business meeting agenda a few days in advance? Now differences are being faced better; not ignored. Meeting for Business: we should encourage all to attend; not for members only. Social responsibility: many are involved in various ways. Outreach: Maybe we need to do more outreach to men. Facebook page may be helpful. Web page is good. Is there already an Oak Park Friends facebook page? Adrian will look into it. We think it is good to follow up with visitors who sign visitor book (Burke does this). There is a need for Q101 for newcomers.

Joan Pine talked about Quaker Quest at Evanston: simple and radical. Four Saturday mornings beginning 2/11/12, repeated in March on Sunday afternoons. Good intro to our faith & practice, also worship. We could take elements of it and not call it QQ; adapt to our setting & needs. We are welcome to bring some of our new attenders to Evanston's QQ.

Next: I write up report; collate notes. Discuss in Ministry & Care committee and Meeting for Business, etc for further seasoning and what/how to help us meet our needs.

Ended with Silent Worship.

Respectfully Submitted by Judy Erickson

BUSINESS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Please see the meeting website at www.oakparkfriends.org for further information, including reports from individual committees.

November 2011

The Ministry and Care committee asked that all committees review the report from the direction of the meeting and consider how to respond.

The ILYM Queries on Quaker service were reviewed and discussed.

QUERY QUOTATIONS

Rooted in the history of Friends, queries reflect the Quaker way of life, reminding Friends of the ideals we seek to attain. We approach queries as a guide, using them not as an outward set of rules, but as a framework

within which we assess our convictions and examine prayerfully the direction of our lives and the life of the community. Here are a few selections from Faith and Practice, published in 1997 by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends:

Stewardship of Resources

Does our Meeting serve social and economic justice in its uses of property and money?
How does our Meeting engage its members in the support of the quarterly and yearly meetings and other Quaker organizations?

Am I clear that I am the steward, not the owner, of property in my care?

Do I simplify my needs, making choices that balance self-sufficiency (to avoid unnecessary dependence on others) and fair sharing of resources? Do I make choices as a consumer that support the equitable distribution of income?

Do I contribute generously within my means to the funding of the work of Friends in my Meeting, in the yearly meeting, and in the wider world of Friends?

AND IN CONCLUSION...

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

By Edmund H. Sears and Richard S. Willis



It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good-will to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King;"
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled;
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world:
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing;
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

O ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way,
With painful steps and slow.
Look now, for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing,
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing.

For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophets seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years
Shall come the time foretold,
When the new heaven and earth shall own
The Prince of Peace their King,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

and a

BLESSED NEW YEAR

to ALL!