

STRAWBERRY CREEK MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

MARCH 2023
NEWSLETTER

Berkeley Technology Academy, 2701 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, corner of Derby St., Berkeley
Phone: 510-524-9186. Mailing Address: P.O. Box 5065, Berkeley, CA 94705.

Website <http://www.strawberrycreekfriends.org> (with Zoom link for Worship Hour)

Listserv (for subscribers) strawberrycreek@groups.io

Web Coordinator/List Serve Coordinator Amy Dewey amyd@alumnae.mills.edu

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/StrawberryCreekFriends>

Calendar <https://www.strawberrycreekfriends.org/calendar>

Current Newsletter <http://www.strawberrycreekfriends.org/newsletter>

Newsletter Editor & Calendar Postings Sarah Hawthorne editor@strawberrycreekfriends.org

Distribution Sunday is last Sunday of each month (newsletter posted online & subscribers are emailed)

Newsletter Deadline is Sunday before Distribution Sunday. **Deadline: March 19** (for April issue)

SUNDAYS (ongoing)

10 a.m. Meeting for Worship is both onsite and on Zoom. *Details inside.*

5 p.m. Oakland Quaker Worship Group (at Peter Lin's house, see <http://oaklandquakers.org>)

(activities below via Zoom unless otherwise noted)

March 5 - Advices & Queries on Peace, read aloud by Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness.

March 12 - 12:30 p.m. Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business

March 19 - 12:30p.m. Discussion on Power (PPR). *Details inside.*

March 26 - 12:30 p.m. Committee Sunday. *Check with your committee clerk for details.*

WEDNESDAYS (ongoing)

7 a.m. Mid-Week Morning Worship. For information, call Peter Lin 510-530-0479.

THURSDAYS (ongoing)

4 p.m. Twelve-Step Meeting (open to all). Contact facilitator Avotcja Jiltoniro 510-658-7995.



First African Methodist Episcopal (FAME)

The oldest Black church in the East Bay burned Sunday February 19 at Telegraph Ave & 37th, North Oakland (no one was injured, and the fire appears to have started accidentally). Pastor Rodney Smith said "We have completely lost the interior of the church — it's completely gutted." He promised, "We will rise again."

A [GoFundMe](#) page has been set up

Strawberry Creek Sunday Worship

We meet for worship at 10am Sunday morning. Every Sunday at 10am there are two options for attending. One is in person at Berkeley Technology Academy (see cover page for address). The other option is attending online via Zoom. On the first and third Sundays of the month the Zoom and in person gatherings are connected electronically (blended). On the second and fourth Sundays, the onsite gathering and the online gathering are separate, with no shared technology connection. Meeting's online calendar shows which Sundays the two gatherings will be linked or not:

<https://www.strawberrycreekfriends.org/calendar>

In person newcomers are welcome to sign our hard copy Guestbook, and Zoom newcomers are invited to sign our online Guest Book. Zoom link and online Guestbook can be found at <http://www.strawberrycreekfriends.org>

Oakland Quaker Worship Group - Sundays

Sundays at 5pm the Oakland Quakers meet in person at the home of Peter Lin. Contact Peter or go to their website

<http://oaklandquakers.org>

Berkeley Friends Meeting (BFM)

For more information about Sunday worship, see <http://www.berkeleyfriendsmeeting.org>

Quaker Center Morning Worship (Zoom)

Every morning (7:30-8am) Quaker Center Ben Lomond offers worship, and once a week it offers worship sharing (Wed at 10am). For these and other Quaker Center events, see

www.quakercenter.org

QEW: Quaker Ecology Meditations Mar 14

At 4pm Tuesday March 14, Quaker Earthcare Witness hosts Quaker ecotheologian Cherice Bock to share her new book, *A Quaker Ecology: Meditations on the Future of Friends*. This book offers exciting meditations on Quaker ecology. See

