



SPARK

New York Yearly Meeting
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Volume 54, Number 2

15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003

May 2024



Why We Gather



Being Changed

Emily Provance
15th Street Meeting

I'd been at Fifteenth Street Meeting for a matter of months, and I wasn't yet a member, but people kept telling me to go to things. I ought to go to Powell House, I ought to go to yearly meeting, I ought to go to this or that retreat. I ought to visit Morningside or Brooklyn or Flushing. This did not make sense to me. Why was everybody trying to get me to leave? Also, did they have any idea how daunting I found it, not to mention expensive, to travel like that? I didn't know anybody. I didn't understand what they were doing. I couldn't figure out the trains and buses and carpools and registration systems and applications required.

I resisted this encouragement for nearly a year. And when I finally got to Powell House, and to yearly meeting, it was . . . fine. I still didn't know anybody. I felt really awkward. I didn't understand the point. I didn't see what got everybody else so excited. There was palpable energy among the people gathered, something more significant and more confusing than simple vacation vibes.

Quakers are slow to articulate communal belief, partly because we emphasize non-creedalism. But we do have beliefs, theology even, and I know this because I've learned it from our behaviors, which tend to

continued on page 4

Pulled to Worship Together

Mary Beth DiMarco
Syracuse Meeting

My initial journey to attend a Quaker meeting was a completely unexpected experience. Having been well established in a meditation practice with a vibrant and active community, I wasn't looking to join another spiritual group. Yet Spirit began gently knocking on the door of my heart. What I discovered was a deep calling into the unknown. I didn't over think it because I knew I needed to follow these stirrings.

Gathering together with Friends, for me, has been more akin to the feeling of being drawn in. Paying attention to the movement of Spirit, I feel touched, interrupted, and I sense the quiet pull of being summoned. Desirous of wanting to respond, I allow myself to trust what I feel and perceive. I gather with Friends because I must. It's as simple as that.

Being led, I recognize those who have also responded to their invitation from Spirit. Together, we share in a mystery that is beyond any one of us. If there that of God in everyone, I don't look for or need uniformity. Letting go of preconceived notions of what a Quaker is, I am free to accept each person. With no pre-determined agenda, we await and surrender to silence

continued on page 4

We are Committed to Complete Totality

Daniela Salazar
Monárrez
NYC Religious
Friends Society

*"Is it starting?
Can you see it?
Is it time yet?
Ya pasó?
Do you think the clouds will clear?
Hank Green said they clear up
a little right before it happens, just naturally."*

The anticipation is palpable and other occupants of the sleepy BBQ restaurant in Dallas, Texas, split their time between watching us (loud visitors from out of town) and the windows with equal interest. The moment their attention flies away from us and towards the outside we know it's time.

When we come back a half hour later, wanting to pretty please use their bathroom again, the wait staff repeat the same amazed question: "You travelled? All that way! Just for this?" And you chose to watch it in our parking lot, their tone implies. "Yup!" we smile mischievously, "Can you imagine?" Their wide eyes tell us that truly they cannot, and they're having a hard time not judging our decisions.

There is absolutely no astronomi-
continued on page 4



Summer Sessions July 26-31, 2024

Friday to Wednesday
At Oakwood Friends
School and Online

Excerpts from Summer Sessions 2023 Evaluations

- "I really liked being in a Quaker space."
- "It was great to have nearly everyone there focused on the work and play of the Yearly Meeting in loving spiritual community!"
- "Loved the contra dancing, the deep discernment and the shade trees."
- "It was fruitful spiritually & peacefully."
- "The atmosphere was more relaxed, I had more conversations, and I loved having the kids in the mix so much."

Summer Sessions continued on page 5

 **Why We Gather: pp. 4-5**
Summer Sessions: pp. 5-8

Notices

New Members

Jody Harrow — Purchase
Dian Killian — Brooklyn
Abby Kinchy — Albany
Aldo Meltz — Albany
Stephen Schacterle — Brooklyn

Transfers

Pearl Kanuaka Ratunil, from Storrs Friends Meeting (NEYM) to New Paltz

Deaths

Janet Anderson, member of Albany, on February 20, 2024.
Pauline DeForest, member of Unadilla, on February 19, 2024.
James Hall, member of Collins, on January 6, 2024.
Barbara Heizman, member of Medford Meeting (PYM), former member of 15th Street and employee of NYYM, on January 20, 2024.
Ly Kesse, member of Genesee Valley, on February 28, 2024.
Joan Lane, member of Manasquan, on March 29, 2024.
Susan Medlar, member of Housatonic, on March 12, 2024.
Ricardo Smith-Hoffman, member of Fifteenth Street, on February 10, 2024
James Washburn, member of Unadilla, on October 24, 2023.

NEWS

Sign up for the Weekly Update

An email newsletter is sent to NYYM Friends each Friday. Past editions are available at nnyym.org/weekly-updates. To subscribe, fill out the brief form at nnyym.org/subscribe.

Powell House Directors to Retire

The Powell House Committee announces with great regret the retirement of its Co-Executive Directors, Regina Baird Haag and Dennis Haag. Their statement follows:

For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven. . . . Ecclesiastes 3:1

Dear Friends,

As spring finally makes an appearance with daffodils, forsythia, and redbud plants beginning to show off here at Powell

Around Our Yearly Meeting

House, we recognize that our “season” of work here is concluding. While we have treasured almost 8 years in this “thin place” that offers radical hospitality and abundance to all, it is time to retire and move on into whatever is next for us.

