

## 6 Jan: Session 1: To what do we aspire in Meeting for Worship? - Bill & Arlene

- Welcome and Introductions
- Silence vs stillness – what happens in meeting
  - [5 min QuakerSpeak video]: What is Quaker silence?  
<https://quakerspeak.com/video/quaker-silence/>
  - [8 min Quaker Speak Video]: What do Quakers Do in Silent Worship? :  
<https://quakerspeak.com/video/what-quakers-do-silent-worship/>
  - [Article]: Friends and Worship, Douglas Steere (1901-1995):  
<https://www.quakercloud.org/cloud/maury-river-friends-meeting/resources/friends-and-worship-douglas-steere>
  - [Article]: The Gathered Meeting, Thomas Kelly (1893-1941):  
<https://tractassociation.org/digital-material/meeting-for-worship/the-gathered-meeting/>
  - [7 min QuakerSpeak video]: How to Deepen Quaker Meeting for Worship:  
<https://quakerspeak.com/video/how-to-deepen-quaker-meeting-worship/>
  - (Optional: 7 min QuakerSpeak video): Is Quaker Worship Meditation  
<https://quakerspeak.com/video/quaker-worship-meditation/>
- **Queries for reflection during your preparation for class**
  - **From QuakerSpeak:**
    - **A.M. Fink says that the silence is “where we meet the mystery without the distraction of words or the trappings of entertainment.” What do you think he means by “the distraction of words” and “trappings of entertainment”? What does it mean to “meet the mystery?”**
    - **Guli identifies that the most challenging aspect of waiting worship for her is listening to the way that God speaks through other people without arguing or responding. What do you find most challenging and enriching about waiting worship?**
    - **Desmond Tutu says, “there can be no forgiveness without giving up all hope for a better past”. What do you think this means and how does it relate to waiting worship?**
    - **What is “your centered place”?**
    - **Douglas Steere says: “On Sunday we gather ‘to know one another in that which is Eternal.’” How do you interpret this?**

- **Have you ever experienced a ‘gathered meeting’? What does a deep meeting for worship feel like to you?**
- **What can we do to deepen our worship? What are we missing? What are we striving for?”**

### **13 Jan: Session 2 Vocal Ministry - Bill**

- Vocal ministry
  - Vocal Ministry Decision Tree: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/eoQzVWfL2v2afq378>
  - [3.5 min Video]: “The Faithfulness Lecture”: “5 tests for discerning a true leading” <https://quakerspeak.com/video/the-faithfulness-lecture/>
  - [Article]: Ruth Pitman ,On Vocal Ministry, Quaker tract: <https://tractassociation.org/digital-material/meeting-for-worship/on-the-vocal-ministry/>
  - [7 min Video]: When to Speak in Quaker Worship <https://quakerspeak.com/video/when-to-speak-in-quaker-worship/>
  - [8.5 min Video]: Pt 2. Vocal Ministry <https://quakerspeak.com/video/quaker-worship-pt-2-giving-vocal-ministry/>
- **Queries for reflection during your preparation for class**
  - **Can you recall some vocal ministry that was particularly meaningful to you?**
  - **What do you think of the standards about speaking and listening mentioned by Ruth Pitman in her Quaker tract?**
    - **For us as individuals?**
    - **For our Meeting as a whole?**
  - **What helps you to decide whether or not to give vocal ministry during Quaker Meeting?**
    - **How does the Vocal Ministry Decision Tree help or not help with that decision?**
    - **Do you encounter internal resistance to giving vocal ministry?**
  - **Traci [in one of the videos] has come up with “The Faithfulness Lecture” as a way to build up her courage when she is feeling resistant to a nudge from the Spirit. What are some tools that you have developed or could develop as a reminder to “live up to the Light that thou hast?”**

- Have you felt that “electric feeling” that Callid Keefe-Perry [in “Giving Vocal Ministry”] says happens when he gives vocal ministry?
- Years ago, a young man gave ministry by silently standing on his head in the center of the worship room for a short time. What do you think of that?
- What do you do if you hear vocal ministry that doesn’t seem to speak to you, or seems spiritually jarring?
- Do you feel our Meeting in recent months has had too much or too little vocal ministry? What do you experience when vocal ministry seems either too much or too little?