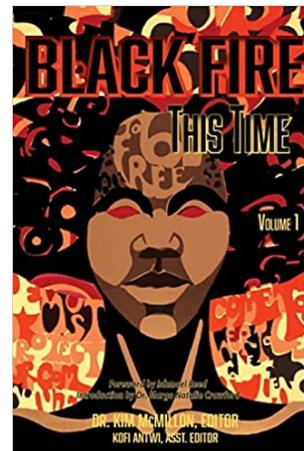
<https://quakerearthcare.org/event/a-quaker-ecology-with-cherice-bock/>

POWER - The Good, the Bad, and the Messy

Power, Privilege, and Race Subcommittee's second adult ed. session in a 3-part series on POWER will be Sunday March 19 at 12:30 on Zoom. Focus: work toward growing, building, and embodying non-oppressive personal and corporate power in our meeting through awareness of the good, the bad, and the messy. PPR Clerk Susan Burr susanburr45@gmail.com

Black Quaker Lives Matter Film Festival

The 2023 Black Quaker Lives Matter Film Festival & Forum (Feb 4 - April 8) honoring distinguished Quakers of Color continues. For schedule/registration, see The BlackQuaker Project www.theblackquakerproject.org or contact Susan Burr susanburr45@gmail.com



Black Fire This Time (2022)

Recently released, this anthology explores all facets of the Black Arts Movement, including the past, present and future of Black writing. Friend Avotcja writings are included. To learn more about Avotcja's creative works and upcoming events in which she's participating, see <https://avotcja.org>

Western N.American Experiment w/Light

At 6:30pm on the fourth Wednesday of every month, the Western North American Experiment with Light group meets on Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6820730575>

For more information, contact Barbara Birch.

🍓 OPPORTUNITIES TO HAVE FUN ❤️

Please contact NomCom Clerks Barbara Birch or Susan Black to let them know your interest in any of the following openings.



Loaves & Fishes

Nominating Committee is looking to reconstitute the Loaves and Fishes Committee as a group of four or more Friends who serve simple refreshments at B-Tech after Meeting for Worship. Every Sunday one volunteer will be scheduled to bring (or make onsite) coffee to be offered on a patio table. (Friends are asked to bring their own cups.) Bringing drinks or snacks is optional at volunteer's discretion. One of the rotating volunteers is needed to serve as Clerk Sound like your cup of coffee?



Bringing Our Community Together

The “technical” tasks that enable our Meeting to be together during our blended Sunday worship hour are surprisingly easy to learn! Consider serving the Meeting once a Sunday by being a Zoom Coordinator or an Audio-Visual Tech. Tell Facilities Clerks Erik Wilson or John McCarthy you want to join a technology team.



Newsletter Editor

Having served as newsletter editor for three years, Sarah will be stepping down at the end of this committee year. She's had a blast (but will be doing something else next year). To know more about being the editor, contact Sarah editor@strawberrycreekfriends.org



Librarian

Love words? Meeting has not had a Librarian for four years. The job description has been re-envisioned to take into account that information has largely navigated from paper to the internet.

Let your imagination go wild, as you create ways to connect our Meeting community with online Quaker resources. If you'd like to know more about the job, check out the [Librarian job description](#) or contact Communications Committee Clerk Sarah at editor@strawberrycreekfriends.org



FGC Gathering 2023

Western Oregon University,
Monmouth, Oregon

July 2-8, 2023

from Michelle Bellows

What is the Gathering of Friends? Around 1000 Quakers on a college campus! A week of deepening relationships. A week of renewed spirituality. A week of play. A week of focused exploration. Some call it Quaker Summer Camp for all ages. Some say it's like a family reunion.

We warmly invite all Friends to come. Seasoned Friends. Brand new Friends. Not quite yet Friends. Young Friends. Older Friends. Friends coming with family. Friends coming with children and youth. Friends coming alone.

Is the Gathering all things to all Friends? No. But we strive to provide a big place where everyone can find their own place. We plan carefully so that it can be safe. We budget and fundraise to help it be manageable. Friends from the west coast and throughout North America have been working for months, seeking the light together, to make this treasure available to all Friends.