We will take with us many good memories of our journey with this organization! It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve as participants in all that Powell House offers the world. Thank you for the opportunity to live, work, worship, and play in this wonderful place :) Blessings, Dennis and Regina

Regina and Dennis brought many gifts to their eight years at Powell House. Recognizing Powell House’s central role in the spiritual life of the Yearly Meeting, they provided deeply spiritual programs and guidance to Friends and to groups of allied purpose who found a refuge and place to recharge at Powell House. Careful stewardship and creative use of technology in programming enabled Powell House to survive the Pandemic, emerging able to rebuild and move forward after an era many institutions like ours did not survive. Their care for the physical plant will serve us well into the future. Their work and leadership resulted in improved appearance, safety, and functionality throughout the buildings and property.

We wish them well in this new phase of their lives and say our goodbyes with gratitude for their care of Powell House during their time with us. Our blessings go with them.

On behalf of the Powell House Committee, Elise Bacon, Clerk



A new roof for Pitt Hall!

The Powell House Capital Campaign

Powell House is the meeting house for all of New York Yearly Meeting. For more than half a century, Friends of all ages have gathered at this special place for extended worship, witness, work and fun. Here we seek and find the Light and here we are strengthened as a body of faith.

Bricks and mortar require care and that takes money. We have already been blessed by the generosity of many Friends and are nearly

halfway to our adjusted goal of \$1,000,000.

As a part of the Powell House strategic plan, our capital campaign is raising funds for:

- needed facilities and infrastructure work
- a commitment to solar and energy independence
- more stable long-term finances
- updating our digital capacity

Have you already heard about the Powell House capital campaign? Yes or no, please learn more at: www.powellhouse.org/capital-campaign or by contacting info@powellhouse.org.

George Fox is 400!

Quakers around the world are celebrating the 400th anniversary of George Fox’s birth with events throughout the year. What will your meeting do? Visit fwcc.world/fox/

UPCOMING EVENTS

Summer Sessions July 26-31, 2024

Online and at Oakwood School Summer Sessions 2024 will be at Oakwood Friends School and online from dinnertime on Friday, July 26, to lunchtime on Wednesday, July 31. See pages 5-8 of this issue for more and find updates at nnyym.org/summer-sessions-2024.

Young Peacemakers Week

From August 19-23, 2024, Albany Friends Meeting will again host Young Peacemakers Week in their lovely old meetinghouse and backyard. The prime objective will be, as always, witnessing to the Quaker Peace Testimony, i.e., a commitment to peace and reconciliation in all spheres of life. The children, all in grades 2-8, will practice this concept in typical summer camp activities, such as arts and crafts, non-competitive games, music and drama, and care for nature and the environment. As always, we will carry out our strong family component, as we find that the children learn best when their parents and siblings take part, too. We will have a family dinner every night, followed by group activities in which the peace component is emphasized. We also offer a program for teen-age interns, in which they support the children in their daily activities. The hours are 1:30 to 6:30, with the option of early drop-off child care from 12:30. Tuition is whatever people are led to contrib-

ute. We are looking for teachers (a paid position), interns (also paid) and adult volunteers. Please visit our website, www.youngpeacemakersweek.weebly.com. For questions about registration, email Nancy Mattice at nmattice99@gmail.com. For other questions, call Anita Stanley at 518-441-7722 or email her at meridiancomm@earthlink.net. We hope to see you at camp!

POWELL HOUSE WORKSHOP

Visit powellhouse.org/event-list/ to register or call 518-794-8811.

From Sorrow to Celebration: Cultivating Lament and Joy in our Journey

June 7-9, 2024, in person

Join us as we embark on a journey of self-expression and a deeper exploration of how we understand both lament and joy in our lives.

Over the weekend, we will delve into the transformative power of expressive writing and the arts for creating openings for healing and spiritual depth. Together, we will navigate emotional highs and lows, discovering the “joy, unspeakable joy” that can be found in even the most challenging moments.

continued on next page

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MENTORSHIP Reimagined



Exploring the
Transformative
Power of Quakerism

NYYM's Mentoring Program for 2024-25

Friends new to Quakerism as well as Friends with years of experience are invited to join the fifth year of NYYM's mentoring program, now called Mentorship Reimagined. We reimagine mentorship as Friends choosing to grow together in their Quaker identity and practices—and see how these spiritual relationships can transform our lives and our

communities. All of us have gifts to share and ways we hope to grow, so all adults are invited to participate as mentoring-seekers/seeking-mentors! Details for the coming year are still emerging, and we invite you to learn more about the program, including how to sign up, at nyym.org/mentoring-2024.

Friends General Conference (FGC) Gathering: Rooted in Story

The 2024 Gathering will be in Haverford, PA from June 30-July 6. Some events will be available online. See www.fgcquaker.org/the-gathering/

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Check Children, Youth and Young Adult Community Director Beth Kelly's list: nyym.org/yaf-events.

Ghosts and Grief: A Powell House Conference for Young Adults June 14-16, 2024

How does the past influence the present? What happens when we pass beyond the physical world? What spaces do you think you would inhabit as a ghost? At this conference, we will explore these questions and more through deep discussion and artistic activities. Find out more: www.powellhouse.org/event-list/

FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

Powell House Youth Conferences
Visit powellhouse.org/event-list/ to register or call 518-794-8811.

EARTHSONG 2024, 7th-12th Grade May 24-26, 2024

Join us for our annual celebration of our loving, strong community.

Fire Within for 6th-8th Grade June 28-30, 2024

Anger, passion, creation, destruction! Fire can symbolize a lot of different things. What gets you fired up? At this conference we will play with ideas about the fire each of us holds inside of ourselves.