## 20 Jan: Session 3: Personal practices - Arlene

- [Article]: Spiritual Practice  
<https://www.pym.org/quaker-traditions-series-part-i-spiritual-practice>: *Examples of communal spiritual practices are: worship, clearness committees, worship sharing, addressing our business together in worship, collective movement and exercise like yoga or tai chi, reading tarot together, reading sacred texts like the Bible together, workshops, Godly Play and Faith & Play stories, children’s meeting, group meditation, and spiritual support and accountability groups.*
- to facilitate personal spiritual growth or grounding
  - *Daily Time of Retirement*
  - *Discern practice you’re led to*
  - *Meditate or pray*
  - *Devotional/spiritual Readings*
  - *Poetry*
  - *Being in Nature*
  - *Journaling*
  - *Reading the Bible*
- [5.5 min video]: How I Practice Quakerism Throughout the Week  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69w47fjisns>
- [5.5 min video]: Quaker Spiritual Disciplines  
<https://quakerspeak.com/video/quaker-spiritual-disciplines/>
- [7 minute video. See also comments.]: Why Do Some Quakers Dress Plain?  
<https://quakerspeak.com/video/plain-dress/>
- **Queries for reflection during your preparation for class :**

- In the article from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting about Spiritual practice, communal spiritual practice is differentiated from individual spiritual practice. What do you do during the week to reinforce the inward listening you practice during Sunday communal practice?
- Unprogrammed Friends are clear that the immediate experience of God is more important than any verbal formulation about God. We use many metaphors for God, such as Energy, Life Energy, Higher Power, and Spirit. What is gained and what is lost by these metaphors?
- As Quakers, we believe that God is within each of us. How did you honor the God within you over the past 24 hours? How is God/Spirit working in your life?
- What do you do to remain open to the Divine in your daily life?
- In the video, How I Practice Quakerism Throughout the Week, Fritz Weiss's perspective is that seeking alone through personal practice prepares us to experience seeking together in community, but if our Truth from personal experience is the only Truth we know, it's not enough. Have you ever experienced Truth gained through personal practice that was broadened for you through corporate worship? If so, please describe.
- To help us grow in the Spirit, Patricia McBee describes the disciplines of Retirement, Prayer, and Discernment as big practices that help us grow in the Spirit. She also says that busy people can engage in small acts to grow in the Spirit if they have the right attitude. What small acts do you practice to help you grow in the Spirit?

## **27 Jan: Session 4 To What do we Aspire in Decision-Making**

### **Part 1: In Business Meeting and in Meeting Committees - Arlene**

- **[4 min Video]: How do Quakers make Decisions?** (Eden Grace from Friends United Meeting):  
<https://quakerspeak.com/video/quaker-decision-making-consensus/>
- **[Article]: IMYM Faith & Practice: Monthly Meeting Advices**  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IRveTecZkxGxaqNgS1PZf-JAbiQA-VIF/view?usp=sharing>

- [Article]: IMYM Faith & Practice: Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M4B7bAeULBcLZyu6KavI42FuqaLMapPE/view?usp=sharing>
- [Article]: Quaker Decision-making in the America Friends Service Committee  
<https://www.afsc.org/testimonies/decision-making>
- **[4 min Video]:**  
<https://quakerspeak.com/video/why-quakers-value-process-over-outcome> (By a former clerk of FCNL)
- [Article]: Quaker Decision-Making:  
<https://neym.org/faith-and-practice/decision-making> (Note of Interest sections 3.12 and 3.13 on “Minutes of exercise”)
- [Article]: Principle vs. Preference: The Speed of Quaker Decision-Making  
<https://medium.com/nursery-of-truth/principle-vs-preference-the-speed-of-quaker-decision-making-58286864b08d>
- IMYM Faith and Practice pg 50: [Quote for reflection:] “*Flowing through every decision we make concerning our priorities is an awareness of how we are serving the Divine within ourselves and other human beings*”
- [Optional Article]: *Quaker Decision-making at Guilford College*  
<https://friendscenter.guilford.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/39/2020/08/Quaker-Decision-making-Sept-2018-copy.pdf>
- **Queries for reflection during your preparation for class**
  - **Have you ever heard someone characterize the Quaker decision-making process as “consensus”? Do you correct them?**
  - **Eden Grace says, “We start from a really strong affirmation and presupposition that God has a will. God has a will for us as individuals. God has a will for us as a spiritual community in the Meeting, and God has a will for this world.” What do you think Eden means by this? Do you share this belief? What does it mean for your life?**
  - **Eden uses the example of community discernment over the color of a carpet as an example of a decision that seems trivial but becomes transformational. Have you had an experience of coming together with a group of people to decide something trivial and emerging transformed?**
  - **In the reading in IMYM Faith & Practice: Monthly Meeting Advices, it is stated (on page 119): “Those present [in the Monthly Meeting] help the meeting by exercising a spirit of wisdom, forbearance, and love.”**

