

*Simplicity \* Peace \* Integrity \* Community \* Equality \* Stewardship*

**OAK PARK FRIENDS**  
**NEWS**  
***April 2014***



***Garfield Park Conservatory***

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](http://www.oakparkfriends.org)

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

Clerk – Judith Erickson

Recording Clerk – Sarah Shirk

Treasurer – Valerie Lester

Newsletter Editors – Pamela Timme and Bob Southworth

(<mailto:ptimme@hotmail.com>)

Submission deadline – 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Happy Belated Birthday to John Muhlenberg, whose birthday was on March 28<sup>th</sup>.

*Please contact [ptimme@hotmail.com](mailto:ptimme@hotmail.com) if you wish to have birthday greetings in the newsletter.*

Third Sunday Sing-alongs - Join Friends every third Sunday of the month at OPAL at 9:40 am for fellowship through song

The Ministry and Care Committee want you to be aware that there is a suffering fund for those that need. Contact a committee member for details.

OPFM welcomes donations for the needs of the meeting which include the meeting space, activities and charitable giving. Donations can be mailed to Oak Park Friends Meeting, PO Box 3245, Oak Park, IL 60303.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

*Please see the meeting website at [www.oakparkfriends.org](http://www.oakparkfriends.org) for further information.*

### **April 9, 16, 23, 30, 7pm, Adult Religious Education Wednesday Movie Nights.**

The Adult Religious Education Committee is planning Wednesday movie nights for the month of April, starting on April 9<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. The video series is "*Painting the Stars: Science, Religion and an Evolving Faith.*" Cossy Ksander will be hosting them at her home. Please call her at 708-574-7237 for further information and for her address if you are interested in participating. See the article below for more details.

### **Women's Weekend: April 25-27**

The 2014 ILYM Women's Weekend will be held April 25-27 at the ILYM campus near McNabb, Ill. This year, ILYM's own Madelyn Hjertmann (formerly George) will be facilitating the program, "Sharing Our Stories, Reveling in Joy."

Madelyn says, "After women's weekend last year, participants expressed a desire for joyful revelry, free time, and fellowship with one another. As a result, I will attempt to facilitate several sessions that will give attendees an opportunity to exchange stories and lessons from their lives, to experiment with laughter, to learn each other's most extraordinary secrets, and to nurture the connections that make us feel more playful and alive."

The Women's Weekend brochure and registration information will be available at the beginning of March.

### **May 4 CROP Walk**

The 2014 Crop Hunger Walkathon West CROP Walk will be held Sunday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm. It will start and finish at the Pilgrim Church, 460 Lake St., Oak Park. For further information, contact Valerie Lester.

### **June 14-18 Site Prep, IL Yearly Meeting, McNabb**

Good service, good fellowship, good food! Come anytime and stay for a few hours or the weekend or as long as you can.

### **June 18-22, Illinois Yearly Meeting, McNabb**

Worship, workshops, speakers, recreation, Friends from the wider Quaker world, all in a serene rural setting just a 2-hour drive from Chicagoland.

## **MESSAGE FROM NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Nominating Committee is currently meeting to identify owners for the various jobs of the meeting. If you feel led to participate, there are plenty of opportunities small and large. Please contact a Nominating Committee member, Sue Beckman, Mandy Gawf, or Bob Southworth

## **WEDNESDAY MOVIE NIGHTS!**

Submitted by Kelly Maynard

Wednesday evenings in April

Dear Friends,

In response to a discussion which occurred during the Direction of the Meeting gathering, Adult Religious Education has organized a pilot program for OPFM to gauge the interest and participation level in mid-week worship activities. We have decided to start with a 4-week study group based around the video series, *Painting the Stars: Science, Religion and an Evolving Faith*. If enough people are interested we can extend this program for three additional weeks. ARE is also hoping to organize a book study for the summer or fall if mid-week gatherings find a positive reception. We encourage other committees or individuals to organize programs for the future (both one-off and multi week is fine).

The gatherings are scheduled for Weds April 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup>. Please feel free to come to all or just one or any number in between. We will be meeting at Cossy Ksander's home at 7 pm and will finish around 8:30.

About the series *Painting the Stars*: "The theme of each session exposes participants to observations and ideas about the intersection of science and faith that seek to be a catalyst for discussion about the promise of evolutionary Christian spirituality. The themes are arranged in order to provide a broad introduction to the conversation that is going on among theologians and other thought leaders on the leading edge of wrestling with where Christianity is going in the 21st century." Each week we will watch a short video. The video come with multiple materials to help facilitate a multi perspective spiritual discussion. We hope to gain clarity a understanding on an important contemporary issue with Quakerism, does a religion need God?