OPPORTUNITIES

Quaker Job Openings

Friends General Conference: www.fgcquaker.org/work-at-fgc/
American Friends Service Committee: afsc.org/careers
Friends Committee on National Legislation: www.fcnl.org/about/work-fcnl

News from Spring Sessions

On April 7, 2024, NYYM Friends at Spring Sessions approved the following minute:

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

A minute in support of the dignity and basic human rights of transgender and gender non-conforming people

As New York Yearly Meeting of The Religious Society of Friends, we embrace that of God and the Light in every person. We are horrified by and opposed to the rising wave of legislation that demonizes transgender and gender non-conforming people in order to deprive them of life-giving treatment and their basic human rights. This statement was born from a place of deep love. We are called to love all our neighbors without exception. We urge our elected officials to support legislation protecting the rights, safety, and human dignity of all people regardless of their gender identity or gender expression. As Friends, we reject any legal restrictions that target transgender and gender non-conforming people.

Quakers in Cuba

Louisiana Hanlon
Brooklyn Meeting

This past January, during my junior year of high school, my family of four trudged through the airport with six suspicious giant black duffle bags. After a night in Miami and a few airport mishaps, we boarded the daily flight to Holguin, Cuba. Our plane landed on a small sun-soaked runway. We disembarked down a flight of stairs to the asphalt and met our hosts outside the tiny airport. With our bags strapped to the roof of our taxi, a 1987 Soviet-era Lada, we set off to the city. The flight to Holguin is only an hour from Miami, but our journey from the glitzy streets of downtown Miami to a city full of 70-year-old cars and horse-and-buggies felt like we had time-traveled back decades.

Our hosts were Maria Yi, the pastor of the Quaker church in Holguin, and her assistant, Lianet. Maria and Lianet helped us get religious visas so that we were allowed to stay in the church and volunteer in the Quaker community in Holguin. My parents had communicated with them via WhatsApp and (since they don't speak Spanish) Google Translate to plan the trip. But once we arrived, the responsibility of communicating was now placed solely on me and my twin brother. Our Spanish is good for high school Spanish, but being the translator for my parents and trying to forge relationships in Spanish was an incredibly daunting challenge.

Because of the current economic crisis, we brought as much food and supplies for the people as we possibly could. Our duffle bags were full of over-the-counter medicines, toiletries, clothes, toilet paper, soap, toys, office supplies, canned food, peanut butter, ramen, condiments, powdered milk, coffee, and more. Over the course of two weeks, after meeting lots of people and learning more about the Cuban economic crisis, I saw how badly these basic items were needed. And I learned more about the forces causing shortages, even on goods that can be produced locally like coffee.

My family and I painted two rooms of the church building, did various chores, and my brother and I taught first day school. We were

continued on page 5

Editor's Note

Hello Friends. I hope you will consider attending Summer Sessions this July. We did have a spiritually centered and renewing time at Oakwood (and online!) last year. This year we will focus on intergenerational community-building events, especially during the opening weekend. Let us uplift joy. Our discernment will be more true to Spirit if we know and trust each other better.

Spark accepts article submissions of 400-600 words, artwork, poetry, shorter news items and announcements, and letters to the editor. Please share your gifts with the rest of NYYM. Email submissions to communications@nyym.org.

Upcoming *Spark* themes: September 2024: Holding Gender in the Light.

Spark invites reflections for our forthcoming issue themed "Holding Gender in the Light." We seek submissions of 400-600 words that reflect on the experiences, joys, and challenges faced by transgender and gender non-conforming individuals and various dimensions of advocating for this community. We invite you to contribute pieces that either share personal journeys, advocate for rights, reflect on these issues through a spiritual lens, focus on recognition of the divine in every person, or something else related. **Please submit your contributions to gender-spark@nyym.org by August 15.** Let's unite in bearing witness to love and justice through our words.

Send in your meeting's news to communications@nyym.org. If you'd like to join NYYM's weekly email list visit nyym.org or subscribe.

NYYM is on **Facebook** (NewYorkYearlyMeeting), **Insta** (newyorkyearlymeeting), and sometimes **Twitter/X** (NYYMTweets).

—Sarah Way, NYYM
Communications Director
communications@nyym.org

NYYM.org/donate



Why We Gather

Being Changed

Emily Provance
15th Street Meeting

continued from page 1

include a lot of gathering. We do it weekly at meetings for worship; we do it repeatedly, in larger groups, throughout the year. When new people are asking questions about Quakerism, we tell them to go away to some gathering. When we want to encourage a teen or young adult, we send them away—to a gathering.

We must expect something profound to happen. Questions will be answered. Friends will grow and feel encouraged. God will move among us in a way that's different from solitude. What I've discovered, over the years, is that presence with a variety of people, especially in the context of deep listening to the Holy Spirit, broadens my perspective and teaches me about our condition. The communal search for Truth uncovers pieces that I don't carry within myself.

Learning, though, isn't quite where the experience ends. It's really more about transformation. God does not only reveal what we might do; God reveals who we might become, as individuals and as a community.

The experience of spiritual transformation does not feel safe. It is choosing to step into a new condition that we can't yet see. It happens most powerfully in communities that are committed to love and a mutual search for Truth . . . and if the people gathered don't all think and act the same. This is why early Friends emphasized travel and intervisitation and large gatherings. It's because, if we really believe that the group can experience the fullness of God more nearly than any of us can independently, then we have new things to discover each time we mix. New combinations of listeners lead to new revelations of Truth.

In the past few months, the most I've learned about God was in a Pentecostal Bible study in a storefront church. The people there were all blue-collar. Some were living in shelters. Some were just out of prison. Most had personal experience with addiction. Their theology differed from mine significantly, and

some of their beliefs are ones I've long rejected. But I saw God's heart shining through them. I learned things about hospitality, about faith, and about the belovedness of God's children that I did not know before, and I was changed. I believe that's the point of gathering.



Quakers: Why We Gather

Kathy Czekaj

Manasquan Meeting

When Quakers gather, whether in person or virtually, a new attendee is invited—the Spirit of the assembly. The whole becomes so much more than the sum of its individual parts. Spirit may imbue itself into the context of the gathering, and when that happens it is instantly recognizable and thrilling to be in its presence. If you've ever experienced what Quakers term “a gathered meeting” you'll know exactly to what I refer, when messages so generously bestowed flow one to another with meaning for all.