**Based on your experience, what is an example of wisdom, forbearance, and/or love that you provided or witnessed in others during our Monthly Meeting?**

- **From page 37 in IMYM Faith & Practice: Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business (MFWWCFB): “When one is heard the first time one speaks, one does not feel the need to go over the same ground.” If you have spoken in MFWWCFB, did you feel heard? What in your experience led you to feel heard.**
- **From page 37 in IMYM Faith & Practice: Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business (MFWWCFB). “The commitment to search for unity depends upon mutual trust...” Do you agree? Why or why not?**
- **Friends are urged to be mutually forbearing and concerned for the good of the meeting of the whole, rather than to press for personal preference in both MFWWCFB and in committee meetings. Have you ever felt a strong personal preference for one decision instead of another? If so, what did you do to seek a decision for the good of the meeting as a whole?**
- **In the article, Quaker Decision-making, <https://www.afsc.org/testimonies/decision-making>, the expectation is that Quakers will enter into decision-making with an open mind and avoid holding unshakably to a predetermined position. Our Quaker meeting is dealing with a number of decisions, such as whether or not to replace the carpet; when and how to safely to reopen the meeting house; how to pare down the number of committees. What do you do to enter the decision-making process with an open mind and to avoid holding unshakably to a predetermined position?**
- **Have you ever been led to Stand In the Way or to Stand Aside of a decision either in MFWWCFB or in a committee? As stated in the article from New England Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice titled, Quaker Decision-Making, “An inability to find a common understanding of God’s can create a rift in the meeting community. In such cases, all members of the meeting must work to repair the wounds of this break—reaching out to others in love, seeking to rebuild trust one with another.” What actions enabled the meeting to move forward with love and trust of one another?**
- **In the article, Principle vs Preference: The Speed of Quaker Decision-Making, C. Wess Daniels suggests one part of overcoming fragmentation in a community is to create low threshold activities that create opportunities to get to know each other. His examples include**

a “God Pub,” and “Living Room Stories.” What ideas do you have for ways to get to know each other from meeting in ways that we wouldn’t know otherwise?

- What does the phrase, “Obedience to God’s Will” mean to you? How does the phrase, “Obedience to God’s Will” relate to Quaker decision-making for the Meeting as a whole?

### 3 Feb: Session 5: To What do we Aspire in Decision-Making Part 2: in Committees - Bill

- Committees of the Meeting:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YaSZIVTVxnn3GtJLvcrbvAbzLyaGtNi/view?usp=sharing>
- IMYM F&P pg 55: [Quote for reflection:] *Friends have kept the power of decision in religious matters as close as possible to the primary worship group and individual...believing that the path to the Divine is inward for each individual and worship group*
- IMYM F&P pg 59: [Quote for reflection:] *Each meeting decides which committees are necessary to carry out its concerns and business*
- [Article]: Arthur Larrabee on The Use of Committees  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OLtMwoFEsxiDWcNdghC0-slyIPBrtW1y25PelvZaWD0/edit?usp=sharing>
- [Article:] Clearness Committees - What They Are and What They Do:  
<https://www.fgcquaker.org/resources/clearness-committees-what-they-are-and-what-they-do>
- [10 min video]: How to have a Clearness Committee  
<https://quakerspeak.com/video/quaker-clearness-committee/>
- [8 min Video]: For personal discernment. Parker Palmer  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t\\_J6RE5\\_5R4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_J6RE5_5R4)
- [Article covering similar ground to the video above]: The Clearness Committee  
<http://couragerenewal.org/clearnesscommittee/>
- [8 minute Video]: When the soul shows up.  
<http://couragerenewal.org/stories/when-the-soul-shows-up>
- [Article]: Some Guidelines for Clearness: For a Leading or Ministry Under the Care of a Meeting  
<https://www.fgcquaker.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Guidelines%20for%20Clearness%20for%20a%20Leading%20or%20Ministry.pdf>
- **Queries for reflection during your preparation for class:**