Please note we cannot meet the first Wednesday of April, but fortunately April 2014 has 5 Wednesdays. We hope you'll join us.

## **"TRIPTYCH DEPICTING PIGEONS AT CLARK AND LAKE"**

Adrian Fisher has a new blog post at City Creatures that is well worth reading. To read about pigeons, the snow queen, grief and the "L" click on the link below. You'll be glad you did!

<http://www.humansandnature.org/blog/triptych-depicting-pigeons-clark-lake>

## **CHICAGO FRIENDS SCHOOL TAKING APPLICATIONS FOR 2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR**

*Submitted by Sarah Shirk*

Do you know a family with children in grades k-3 who embrace the Quaker testimonies and want a small school learning environment in Chicago's Edgewater neighborhood? If yes, direct them to the Chicago Friends School web site at <http://chicagofriendsschool.org/> to complete an inquiry form.

To learn more about the mission and philosophy of the school go to: <http://chicagofriendsschool.org/mission-and-philosophy-statements/>

Employment opportunities for the 2014-2015 school year will be posted at: <http://chicagofriendsschool.org/employment/>

Do you have time to volunteer? If yes, see the committee options here: <http://chicagofriendsschool.org/get-involved/>

## **BUSINESS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

Please see the meeting website at [www.oakparkfriends.org](http://www.oakparkfriends.org) for further information, including reports from individual committees.

### **March 2014**

#### **MINISTRY & CARE COMMITTEE**

We met on 3/2. With great joy we received a letter requesting membership from Sarah Shirk! Judy read the letter aloud, and it was received with great joy. A Clearness Committee has been formed & is being scheduled.

#### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The adult religious education video series Painting the Stars has a written guide that is available as PDF for advance preparation prior to the viewing of video program. Printed materials for this course will be put on the OPFM website and each week's materials will be sent to the list.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

State of Society report for ILYM is due June 1<sup>st</sup>. A pot-luck with attention to ILYM Queries for Reflecting on the Health of a Quaker Meeting will take place March 30<sup>th</sup> to prepare the State of Society report. Adrian will coordinate.

May potluck will be moved to May 11<sup>th</sup>. May business meeting will be moved to May 18<sup>th</sup> to avoid conflicts with Mother's Day.

## 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:

### Care for the Meeting Community

Are love and unity maintained among us? When conflicts exist, are they faced with patience, forbearance, and openness to healing? Are avenues for exploring differences kept open? To what extent does our Meeting ignore differences in order to avoid possible conflicts?

Is the Meeting a safe, loving place? When we become aware of someone's need, do we offer assistance? Are the meetinghouse and the Meeting property physically accessible to all?

Do all adults and children in our Meeting receive our loving care and encouragement to share in the life of our Meeting, and to live as Friends? Do we truly welcome newcomers and include them in our Meeting community?

When a member's conduct or manner of living gives cause for concern, how does the Meeting respond?

How does our Meeting keep in touch with all its members?

*Am I ready to offer assistance as part of my religious community serving its members? Am I equally willing to accept graciously the help of others?*

*Do I recognize and face disagreements and other situations that put me in conflict with others?*

*Do I manifest a spirit ready to give or receive forgiveness?*

*Do I treat adults and children alike with respect and without condescension? Is my manner with visitors and attenders to my Meeting one of welcome?*

## OPFM HISTORICAL GLIMPSES

### **Selections from State of Society Reports**

Submitted by Pamela Timme

*It's that time of year again, when the State of Society Report, which reviews the course of the past year at OPFM, is being written. Here are a few excerpts from previous years.*

**1945:** We meet at eleven o'clock Sundays, in a corner of a large building at 178 Forest Avenue. You will see a simple sign hanging on the front door. Come on in. Come upstairs. Turn to your right. We will be in a circle welcoming you to the deep silence of The Eternal Father.

**1976:** Some time ago a Friend expressed a desire to meet early for the purpose of having a longer period of silence. Several participated and found that it was beneficial to them and to the Meeting as well. With some Friends already gathered those who came at the regular hour settled in without visiting and the Meeting could center down more quickly. Friends have also been coming more promptly.