A dear friend of mine, Jerry Leary, has recently published a book of poetry called “Friday Philosophers,” available on Amazon. Without any knowledge of Quaker practice, he expresses a felt sense of this concept so beautifully in his poem entitled “Sabbath.”

Sabbath

by Jerry Leary

I linger in luxury of Sabbath time,
let one day go deep,
release a spirit word
to seek the Other,
so what breathes again between us
thrives,
forms recognition of a forgotten
truth,
heals wounds of business,
revives our common body
recognized once more
in rest, discovering the obvious



Pulled to Worship Together

Mary Beth DiMarco
Syracuse Meeting

continued from page 1

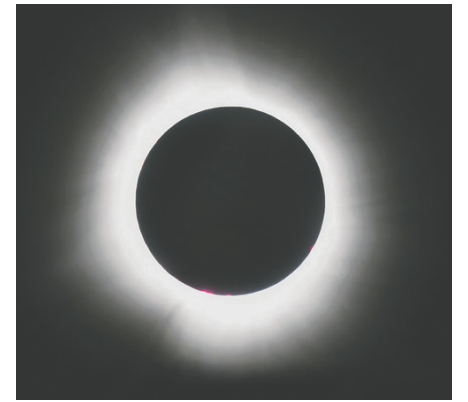
and messages, shared in openness and love. Sitting in freedom, we participate with Spirit and witness the manifestation of the creative One. The magnificent essence of the Divine is limitless.

Saying a continual yes to Spirit establishes my own journey with truth. It is not a static state of mind or a comfort level of finding one solid certainty, new friends or a popular group. It is a fluid faithfulness, a continual yes to God's call, necessitating a maturity, an authenticity and a taking of responsibility for my spiritual life and the life of the Meeting.

I witness kindness, thoughtfulness, nurturing, various personal or familial struggles, a willingness to listen to differences and an expectation from other Friends to try and be our best selves. It is these sparks of divinity that speak to me, affirming what I discern as the spirit of God among us. In seeking simple, true, and honest relationships, I witness wonderful human goodness. I rejoice in this and know that this too evidences the spirit of God.

Sharing times of worship gives way to being together socially, in fun activities or engaging in social activism. Friends become friends when we respect and celebrate each other's engagements, gifts and talents.

Throughout my life, I've always loved the Latin phrase, *fidens quaerens intellectum*; faith in search of understanding. It is a theological method stressed by Augustine (354–430) and Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1033–1109), whereby one begins with faith, and from there, seeks an understanding of the mysteries of God. Worshipping with Quakers has only solidified this maxim for me, not in a scholarly way, but rather being receptive to an ongoing understanding of Spirit, in my own heart, in the lives of Friends and in the world we embrace.



Eclipse totality, April 8, 2024. Photo by Wally Beagley.

We are Committed to Complete Totality

Daniela Salazar Monárrez
NYC Religious Friends Society

continued from page 1

cal reason the moon and sun appear the same size in the sky just so that the sun's corona casts the moon's shadow into an eerie twilight for minutes; the Earth's moon is an abnormal size in proportion to Earth; compared to other planets, ours is quite large. The moon itself began as a part of Earth and its distance from us has slowly been increasing over time.

In the car from the airport our driver asks us why we're in town and we report the unfavourable clouds which we have 3 hours and 10 minutes to take into account as we pick the best direction to head in once we acquire the rental. “Oh!” he said, reaching for his phone to dial a number, “Déjame le hablo a mi primo.” He calls his cousin, two hours south from us now. “He drove down from California to see it. Arrived just the other day. He was telling me all about it.”

Our attention is once more collected together in this parking lot as we witness the Corona of the sun appear, “Take off your glasses!” goes the shout all over the street. It's absolutely incredible. It looks like pure white light, behaving like halogen, around the blacked out face of the sun. Eclipses only happen with New Moons. The moon is completely invisible until it renders the sun into shapes that remind us of the stages of the moon, crescent full waning. But not; it's odd and eerie. Quick and precious but not instantaneous. It feels

continued on next page




continued from previous page

unsafe to take the glasses off but we rip them off and then there is a general silence and collective awe. Part of this incredible feeling comes from being allowed to savor it. It will be over so soon. We know that this is temporary and that the real light of the sun will come back in. We have utter faith in that, we just know it.

In witnessing totality, we bear witness to truth itself, that we do not give ourselves life. We are incapable of sustaining life for ourselves. We can work to prolong it and collaborate to improve it, but we can no more create something from nothing than move the sun out from behind the moon or clouds in the sky. And what keeps this feeling like a miracle is only that we know how rare and brief this encounter of celestial bodies is. If this just happened, if we were not told about and prepared for what was coming, it would inspire a great fear and existential dread. The wonder also comes from the indescribably and captivating beauty of this kind of light.

We don't have to wonder if acts of nature are divine revelation; they are a message reverberating through the environment: WITNESS ME. Why must you all gather at the path of totality? Why travel for the eclipse? We are committed to complete totality. We face the sun and are awed by the light. We gather to bear witness to the revelation that is embodied by the totality of the spirit, we must commit completely.

Our race to totality was a rehearsal for the total unity we must practice in the coming revolutions of the moon. The next total eclipse of the sun over North America will be in 2044; what should we do and how will we live that time? After all, how worth it was it to gather from across the land just to witness the birth of a brand new sun.

You can reach Daniela on Instagram at @nyc.quakers. 




Louisiana Hanlon (right) playing dominoes with a family in Cuba.