- **Committees typically conduct the work that facilitates the decision-making in the monthly Business Meeting. How can committees balance their work in a timely manner and still leave enough time to wait on the Spirit for direction and unity in their decisions?**
- **Enthusiastic and well-informed committees sometimes view it as a burden to get the Business Meeting as a whole to embrace committee requests. Non-committee members may feel pressure from the committee to make particular decisions. What do you see as the positive and negative aspects of this situation? How can we as a Meeting deal with this?**
- **What do you do to prepare yourself to help another access their own inner teacher without imposing your beliefs about what that person “should” do?**
- **What do you think of the discipline of asking “open-ended questions”?**
- **What might you ask in a clearness committee for membership?**
- **What might you ask in a clearness committee for marriage?**
- **Have you ever met with a clearness committee, or served on a clearness committee, that did not find unity on the rightness of proceeding with the leading at that time, but did eventually bring forward a ministry that was “...deepened and honed in ways that might not have been possible if the ministry moved forward when originally proposed”? Without identifying the individual, describe the original leading and how it deepened and honed with a time of waiting.**

## **10 Feb: Session 6: Eldering - Arlene**

How we behave towards one another

- [Article]: A Case for Eldering and Discipline  
<https://www.friendsjournal.org/case-eldering-and-discipline/>
- [Article]: Paradigms of Calls and Discoveries of Gifts  
<http://bit.do/Discoveries-of-Gifts>
- [1.5 min Quaker Speak Video]: Positive Quaker Eldering Has 50-year Impact  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFDZYCNvmTE>
- [Article]: Notes on Boulder Friends Meeting’s workshop on Eldering  
<https://www.boulderfriendsmeeting.org/wp-content/friends9x4Q/2020/05/Eldering->



[Notes.pdf](#) [NOTE: Pay attention to the following sections: Purpose; Eldering; and Criteria for Eldering in Boulder Meeting]

- [Article:] Elders and Young Friends <http://bit.do/Elders-young> (Just start reading from the top of the copied page.)
- [5 min Quaker Speak Video]: The Quaker Practice of Traveling with an Elder <https://quakerspeak.com/video/the-quaker-practice-of-traveling-with-an-elder/>
- [Article:] Naming Spiritual Gifts. <https://www.fgcquaker.org/resources/naming-spiritual-gifts-within-meeting>
- [Article]: Forgiveness: Parallels Between Quakerism and Judaism <https://www.jewishboston.com/read/forgiveness-parallels-between-quakerism-and-judaism/>
- [Article]: Matthew 18: This forgiveness thing is real <http://www.quakerquaker.org/profiles/blogs/matthew-18-this-forgiveness>
- [Article]: Why Forgive <http://www.durhamfriendsmeeting.org/?p=476> (by a Quaker Pastor)
- [Article]: On Forgiveness: <http://www.oldchathamquakers.org/blog/archives/05-2018>
  
- **Queries for reflection**
  - Have you ever experienced “eldering,” in which someone helped you become aware of gifts within yourself, spiritual or other gifts? What impact did that eldering have on you?
  - Have you ever experienced “eldering,” in which you helped someone become aware of their spiritual or other gifts? What impact did that eldering have on you?
  - What do you experience when you hear vocal ministry that appears to lack a spiritual basis?
  - Describe a time when you were an elder to a child or to an adult, either in meeting or outside. What did you do to draw out their gifts with love and support?
  - Without naming names, what behaviors, if any, have you witnessed either in monthly meetings or meetings for worship for which eldering might be appropriate? Describe the behaviors.
  - In the article from Jewish Boston titled Forgiveness: Parallels Between Quakerism and Judaism, the author states that because Quakers have no doctrine, creed, or dogma, forgiveness and repentance are unique to each Quaker based on personal beliefs and practices. What is your belief about forgiveness, and what is the reasoning behind your belief?

- The article, *Naming Spiritual Gifts within the Meeting*, makes the point that spiritual gifts may not be the same as an individual's skills or talents; they are essentially on loan from the Spirit. They are for the benefit of the community rather than the individual. How do you think about "spiritual gifts"?
- "It is said that 'you can't elder someone you don't love'. What do you think of this?"
- Who benefits from Eldering? Who benefits from forgiving?