**1977:** A special group is meeting to plan for our participation in Oak Park's "A Day in Our Village," which is held the first Sunday of each June. It is a time when this village holds open

house, and last year afforded us a great opportunity to let residents know about our meeting and the various social concerns we support.

**1978:** This year the "Day in Our Village" gave us the opportunity to inform interested persons of the history of Chicago Friends while we serve William Penn Ginger Bread.

**1979:** In preparing this report on the State of Oak Park Meeting, we must acknowledge that differences of opinion do exist among us. Some members find our silent worship and spoken words a seeking, finding and sharing that gives real depth and direction to their lives, while others feel that as a Meeting we are in need of greater spiritual growth.

**1984:** Many members and attenders expressed appreciation for our Meeting over the years. With all of its problems and questions, our Meeting continues to search together in the Light and Meeting looks to the future with confidence that our faith is our strength.

**1985:** The Meeting seems to be a collection of individuals who are at different points in their spiritual development and have diverse interests in social action. Thus, each member and attender of our Meeting has a different perception of the current state of the Meeting. Our challenge, as a Meeting, is to treasure the individuality of each man, woman and child while retaining a sense of cohesiveness as a group.

**1988:** For Oak Park Monthly Meeting the past year has been one of change and emotion, ranging from sadness to rejoicing. Yet despite the changes, there is the comfort of an underlying continuity and rhythm within our Meeting...We feel Oak Park Meeting has a sincere love and acceptance of each individual and his or her concerns and opinions. While we may not be a politically oriented unit we all know there is an understanding support group within our Meeting that is there for the asking. No one need fear ridicule for expressing her or his vision. We search as individuals, yet share as a Meeting.

**1991:** Several years ago we decided to have only ad hoc committees, since our meeting was so small. Now we are feeling the need for an Oversight Committee to be concerned with the spiritual growth and health of the meeting and its individuals and a Peace and Social Concerns Committee to help us relate better to the community and discover appropriate ways to witness to our testimonies together.

**1998:** Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business provide an opportunity to move beyond the individual search for enlightenment and seek to find spiritual unity. In this endeavor, we strive but often fail to listen for the spirit in each other's messages....We have in our midst deeply spiritual participants and energetic seekers, and we are beginning to find ways to share our spiritual journeys. While we each bring to and take from meeting different experiences, some feel that the palpable presence of the Spirit is not often felt by the meeting as a whole and wonder if there are ways to deepen our prayer and come closer to the Light...We look to the future optimistic that our growing pains will soon lead to a synthesis of spirituality and social activism and an environment where both Quaker unity and diversity can flourish.

**2005:** What a tumultuous year it has been, less tranquil in some ways than last year. This has been a year of seeking. In numerous ways we are seeking to let Truth fare well among us...In everything we are seeking to build community and to strengthen our connection to God in an increasingly fragmented and dangerous time.

**2010:** The earth has cycled again around the sun. The great circle of life has also cycled again. We seek comfort in this reality, but don't always find it. Some people have entered our lives;

some have departed. The death of one of our beloved members (son, cousin and friend) is a difficult reality. There have been other difficult losses among us, beloved relatives and friends. We remember the gifts they left us and we miss them. The kindnesses, love, and stories shared by others support and comfort us...A member continued her leading on loving and restoring our diminished ecosystems by holding a workshop on reconciliation ecology in the Chicago area. We encourage all to consider that the earth needs its strongest creatures to be good and faithful stewards in order to keep the great circle of life alive...We have seasoned a plan to hire a children's educator to provide sustainable religious programming for children...We look forward to continuing to learn and love and grow together in the Holy Spirit.

**2013:** Meeting attendance has been lower this year. We have welcomed several visitors who have become regular attendees. Our employee whom we hired two years ago to jumpstart our children's program has resigned for personal reasons. With few children attending, we made materials available in the meeting room on most First Days, and planned a First Day School program for the third First Day of each month. The Ministry & Care Committee has been growing spiritually as they care for members and attendees facing personal challenges, losses of family members, and life transitions. We have been assisted in this by both our new ILYM Field Secretary, Judy Wolicki, and our Ministry & Advancement Visitor, Joan Pine. We are taking a new marriage under our care. The Adult Religious Education program has been robust this year, holding sessions every month. Two larger workshops that were well attended, with visitors from other meetings, were on "Grieving" and "Welcoming Newcomers."

## **AND IN CONCLUSION...**

"...Do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."

*Matthew 10:19-20, Bible, New Revised Standard Version*