Quakers in Cuba

Louisiana Hanlon
Brooklyn Meeting

continued from page 3

welcomed into the homes of seven different Quaker families and had dinners in a few of their houses. At each of these gatherings, I was challenged to converse in Spanish. My curiosity about everyday life in Cuba and my desire to understand their perspective on the current political and economic situation forced me to stop being so self-conscious and to take risks and improvise. Playing cards with Lianet's 11-year-old son after dinner always provided comic relief.

If I didn't know the struggle of the current life in Cuba, I would have fallen in love with the city of Holguin. The colorful city is book-ended between two green mountains. With multiple town squares, a promenade, and streets full of bicycles, it looked like such an idyllic community. But because of the turmoil in recent years caused largely by the lack of tourism during the pandemic, compounded with the U.S trade embargo, the economic situation is at its worst since the collapse of the Soviet Union. We spent most of our time with young adult Quakers and everyone we met was waiting for a visa to come to the United States because they had little hope for a future in Cuba. Despite all this, we witnessed so much love, faith, and strength. The link between American Quakers and Cuban Quakers is more vital than ever through these difficult times. If you are interested in visiting the Holguin church, or would like more information, please reach out to me via an email to communications@nym.org. 

Summer Sessions

continued from page 1

Summer Sessions is the largest annual gathering of New York Yearly Meeting Friends and is the reason why our group is referred to as a "Yearly Meeting." We gather to worship, play, learn, conduct business, and have fellowship. A Quaker community is created during our time together, and many find this to be a powerful and joyful experience. Summer Sessions is open to anyone who is Quaker or Quaker-curious in NY, CT, NJ, and beyond.

In-Person Location is Oakwood Friends School

NYYM will again meet at Oakwood Friends School in Poughkeepsie, NY, for Summer Sessions. As Friends saw last year, many Summer Sessions traditions have continued at this location. There are new blessings: housing clusters for young adults and for families; a full-time program for high schoolers; an ice cream truck visiting campus; field trips to nearby attractions; and a more compact campus, making travel to activities easier. This year, Summer Sessions will begin with a weekend focused on community building. Check out the "Week-at-a-glance" schedule on page 8.

Attending Online

Like last year, many Summer Sessions events will be hybrid—available on campus and online via Zoom—such as the plenaries, worship sharing, bible study, meetings for worship and for business, and meetings for discernment. Online participants will be able to see and hear and speak at these events. Closed captioning will be available for all meetings held on Zoom. There will be online-only worship sharing groups, many of which will meet via the "FRAME" virtual platform.

Worship at Sessions

NYYM Summer Sessions provides many opportunities to worship and share with the Peaceable Community. Everyone is invited to attend opening worship on Friday evening, meeting for remembrance Saturday morning, meeting for worship Sunday morning, meeting for discernment on Monday, meetings



NYYM Friends at the Summer 2023 contra dance.

for worship with a concern for business, and closing worship on Wednesday, all of which will be hybrid events. A hybrid evening prayer is being planned for after the activities on both Saturday and Monday nights. Worship sharing groups will return to meeting every morning at the same time, Saturday-Wednesday.

Business Meetings

At Sessions you are asked to lend your attention to meetings for worship with a concern for business. These meetings will begin with a period of worship to help spiritually center ourselves. The clerk leads us through an agenda of items, including reports of Friends' works and issues that require discernment or action on the behalf of the gathered body of Friends.

Special Events

Plenary

The Saturday evening plenary will be presented by Joyce Ajlouny, American Friends Service Committee's General Secretary since 2017. A Palestinian American, Joyce started her career working in international development in Palestine, focusing on minority and refugee rights, gender equality, economic development, and humanitarian support. She served as the country director for Palestine and Israel with Oxfam-Great Britain, chaired the Association of International Development Agencies there and took on leadership roles at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Prior to joining AFSC, Joyce served as the director of the Ramallah Friends School, a leading K-12 Quaker school in



Joyce Ajlouny, AFSC

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Palestine, where she led a diverse staff to transform the school academically, physically and financially.

Bible Study

Bible Study and Closing Worship presenter will be nova sturrup (lower case preferred). nova sturrup is an artist, dreamer, and a lover of literature of all kinds, ranging from tarot cards to their grandma's recipes to ancient texts like the bible. They earned a Master of Divinity degree at Union Theological Seminary with a focus on trauma studies, community building, and bible study for collective healing. At Union, nova was awarded the 2022 Kneeland Preaching Prize for their sermon "How Long Oh, Lord?: Reflections on the Breonna Taylor Case." They continue to reflect on the Bible and the Black experience through the continuing revelation that is their "Black Femme Bible Study." nova currently lives in New York City and is a member of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting. Join nova for Bible Study after dinner nightly Saturday through Tuesday.



nova sturrup

Meeting for Remembrance

A Meeting for Remembrance will be held to recognize and hold in the Light Friends we have recently lost. At Summer Sessions 2024 we will focus on Friends who died in 2023. At the meeting, names will be read, along with their

meeting affiliation. For those who were active in the yearly meeting we will read brief excerpts from their memorial minute (if it has been transmitted to the NYYM office and clerk; email them to office@nyym.org and clerk@nyym.org). There will be time for Friends to speak in remembrance as they are led.

Meetings for Discernment

Meetings for Discernment are periods of extended, waiting worship and deep listening to discern leadings and strengthen connections in our yearly meeting. The Summer 2024 Meeting for Discernment will be held in three sessions in-person at Oakwood Friends School and simultaneously online via Zoom on Monday, July 29. There will be a Zoom meeting on the evening of Wednesday, July 24, at 7:00 p.m. for anyone new to the Meeting for Discernment or interested in holding space as an elder.

Community Events

Hybrid: On Monday evening, the senior high school group will emcee **Café Night**, an all-ages talent show during which hats are passed to collect donations. Café Night will be streamed on Zoom and online performers are invited to participate. Bring your instruments and props and join the fun!

