

STRAWBERRY CREEK MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

APRIL 2021
NEWSLETTER

Berkeley Technology Academy, 2701 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, corner of Derby St., Berkeley

Website <http://www.strawberrycreekfriends.org>
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/StrawberryCreekFriends>
Listserv (for subscribers) strawberrycreek@groups.io
Calendar <http://www.strawberrycreekfriends.org/Calendar.html>

Current Newsletter <http://www.strawberrycreekfriends.org/pdf/newsletter.pdf>
Distribution Sunday for paper/electronic newsletter is the last Sunday of the month
Newsletter Deadline is the Monday preceding Distribution Sunday. **Next deadline: April 19**

Web Coordinator Amy Dewey amyd@alumnae.mills.edu (to join our Listserv or create a Zoom meeting)
Newsletter Editor & Calendar Postings Sarah Hawthorne editor@strawberrycreekfriends.org

THE CALENDAR
(activities below via Zoom)

SUNDAYS (unless otherwise noted)

10 a.m. Meeting for Worship (every Sunday) See next page for details.

April 4 Advices & Queries on Meeting for Worship – Worship & Ministry (during worship hour)
11:45 a.m. Quaker Action Worship Group (QAWG). Contact Betsy Morris or Asa Brown.

April 11 11:50 a.m. Meeting for Worship on the occasion of Business

April 18 9:00 a.m. Worship Sharing based on a query. Contact Bob Langfelder boblangfelder@aol.com
11:50 a.m. Power, Privilege, and Race (PPR) session

April 24 (Saturday) PacYM Racial Justice discussion (all welcome) Registration required.

April 25 11:50 a.m. Committee Sunday. Check with your committee clerk for details.
12:45 p.m. Young Adult Friends. Click on YAF tab on Berkeley Friends Meeting website.

May 1 (Saturday) 10am–5pm **Strawberry Creek Spring Retreat** (Zoom). Details inside.

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 Jiltonilro 510-658-7995.
(previously held at Berkeley Fellowship, 1027 University near San Pablo Ave, Berkeley).

Strawberry Creek Sunday Worship (Zoom)

Strawberry Creek Friends Meeting meets for worship at 10am Sunday mornings via Zoom. The "Virtual Meeting Room" opens earlier at 9:30am. Our worship closes at 11am, followed by holding in the light those in need, announcements, and social time to share. Newcomers are invited to sign the Zoom Guest Book in the Chat Function. Strawberry Creek Friends Meeting is part of a larger network of Quakers. Below are other Quaker groups and programs.

Berkeley Friends Meeting

The Zoom link for Berkeley Friends Meeting Sunday worship may be found online.

<http://www.berkeleyfriendsmeeting.org>

PacYM News...

PacYM Youth Program Coordinator new hire Keenan Lorenzato (Davis Meeting) started work March 15. He's served as Camp Woolman Director (Sierra Friends Center). Friend-in-Residence (Berkeley Meeting), and student resident (Pendle Hill) and earned a minor in Quakerism at Guilford College's Quaker Leadership Scholars Program. PacYM may hire a **PacYM Administrative Assistant**, estimated to increase per member assessment \$24 (to \$122 from \$98).

PacYM Racial Justice Sat April 24 & Fri May 7:

To support discussions on race in Friends Meetings, PacYM's Racial Justice Subcommittee (of Ministry Committee) are holding online workshops, with personal stories from Racial Justice Subcommittee members, plus worship sharing groups on how race awareness is going in our Meetings and our own experiences of race. Pre-registration is required (see SCMM online calendar for registration link).