## 17 Feb: Session 7: Let Our Lives Speak -Bill

- [11 short Articles]: AFSC An Introduction to Quaker Testimonies  
<https://www.afsc.org/testimonies/introduction>
  - Introduction
  - What are Testimonies and Queries?
  - Peace
  - Equality
  - Integrity
  - Community
  - Simplicity
  - Stewardship
  - Silent Reflection
  - Quaker Decision-making
  - Nonviolent Witness and Action
- [Article]: The Quaker Testimonies  
[https://together.woodbrooke.org.uk/quaker.org.uk\\_mirror/Quaker%20Testimonies%20leaflet.pdf](https://together.woodbrooke.org.uk/quaker.org.uk_mirror/Quaker%20Testimonies%20leaflet.pdf)
- [Article]: S-P-I-C-E-S The Quaker Testimonies (from Connecticut Friends School)  
<https://www.friendsjournal.org/s-p-i-c-e-s-quaker-testimonies/>
- [Article]: Categorically not the testimonies (Eric Moon). **Note also the comments:** <https://www.friendsjournal.org/categorically-not-the-testimonies/>
- [Article]: Quaker Testimonies in Quaker Ranter (Martin Kelley)  
[https://www.quakerranter.org/quaker\\_testimonies/](https://www.quakerranter.org/quaker_testimonies/)
- [Article]: Do Quaker Testimonies Have An Authentic Historical Dimension (Keith Helmuth): <https://www.friendsjournal.org/2010020/>
- **Queries for reflection:**
  - What is your favorite Quaker testimony? Why do you like it?

- Is there someone whom you either know or know of who embodies one or more Quaker testimonies? Which testimonies? Give an example of how that person embodies one of the testimonies.
- Can you think of ways in which a particular testimony might be troublesome?
- Eric Moon purports that when we codify, make creeds, and canonize a few words--such as reducing our testimonies to the acronym, SPICES,--we limit our vision, as well as the possibility of God's work through us. Does focusing on the testimonies deepen or weaken your Quaker spirituality? What, if anything, do the testimonies leave out?
- How can you speak your truth so that those who disagree with you can hear it?
- George Fox said in 1650 that Quakers are called to live “in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars.” How do you interpret this?
- How do you interpret the peace testimony now that declared war seems to be no longer how nations interact with one another?
- Eric Moon says: “To learn from our testimonies, to make them our own, we perhaps can meet them again, ...as John Woolman did: in human faces, on foot, walking...[so that] we might re-awaken our Quakerism into an incandescent, Spirit-led passion.” What is your take on this?

## 24 Feb: Session 8: Mysticism - Bill

- [11 min Video:] “Quaker Mysticism”.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zY5UDUnT8tE>
- [Article:] Mysticism: The 'Engine' of liberal Quakerism.  
<http://www.quakerquaker.org/group/liberal/forum/topics/mysticism-the-engine-of-liberal-quakerism-anonymous-article-from>
- [Article]: “Rufus Jones and Mystical Quakerism”, by John Punshon, Friends Journal: **(page 9)**  
<://www.frihttpsendsjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/emember/downloads/1984/HC12-50767.pdf>
- [Article]: “The Mystical Dimension of Quakerism”, by Douglas Steere, Friends Journal **(page 8)**:  
<https://www.friendsjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/emember/downloads/1984/HC12-50767.pdf>
- [Article]: “Mystical Experience, the Bedrock of Quaker Faith” by Bob Atchley  
<https://www.friendsjournal.org/mysticism-quaker-faith/>
- [Article:] Are Quakers Mystics? <https://www.renofriends.org/are-quakers-mystics/>

- [Article]: “Active mystics” [addresses the common tension in Meetings between what are called the “mystics” and the “activists;”]  
<https://www.afsc.org/blogs/acting-in-faith/active-mystics>
- [Optional Article]: “Rufus Jones and Mysticism for the Masses”, by M. S. Hedstrom (slightly jaundiced view of Jones, Thomas Merton, and book-selling, but very thoughtful) <http://www.crosscurrents.org/Hedstrom0204.htm>
- **Queries for reflection:**
  - Have you had any mystical experiences you’d feel comfortable sharing in class?
  - Quakers are sometimes called “Practical Mystics”. What does this mean to you?
  - Quakers are also called “Corporate Mystics”. What are your thoughts on this?
  - Rufus Jones says that mysticism “flourishes best in groups.” And as he phrased the same idea in *Social Law* [not included in our readings], “No man can be holy unto himself.” What does this mean to you?
  - Rufus Jones says “...true ‘life’ begins when man [sic] finds that eternal Reality to which he ‘belongs’”. Has this been your experience?
  - Steere mentions that Quakerism is variously thought of as either “prophetic” or “mystical”. What is your take on this?
  - Do you think Boulder Friends Meeting experiences the tension Schaefer describes between “mystics” and “activists,” or that our community is the combination of both, what Schaefer calls “positive mysticism.” Explain your perspective.
  - Hedstrom says “For [Rufus] Jones, the test of mystical experience was its social utility.”. Do you agree with Rufus Jones in this?
  - Rufus Jones argued [in 1942] that “It is now if ever that we need the voice of those who, 'listening to the inner flow of things, speak to the age out of Eternity.'” Does this idea speak to you now, in 2022? If so, what would Eternity say to **our** age?