On Campus: The afternoons of the opening weekend, Saturday and Sunday, will largely be devoted to **intergenerational community building**; for more details, see page 7. On Tuesday afternoon, Junior Yearly Meeting presents the **Fun(d) Fair**, a fundraising fair that includes games, crafts, and refreshments. At the same time, there is a **"Tagless" Tag Sale**, at which you can "pay what you wish" for items donated by Friends. Please consider bringing used items in good condition to Oakwood so they may be sold at the tag sale. Money raised will be donated to the NYYM Sharing Fund and Powell House. In addition, there will be a **contra dance** for all ages on Sunday evening. Last year we danced on a patio while the sun set, and it was lovely; consider joining us at Oakwood this year.

Attending In Person at Oakwood

Oakwood School is in Poughkeepsie, NY, at the end of the Metro North Rail Line and just off Rt. 9 on the east side of the Hudson River. We will meet Friday afternoon, July 26, through Wednesday lunch, July 31.



Gloria Thompson clerking a meeting for business last year.

The areas on campus that we will use are largely accessible. If you have mobility concerns, please contact registration@nyym.org or call the NYYM office at 212-673-5750.

Meals

Meals are served in the Oakwood Dining Hall. Please sign up for meals on your Summer Sessions registration form and specify your dietary preferences and restrictions. Meal costs: Breakfast: \$9; Lunch: \$12; Dinner: \$15 \$15/day for children under 12
Note that if you're staying in a hotel, your stay may include breakfast.

Overnight Accommodations

On campus—Each dorm room has two twin beds. The charge will be \$65 a night for the room, regardless of how many Friends stay in the room. Linens (sheets, pillow, blanket, towel, washcloth) for two people are included in the room price. A third person would be an additional \$10 for the week. Note that on-campus housing is "first come, first served," and will probably fill up; please register early if you want to stay on campus.

With Friends—There is a limited number of home hospitality offers from Friends in the area. You can indicate your interest in either of these options — staying on campus or with local Friends — on the registration form.

Off Campus—NYYM has reserved a block of rooms at a reduced rate (\$155+tax/night) at the nearby Holiday Inn Express, 2750 South Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601. To reserve a room at the NYYM rate, use booking code NY1 when calling the hotel directly at 845-473-1151 and choosing option 0 to speak with the front desk or when booking online at www.hiexpress.com/poughkeepsie. Note that rooms will be released to the public on June 26 and are subject to availability after that, though the reduced rate will be honored if rooms are available. There are many other hotels in the area. There are also campgrounds nearby—see a list of recommended sites at nyym.org/summer-sessions-2024. Remember, if you're staying at a hotel or campground you must make your own reservation separate from your Sessions registration.

COVID Concerns

Masks will be optional. Friends are encouraged to take a COVID test at home before coming to Oakwood. If you feel unwell, please stay home, regardless of COVID test results. If you feel ill at Oakwood you will be asked to take a test.

In-person Nurture and Support Accessibility Concerns. All the areas on campus that we will use during Summer Sessions are accessible, including the first floors of the dormitories. You will be able to request an accessible room and other accommodations on the registration form. Golf carts will be available to assist movement around campus. One way to help our

The Theme for 2024



The Sessions Program Subcommittee has determined the theme for New York Yearly Meeting's Sessions in 2024: **Where is the Love?** We are living through a time of increased national and international conflict. Where, at this time, do we find love? Where is it in ourselves and in our communities? How can we center love and encourage it to grow?

The theme was inspired by the song of the same name by the Black Eyed Peas. The chorus:

People killin', people dyin'
Children hurtin', hear them cryin'
Can you practice what you preach?
And would you turn the other cheek?
Father, father, father, help us
Send some guidance from above
'Cause people got me, got me questioning
Where is the love?

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community is to offer assistance to Friends who may need help getting around or carrying trays in the dining hall.

Live closed captioning will be available during Zoom meetings. Those attending Sessions in person may find closed captioning to be helpful when sound is quiet or garbled. Closed captions will be visible on the screen to the right of the stage.

12-Step Meetings will be held every day at 8:15 a.m. for 30 minutes for those on campus during Summer Sessions. Meetings will be coordinated by John Scardina. Please contact John at 12-step-coordinators@nym.org if you are able and willing to facilitate a meeting or two.

The Healing Center. As in years past, the Healing Center will be a sacred space for Friends during Summer Sessions. The Healing Center operates on a temple model, not on a spa model. Seekers cannot expect to come for an appointment as if they were paying for services. Rather, seekers enter a sacred space where everyone present contributes prayerfully to the spiritual energy. Seekers can hold space, receive work, or join a meeting for healing—whatever is offered at the time.

Whisper Buddies is a joyful way to meet and connect with Friends who have a different amount of Quaker decision-making experience than you do. Through this program, Friends who

are new to Quaker business meetings (or new to how New York Yearly Meeting holds them) can pair up with Friends who are more experienced and are willing to answer questions as they arise— by whispering, passing notes, or talking informally together after a committee meeting or Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business. The introductory meeting for Whisper Buddies will take place at 4:00 pm on Saturday, July 27.

Need help at Summer Sessions? Have a question about the schedule, or who to contact about a problem? Call the NYM event phone at 212-673-2285 to reach NYM staff or a registration team member. If no one answers, leave a message and someone will respond ASAP.

Intergenerational Community Building

The afternoons of Saturday, July 27, and Sunday, July 28, will focus on joyful, intergenerational community building. We're planning field trips to nearby parks and attractions, big group games, ongoing community art projects, and more. Friends are encouraged to help facilitate activities. Last year Friends led AVP ice breakers, explorations with watercolors and printmaking, and a tour of the campus. Can you help? Many hands and hearts are needed. Please use the form at nym.org/summer-sessions-2024.

Children and Youth Programs

Children Under Five will be cared for by experienced, paid childcare providers, supervised by JYM coordinators, during meeting times.