The 2023 Gathering is clerked by former Strawberries Kate Jaramillo and Jessica Bucciarelli. Our dear Friends Barbara Birch and Tom Rothschild will each offer a workshop, and several Strawberries are connected to a workshop that will be offered by Pacific Yearly Meeting's Eldering Subcommittee.

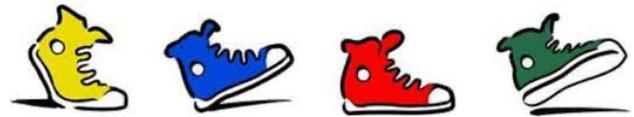
If you've been to the Gathering before, plan to come. Plan to encourage Friends in your community to join you. If you have never been to the Gathering before, know that you are **especially welcome**. Come give it a try!

After three years of virtual Gatherings, our 2023 Gathering will feel like something new, and be a reunion at the same time. We hope you will be a part of the gathering this year.

In March, an Advance Program will be postal mailed to Gathering Friends and Meetings throughout North America. If you don't receive one, contact us – we will send one to you!

Find more information at FGCgathering.org

Or ask Michelle michelle.l.bellows@gmail.com



Berkeley CROP Hunger Walk Sun April 30

This year's Berkeley CROP Hunger Walk will be held on Sunday April 30. Funds raised will benefit the international relief programs of Church World Service, as well as Berkeley Food Pantry, Dorothy Day House, and Youth Spirit Artworks.

Gather at 12:30 pm at St. Mary Magdalen, 2005 Berryman Street. The walk begins at 1:00 pm. See <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2023/team/berkeley-quakers> to join the Berkeley Quakers team or make an online donation. We especially need people from Strawberry Creek to join the Berkeley Quakers team. Make checks out to CWS/CROP and send to Berkeley CROP Walk, % First Congregational Church of Berkeley, 2330 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704. More information about Church World Service can be found at <https://cwsglobal.org>.

For more information about the walk, call 510-548-5294 or email tomyamaguchi@mac.com

**Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting
Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business
February 12, 2022, draft minutes**

For review and approval at March 12, 2023, Meeting for Business

Meeting for Business opened at 12:30 p.m. with silent worship and was conducted via Zoom. Beth Wrightson clerked the meeting. 30 Friends were present.

The Mutual Care Committee shared their reflections on Advices and Queries on Meeting for Worship.

The Clerk reviewed the agenda, posted by the Recording Clerk to groups.io on February 10, 2023.

The Recording Clerk then read the January, 2022, minutes, which were approved with no corrections.

Prompt

The Clerk read the prompt: “We are reminded to consider how our work and decisions today support SCMM in becoming an actively anti-racist faith community.”

Correspondence and Clerk’s Business

The clerk read the following quote from Elias Hicks: [When the]servant [of God]. . . is commanded to smite the rock, [he should] do so, and when to speak calmly to do so. Let the consequence be as it may. And I believe many precious gifts have been greatly marred and some lost by endeavoring to please.”

The Clerk shared with the Meeting three thank you letters, from Quaker Earthcare Witness, Friends House Moscow, and Pacific Yearly Meeting. In 2022 Quaker Earthcare Witness offered workshops for more than 800 Friends, sponsored Quaker observers at the UN’s COP26 and COP27 climate discussions and, joined with British Friends in pressuring Vanguard to divest of fossil fuels. Friends House Moscow continues to hold a daily Meeting for Worship, in addition to its support for conscientious objections in Russia and other programs. The link for the Meeting for Worship, which is at 9:00 Pacific time, is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4165005614?pwd=NUtieEtqbDBYbjBrcGdMMzBKQ3drQT09>

Catya DeNeergaard and Brian Ericson both sent requests to lay down their membership. Those requests will be forwarded to the Care of the Meeting Committee.

The Clerk also mentioned the deaths of Robin Standish and Chris Muller, both longstanding members and important threads in the warp and weft of the Strawberry Creek community. We paused to hold those Friends and their families in the Light. A Friend asked if anyone was in touch with Wilbur; he has a daughter who maintains contact with him, as does Rick Herbert.