### 3 March: Session 9: Varieties of Quaker Beliefs - Arlene

- [6 min 42 sec Video]: 9 Core Quaker Beliefs, by Arthur Larrabee  
<https://quakerspeak.com/video/9-core-quaker-beliefs/>

In particular note: "Today, it is generally true that Friends still adhere to certain essential principles:

- a belief in the possibility of direct, unmediated communion with the Divine (historically expressed by George Fox in the statement, "Christ is come to teach his people himself"); and
- a commitment to living lives that outwardly attest to this inward experience."
- God
  - [19 min Video]: What Do Quakers Believe? (QuakerSpeak)  
<https://quakerspeak.com/video/what-do-quakers-believe/>
  - [Article]: Quakers and God (Seven Quakers share what God means to them) <https://www.quaker.org.uk/about-quakers/our-faith/quakers-and-god>  
(Note: You'll be asked to accept cookies.)
  - [Article]: God, Jesus, Christianity, and Quakers (A nontheist's view by Jim Cain) <https://www.friendsjournal.org/god-jesus-christianity-and-quakers/>
  - [Article]: The name of God (Craig Barnett):  
<https://transitionquaker.blogspot.com/2013/11/the-name-of-god.html>
- The bible
  - [2.75 min Video]: How Do Quakers Read the Bible (QuakerSpeak)  
<https://quakerspeak.com/video/quakers-read-bible-paul-buckley/>
- The inner Christ
  - [Article]: From The Guardian (British): "The Quakers are right. We don't need God":  
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/04/quakers-dropping-g-god>
  - [Letters on the above]:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/07/debate-on-god-language-doesnt-mean-all-quakers-are-losing-faith>
- **Queries for reflection:**
  - Jim Cain, in his article, God, Jesus, Christianity, and Quakers says that, "... the question of whether Quakers are Christian or individual Quakers are Christian are problematic, best replaced by questions about how we conceive of God, how we understand Jesus, or how we experience the sacred." Do you feel comfortable or uncomfortable with his suggestion?
  - What are your hopes and fears about discussing the range of beliefs among Quakers?

- How do you experience the presence of the Divine in you?
- What is your reaction to the proposal that we might need to substitute the word, “God” with a less misunderstood word, --such as “Light,” “Spirit” or some other word?
- Our Quaker Meeting is made up of people from different traditions, “...who may feel more or less comfortable with a vocabulary that embraces God, Jesus, prayer, and Spirit.” How do you describe your experience of God?
- As a non-creedal religion, many Quakers feel that the forefront of their religious life is experience. What do you say that you believe? How do you answer that question when other religious folks ask you?
- If you read the bible, how do you listen for the voice of God or Spirit underneath the words?
- Is the space in our worship room so uplifting that anyone can find it in themselves to sit, think, clear their heads and order their thoughts? If yes, what does God or Spirit add?
- From the article, “The name of God”, by Craig Barnett, “...the only genuinely important question ... is whether we can experience a spiritual reality that is independent of our own desires and decisions.” What does ‘experiencing a spiritual reality that is independent of our own desires and decisions’ mean to you?
- Another quote from Craig Barnett: “The Quaker Way... a matter of ...looking deeply and attentively at the reality of our experience and allowing ourselves to be guided and transformed by what we discover there.” Has this been true for you?
- Craig Barnett quotes Rex Ambler, who said in “The Quaker Way – a Rediscovery”: “Reality is finally mysterious. Our little word 'God' tries to name that mystery... It points but it does not describe. It offers no concepts or images that enable us to grasp the reality in our minds. It can only invite us to look and to see for ourselves.” Could a concept of God that is free of “concepts or images” be helpful to you?