Part of the teen group gives their epistle at Summer Sessions 2023

Junior Yearly Meeting is the program for children ages 5-18 attending Summer Sessions in person. Groups are arranged according to age or grade, and meet every morning, Saturday through Tuesday, from **8:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** JYM volunteers plan a community-building program of activities for the children, including games, discussions, art projects, and more. JYM is a time for young people to experience a community based on Friends' testimonies and practices. Age-appropriate, experiential Quaker content is part of the program, and groups will spend some time in quiet worship or worship sharing every day. The JYM communal sing will take place on Tuesday, with a campfire that evening. JYM groups will present their epistles

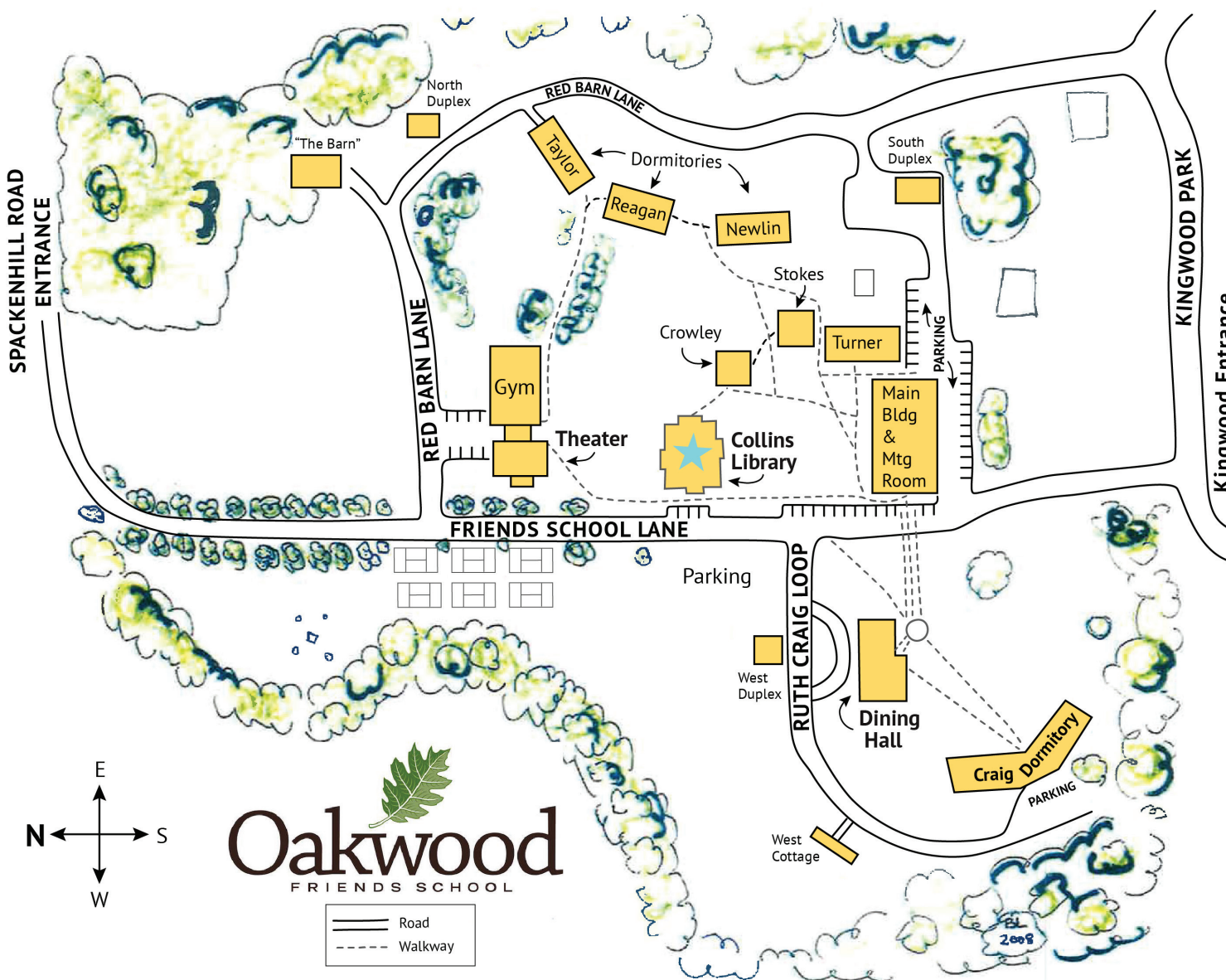
to the rest of NYM on Wednesday morning.

High School Group: The High School program will include a housing cluster, a lounge, and a full program of special activities throughout the day! Read more at nym.org/HS-Program-2024.

Can my child go to Summer Sessions without me? Yes! If your child is under 18, they may attend Summer Sessions with an adult chaperone. They must room with the chaperone if possible. The chaperone must be designated by the parent/guardian on their registration forms, must be at least 10 years older than the Friend they are chaperoning, and must bring a note signed by the parent/guardian to JYM check-in.

Young Adult Friends Young adult Friends (YAFs) form a community together at Summer

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Sessions. They can choose to join a YAF housing cluster if staying on campus—be sure to select that option on your registration form. Sessions will begin with an Ice Cream Social for young adults Friday night and a gathering to get to know each other and make plans for the rest of our time together. There will again be a nightly social time and epistle writing, and probably at least one workshop about how the yearly meeting functions and how young adults can participate. YAFs can also connect before, during, and after Sessions through a WhatsApp group. Please email Beth Kelly (bethk@nyym.org) with any questions.