Old Business

Erik Wilson presented the proposed facilities committee job description, which was not changed substantially from the version that was circulated on groups.io. January 7th. The job description was approved.

New Business

Nominating Committee recommended Julia Bazar as the Pacific Yearly Meeting observer. Rep Comm will be Feb 25th and March 4th. Ragni Larsen-Orta remains our Pacific Yearly Meeting representative. The recommendation of Julia's name will season for a month. Any Friends who have concerns should share them with the Nominating Committee.

Reports

Worship and Ministry (Judith Schumacher-Jennings) thanked Friends for attending the Listening Meeting on January 29. Janet Piggins has written up the notes. Their next meeting is on Committee Sunday and they will report back at next Business Meeting.

Mutual Care (Margaret Schnieder). Our connections are not fraying, even in this stressful time. The Committee gets the privilege of seeing the strands of support that are already active in the Meeting, and, frequently, holding Friends in the Light. The work of the committee is held in confidence, in the sense of intimacy, not secrecy. One Friend observed that this confidence is akin to a sacrament. Another Friend reflected that the meetings of the Mutual Care Committee are grounded and worshipful. While this would be helpful for all committees, it is inherent in the work of Mutual Care. A Friend said that a Euro-centric container for the work of the committee may at times limit the ability of its members to perceive accurately.

Treasurer (Nancy Wilkinson). Nancy presented the reconciled financials for FY 2022. We ended 2022 with \$5,500 more income than expenses.

First Day Children's Program (Andrea Parriott & Josh Gallup). Plans are underway to reopen the First Day Children's Program, which has been closed since the pandemic started. There are some families who are planning to come. The committee is working with these families to find a Sunday that works, hopefully in March or April.

College Park Quarterly Meeting (Julia Bazar). Winter Quarterly Meeting was held in the Berkeley Friends Meeting and on Zoom. The future of the Quarter was the theme. Topics discussed were the relationship between the Quarter and constituent meetings, the purpose of the Quarter, and the structure of the Quarter. The next steps are for the ad hoc committee on the future of the Quarter to synthesize what it has heard and pose queries to the member Meetings.

Peace Earthcare and Social Witness (Larry Strain) provided an extensive review of its activities. The written report was posted on groups.io. February 13th and is appended to these minutes.

Query

The Clerk invited us to contemplate the query: "How did our work and our decisions today support us in becoming an actively anti-racist faith community?" In response, a Friend recalled that the first several business meetings where the queries were posed, our responses were uncertain. Now, the queries generally result in thoughtful and substantial reflection.

Announcements

Next Meeting for Business March 12, 2023, at 12:30 p.m.

From Power Privilege and Race Subcommittee: two announcements

- The 2023 Black Quaker Lives Matter Film Festival & Forum (February 4 – April 8) honoring distinguished Quakers of Color continues. For schedule and registration please go to The Black Quaker Project website: www.theblackquakerproject.org or contact Susan Burr (susanburr45@gmail.com) for more details.
- Power, Privilege, and Race Subcommittee's second adult ed. session in a 3-part series on POWER will be Sunday March 19th at 12:30 on Zoom.

Listening Meeting to promote discernment for the State of the Meeting will be Sunday, February 19 from 1 to 2:30 or so. If you would like to share your thoughts in writing, please email them to Jeanne Diller. The committee writing the report is Jeanne, Cindy Trueblood, and Andrea English.

Meeting closed with silent worship at 2:15 pm.

Beth Wrightson, Presiding Clerk,
Elaine Emily, Alternate Clerk, Paul Jolly, Recording Clerk



Who We Are Today:

Adjusting Meeting Structures (a workshop)
Nominating Co-Clerk Barbara Birch brought to our attention *Faithful Always: Adjusting Meeting Structures to Flourish as Who We Are Today* at 4pm Tuesday March 14. One in a series of *Unleash the Power* gatherings that address current issues affecting Quakers, the workshop recognizes that a lot of Meetings are experiencing smaller numbers. “In this gathering, we’ll talk through many of the ways in which Meetings and churches can faithfully adjust to changing conditions.”