## **10 March: Session 10: Queries and Reflections**

- **Queries for reflection and discussion**

- What impact, if any, has this class on your Quaker spirituality?
- Unprogrammed Friends are clear that the immediate experience of God is more important than any verbal formulation about God. Still, we talk about, and use

many metaphors for God, such as Energy, Life Energy, Higher Power, and Spirit. What is gained and what is lost by these metaphors?

- We have a variety of backgrounds—each of these heritages uses different languages to express spiritual concepts? Which languages are difficult for you?
- Based on the readings and discussions from the class about God's /Spirit's ways of working in your life, are you drawn to try a practice to help you remain open to the Divine in your daily life? If so, what practice might you try?
- The open-ended question approach to clearness committees presupposes that everyone contains 'that of God', and that means everyone has within them the tools for their own spiritual growth. Do you believe it? How can we cultivate a deep faith in this idea, when we see ignorance and stubbornness all around us?
- The article, On Forgiveness, states that Mary Queen of Scots said about Queen Elizabeth, "I will forgive, but I won't forget." The author asserts that, "This is not forgiveness, but forgiveness lite." Do you agree or disagree, and explain your response.
- It is said that "you can't elder someone you don't love." What do you think of this?

- **Queries about the class itself**

- Which of the articles, videos, and queries were most meaningful for you? Did any fall flat for you? If so, please let us know now, or in an email.
- Think about this class--the topics, the articles and videos, the 7:00-8:30pm time, the large and small group format, the Zoom experience, and the facilitation of this class. What, if anything, would you suggest changing in this online Quaker Spirituality class, were it to be offered again?
- How might we use these class resources going forward?
- Would you take a class like this again—one focussed on Quaker spirituality—or would you rather have the Meeting offer a different kind of Quaker Studies class?

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### **Extra Resources**

## **Boulder Meeting History (from our website):**

<https://www.boulderfriendsmeeting.org/history/>

Interesting set of online articles:

- Quaker Theology: A Progressive Journal and Forum for Discussion and Study:  
<https://quakertheology.org/>

For deeper study of Quaker mysticism, consider “What Canst Thou Say?” Journal for Quaker Mystics: <http://www.whatcanstthousay.org/about-wcts-and-sample-issue>

## **Queries we wish we’d gotten to in earlier sessions:**

- Rex Ambler says “Our little word 'God' tries to name that mystery [of Reality]... It points but it does not describe. It offers no concepts or images that enable us to grasp the reality in our minds. It can only invite us to look and to see for ourselves.” Could a concept of God that is free of “concepts or images” be helpful to you?
- (From the article, The name of God): “The Quaker Way...is a matter of practice...The only genuinely important question from the point of view of this practice is whether we can experience a spiritual reality that is independent of our own desires and decisions.” What does ‘experiencing a spiritual reality that is independent of our own desires and decisions’ mean to you?
- Are there some *beliefs* that would disqualify a person from being a Quaker?
- Are there some *behaviors* that would disqualify a person from being a Quaker?

## **Interesting quotes that didn’t fit anywhere else:**

- “When it comes to acting in and relating to the world, language is at least twice removed from any experience of reality – we are using language - as I am now - to communicate ideas that are in turn formed in our heads on reflection in turn of imperfectly formed knowledge of partial experiences of reality. This is why we meet in silence.” –Gordon Ferguson in a comment down below Craig Barnett’s article “The name of God” (from session 9)]
- Perhaps the original source of the quote above: “Joseph Campbell has said that the best things can’t be told since they transcend all thought; the second best things are misunderstood, since they are the thoughts that refer to what can’t be thought about; and the third best things are what we talk about.” Cited by Glenys



D. Livingstone

<https://www.magoism.net/2018/06/essay-part-3-language-for-goddess-divine-expression-by-glenys-livingstone-ph-d/>, referenced to Joseph Campbell: *The Power of Myth*, p.49.(elsewhere cited as on p 62)]

**Membership information** (resources for a session we didn't include in the syllabus):

- [5 min Video]: How to Become a Member of a Quaker Meeting.  
<https://quakerspeak.com/video/how-to-become-a-member-of-a-quaker-meeting/>
- [Article]: Belonging: Quakers, Membership, and the Need to be Known  
<https://www.friendsjournal.org/belonging-quakers-membership-and-the-need-to-be-known/>