Things to Consider Bringing

- clothes & shoes for warm days and cool nights
- refillable water bottle
- sunblock, hat, sunglasses, bug spray
- umbrella and rain gear
- swimsuit & towel
- musical instruments or other props for the Café Night talent show
- if staying on campus, consider bringing a fan for your room, an extra blanket, a small lamp, plastic bag for room trash, a bathrobe for the showers
- a laptop or device to access documents during

- business meetings.
- money to spend at the ice cream truck, Café Night, Fun(d) Fair and Tag Sale

Transportation

The address for Oakwood School is 22 Spackenkill Rd, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603. The train station in Poughkeepsie is served by Metro-North (new.mta.info/schedules) and Amtrak (amtrak.com). Taxis are available at the train station to take you the 4 miles to Oakwood. The Sessions Committee plans to arrange for one van pick-up from the station on Friday and on Saturday; please indicate your interest on the registration form.

Carpools: Drivers who can offer rides and Friends who wish to find a ride can use the online Carpool Board at www.groupcarpool.com/t/dazwqs.

ARRIVAL: Check in will begin at 4:00 pm on Friday. Please check in at Collins Library in the center of campus when you arrive. You will receive a name tag, your dorm room key if staying on campus, and a detailed program schedule. For those staying on-site, check-in will



Friends enjoying the ice cream truck on Oakwood's campus.

continue until 8:00 pm. If arriving later, please make other arrangements for that evening or notify the Registrar before 5:00 pm on the arrival date by calling 212-673-2285.

Pay as Led

Pay as Led is designed to enable newcomers and Friends of differing financial situations to attend Sessions together. After registering you will receive a follow-up email or letter with your suggested Pay as Led rate options. The three options are: the standard rate, which covers the costs NYM owes to Oakwood; the full rate, which helps others attend; and the supported rate, for those who would consider not attending due to cost. The Pay as Led plan relies on generosity from those who can afford to pay more.

If you need help paying for your transportation or off campus housing costs, please contact registration@nyym.org or call the NYM office at 212-257-5750.

Ways to Help

Work with children. If your gifts lead you to contribute to the work of the yearly meeting through guiding the children, consider this your opportunity. We need resource people and group leaders; art people, games people, experienced old hands and newcomers. What we will have in common is delight in sharing time with children while at Summer Sessions. We expect to share much joy together. Contact Polly Duke and Lauren Scott at jym-coordinators@nyym.org. **Indicate on your registration form if you'd like to help in one of these ways:**

- **Drive a golf cart around campus.** If you are at least 21 years old with a valid driver's license
- **Staff the Healing Center.** Modalities may include energy work, massage, craniosacral therapy, and spiritual counseling.
- **Carry a microphone.** Help Friends hear each other during meetings.
- **Provide technical help.** Friends experienced with Zoom meetings are needed to assist Friends at home and on site at Oakwood.
- **Build community** by facilitating an intergenerational activity on Saturday or Sunday.
- **Help** with the Tagless Tag Sale, childcare during the Plenary, or facilitate a worship sharing group

REGISTRATION is OPEN

Registration is completely online. If you are unable to register online, please ask someone you know to assist you, or call the NYM office at 212-673-5750. Volunteers are ready, willing, and able to provide online registration assistance.

Updates and additional information will be emailed to the NYM list and posted at nyym.org/summer-sessions-2024. Not on the NYM email list? Sign up at nyym.org/subscribe.

Visit nyym.org/summer-sessions-2024

2024 NYM SUMMER SESSIONS WEEK-AT-A-GLANCE July 26 - July 31 <i>subject to change</i>							
	* = hybrid event (accessible both online and in person)						
	Junior Yearly Meeting groups & childcare for under 5s meet 8:45 am - 12 pm, Saturday through Tuesday						
	Friday 7/26	Saturday 7/27	Sunday 7/28	Monday 7/29	Tuesday 7/30	Wednesday 7/31	
6:00 AM	Coffee and Communion/Early Worship, 6:00 - 7:00 am						
6:30 AM							
7:00 AM							
7:30 AM	BREAKFAST 7:30-9:00 am						
8:00 AM							
8:30 AM	12 Step Meetings: 8:15-9:15 am						
9:00 AM	Worship sharing 9:00-10:00 am						
9:30 AM							
10:00 AM	Meeting for Remembrance* 10:15 am-12 pm	Meeting for worship* 10:15-11:15 am	Meeting for Discernment* 10:15 am-12 pm	Meeting for Business* 10:15 am-12 pm	JYM epistles and closing worship* 10:15 am-12 pm		
10:30 AM							
11:00 AM							
11:30 AM							
12:00 PM	LUNCH 12:00-1:30 PM						
12:30 PM							
1:00 PM							
1:30 PM	Intergenerational Community Building 1:30-5:00 pm	Meeting for Business* 1:30-3:30 pm	Meeting for Discernment* 1:30-3:30 pm	Fun(d) Fair/Tag Sale 1:30-3:20 pm	Meeting for Business* 3:30-5:30 pm	Pack up & Departure -- Safe Travels!	
2:00 PM							
2:30 PM							
3:00 PM		Intergenerational Community Building 3:45-5:15 pm	Meeting for Discernment reflection session* 4:00-5:15 pm				
3:30 PM							
4:00 PM	Check in begins at 4:00 pm	DINNER 5:30 - 7:00 pm					
4:30 PM							
5:00 PM							
5:30 PM							
6:00 PM							
6:30 PM	Bible Study* 6:30-7:15 pm						
7:00 PM	Opening Worship* 7:00- 8:00 pm						
7:30 PM	JYM intro 8 pm	Plenary* 7:30-9:30 pm	Contra Dance 7:30-9:30 pm	Café Night* 7:30-9:00 pm	Coord. Comm Meetings*/JYM Campfire 7:30-9:00 pm		
8:00 PM							
8:30 PM							
9:00 PM		Evening Prayers* after plenary		Evening Prayers* after Cafe Night			
9:30 PM							