- Rethinking our distribution of responsibilities among members—do we really need all the same committees and positions we used to?
- Adjusting from a full-time pastor to a part-time pastor—how does the relationship change to honor the released minister’s part-time status?
- Becoming a Meeting without a pastor—how can a church make the shift from having to not having staff?

- Reassessing our relationship with property—is it time to think about selling our building, or maybe consider sharing it with others in new ways?
- Combining congregations—what are some of the different ways in which this can be approached?
- Changing a Meeting’s status—could there be times when a congregation is called to transition to a virtual Meeting, or maybe a house church? What would those transitions be like?

■ To register: <https://www.friendsunitedmeeting.org/connect/unleashing-the-power>



Reflections
on Advices & Queries on
Meeting for Worship
by Mutual Care Committee

As eight members of Mutual Care Committee sat together, some in person and some on Zoom, to reflect on the Advices & Queries on Meeting for Worship, several themes emerged.

Friends spoke of coming to Meeting when feeling spiritually cold. One appreciated the suggestion that in doing so, one might receive “the grace of prayer”—coming to Meeting to sit in worship is a choice one can make no matter how you feel, and the group holds you in a space where maybe you can actually pray.

Similarly, another Friend pointed out that the Advice is to come both “with hearts and minds prepared” AND when spiritually cold, that Friends can come in either state, and that sitting together in worship holds us all. Yet another finds she *especially* craves going to worship when she is spiritually cold—going when she is feeling connected and spiritually alive is great, but when she is cold she is really hungry for worship, yearns for it.

Another related theme concerned the way our setting affects us. Many voiced that Meeting for Worship on Zoom is daunting. One grieves for the connected comfort in years past of her own surrender into worship, so much harder to find on Zoom. As animals, as creatures, we do better in one another’s physical presence, we *feel more* in person. Intimacy is possible on Zoom, but maybe in smaller numbers? As one Friend put it, Zoom is better than nothing, but that is faint praise.

Worshipping on Zoom, however, brought an unexpected gift for one Friend. The necessity of Zoom during the pandemic and a period of heightened social awareness, gave him a taste of not-quite-connection to the people on the screen, a taste for what it might be like for others. Is this what newcomers feel, newcomers of color implied, when walking into a Quaker Meeting: “There’s all these old white people there. What does it feel like walking into that kind of a space? I have a feeling that at best, it feels like ... some kind of screen in between you and everybody else...like a Zoom meeting”.

Finally, a reflection on the very nature of Quakerism itself. These Advices & Queries capture a contrast to mainstream Christianity, which creates “you’re one of us” and “you’re not one of us” by defining boundaries of creeds and beliefs. Quakerism in contrast is focused on the center, not the periphery, a precious thing about our community.



Peace Earthcare and Social Witness Report

PESW was asked by Quaker Earthcare Witness to submit a report on our work on the climate crisis and climate justice. We thought it would be a good time to share this report with our meeting. When I started writing the report I wasn't sure we had done very much, but it turns out we have. I am also going to say something about the work of Power, Privilege and Race subcommittee and the ways the work of our two committees have overlapped.

Since 2017, the Power Privilege and Race (PP&R) Subcommittee of Worship and Ministry has been hosting adult ed sessions, book readings and screening videos and documentaries on racism and privilege. In 2019 they led the effort to write the **Minute on Engagement to Uproot and Dismantle Racism**, adopted by our meeting in early 2020.

The Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness (PESW) Committee's function is to facilitate Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting's public witness for peace, justice, and environmental concerns. Care for the earth has become a natural extension of the historic Quaker concerns for peace and justice. We refer to SCMM's Earthcare Testimony (2010). We recognize ongoing racial, economic and social injustices in our society call us to witness and act to right these injustices. We are guided by the Testimony on Equality (PYM Faith and Practice 2001) and SCMM's Minute on Engagement to Uproot and Dismantle Racism.

Over the past couple of years, particularly since our meeting adopted **Minute on Engagement to Uproot and Dismantle Racism**, PESW committee has worked to bring together the linked concerns on racial, economic and social injustice with the climate and ecological emergencies we are facing. One place this happened was in the spring and summer of 2021 when PP&R, hosted a series of selected readings from and queries on **Braiding Sweet Grass** by Robin Wall Kimmerer, which offered new

insights on how we hold the world and our place in it.

In the Fall of 2021 PESW committee hosted an Adult Ed session titled the Climate Crisis: Spirit Calls us to Act. We used Rebecca Solnit's article in the Guardian "**Ten ways to confront the climate crisis without losing hope**" as a starting point and led a session on: the urgency of the climate crisis; understanding carbon emissions, what needs to be done and what is being done; how to communicate about the climate crisis; climate justice and how the climate crisis is related to power, privilege and consumption, and impacts disenfranchised communities and communities of color.

We considered the following queries:

- Do personal actions matter;
- What are we as Quakers to do;
- Despair and Action, Corporate,
- institutional and community actions.

The session was well attended and in the Spring of 2022 we hosted a follow up session to present the Philadelphia YM report entitled **Moving forward Together in the face of Climate Change,** a very detailed call to action that calls on us to expand work in five areas:

- Activism – Advocacy, direct action and public witness
- Education – info, webinars, traveling ministry on the causes and costs of climate change
- Reducing our Carbon Footprint – as individuals and as a community
- Finances – responsible purchasing and investing
- Mourning Loss / Instilling Hope –the need for spiritual grounding & community support (cont. next page)

PESW Report (continued)

In January 2023, PESW, PP&R and Tom Rothschild from the Indigenous Concerns subcommittee of Pacific Yearly Meeting's Worship and Ministry committee presented **The Doctrine of Discovery: Unmasking the Domination Code**, a Documentary by Steven T. Newcombe (Shawnee, Lenape).

The program is part of an initiative of the Indigenous Concerns subcommittee of PacYM's Worship and Ministry committee. The film was followed by discussion and queries.

This Doctrine, has been, and still is the justification for the seizure of lands of Indigenous Peoples in North America—and throughout the world—on the basis that they were not Christian, and therefore had no rights, and could be displaced, enslaved, even killed, and that the land and its natural resources could be seized, dominated and exploited as well.

Queries:

- How could I or do I experience the Doctrine of Christian Discovery in my daily life?
- How does today's film bring light to our commitment to Uproot and Dismantle Racism? In what ways?
- Where do we go from here?

We are in the process of coming up with follow up sessions to address where we go from here.

Quaker Leadership of the Future

1p.m Sunday, March 5, 2023 – two hours interactive program. Friends from multiple generations in several yearly meetings and Quaker organizations. (host Western Friend)

<https://westernfriend.org/event/quaker-leadership-future>

Friends Committee on National Legislation

FCNL brings Friends' spiritual values and testimonies to bear on U.S. public policy decisions, guided by its legislative priorities. To view FCNL's current legislative priorities, go to <https://www.fcnl.org/about/world-we-seek/legislative-priorities>

A distinctive feature of FCNL is its practice of asking Quakers around the country to help shape its work. In this spirit, Bridget Moix, the fifth General Secretary of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, addresses the complex issue of abortion -- [*Seeking Divine Guidance and Holding Compassion on Abortion*](#) (June 28, 2022).

She notes that Quakers have not found unity on the issue of abortion. The Supreme Court's decision to overturn the *Roe v. Wade* ruling calls us to renew our discernment.

Some Friends are strong advocates for abortion rights, recognizing that a woman's choice is a matter of individual conscience to be taken in relationship with her God as she weighs the multiple impacts of pregnancy. Other Friends feel their commitment to nonviolence and honoring the Light of God in all human beings requires them to limit abortion options or oppose it outright.

Recently FCNL mailed a paper guide developed by [Essential Partners](#) "A Guide to Dialogue about Abortion" (2022) to assist Quakers in their conversations on this topic.