PacYM Annual Session July 23 - 28, 2021

Pacific Yearly Meeting's online 2021 theme is "*The Power at Work Within Us: connection with the power of Spirit working within and among us.*" Avotcja and Gabriela Portillo Alvarado will be co-keynote speakers, sharing poetry and dialogue. Fees are pay-as-led (\$30 suggested, \$10 if under 18). See <https://www.pacificyearlymeeting.org>

FGC Annual Gathering June 27 - July 3, 2021

Way Will Open is this year's FGC Gathering theme. <https://www.fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering>

Strawberry Creek Spring Retreat, Sat May 1

Our Meeting's Spring Retreat (traditionally at Quaker Center, Ben Lomond) has always been a core way we connect deeply with each other and build community. This year is no different, except that once again due to covid, the one day 10 -5pm event is on Zoom (we will miss Todd's cooking!). There will be a mix of worship-sharing, interest groups and informal time together. To let us know you want to offer an interest group (1½ hours) e.g., lead a discussion or exercise), contact Shelley sheltanen@att.net or Rhea jrf8@humboldt.edu

College Park Quarterly (Spring) May 14-16

At the next CPQM meeting (Zoom) the focus will be on Quaker response to climate justice, and how we are led on other peace and justice issues. If you would like to offer an interest group, please contact Jan Turner yellowgateroad@gmail.com

Good Work FCL-CA! Prisons & Housing

Friends Committee on Legislation of California is now moved into its new office in the Sacramento Natomas area. This year the CA Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) report projects that prison population will remain below 100,000 for next five years (down from 165,000 in 2006 in a system designed for 85,000). The LAO report references two past sentencing reform bills co-sponsored by FCL-CA. This year FCL-CA has been working with the CalEITC Coalition to expand assistance to low-income Californians affected by the pandemic. Also this year, FCL-CA has weighed in on bills supporting police accountability (SB 16), reform of sentencing for felony murder/special circumstances (SB 300), protecting consumers from water shutoffs (SB 223), addressing wage theft from garment workers (SB 62), and Sen. Skinner's Green Hydrogen bill (SB 18), among others.

AFSC Works to Demilitarize Oakland Police

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has joined other organizations in the Healing Justice Program. "Use of a military-style truck is not a proportional response to residential emergencies. The BearCat's presence strikes fear in the hearts of adults and children... It triggers trauma for Black and brown folks who live in the neighborhoods where it is most frequently used." Find out more about West Region AFSC projects. See <https://www.afsc.org/office/oakland>

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting
Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business
March 14, 2021 Minutes*

** These are draft minutes, for review at the March Meeting for Business.*

Meeting for Business opened at 11:50 a.m. with silent worship and was conducted via Zoom. Elizabeth Moses Strain clerked the meeting. 41 Friends were present. Kris Muller shared the reflections of the Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness Committee on the Advices and Queries on Spiritual Life [see text below]. Several friends expressed appreciation for the depth and candor the committee shared.

The Clerk reviewed the agenda, which had been posted by the recording clerk to groups.io on March 12th.

The Recording Clerk read the minutes for the February 14, 2021 meeting for business. The minutes were approved with the following changes:

- The topic of the brochure which the Worship and Ministry committee shared was meeting for worship, not spoken ministry.
- Nancy Wilkinson's name was added as *ex officio* member of Community Sharing Fund working group.

Correspondence and Clerk's Business

The clerk received two minutes circulated by PacYM. One was a minute from Orange Grove Meeting on Racial Justice, which quoted Strawberry Creek's Minute on Engagement to Uproot and Dismantle Racism. The other was a letter to the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service from Santa Barbara Friends Meeting. Both will be posted to the list serve, and forwarded to Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness Committee.

Old Business

Community Sharing Fund (CSF) working group (Larry Strain) gave a brief update on the CSF minute which has been seasoning. The working group mostly heard support for the minute. A few concerns were raised about the purpose and efficacy of the CSF. The working group spoke with the individuals with concerns who are now either in support of the CSF or willing to stand aside. The working group received editing suggestions and brought a revised minute. The revised minute included minor editing revisions and clarified what its tasks will be. The new sub-committee will be under (but mostly independent of) the care of Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness Committee. The word "recipients" was substituted for "organizations." The final revised Minute was approved.

The working group, as requested, submitted a slate of Friends to serve on the subcommittee. These names were announced after Meeting for Worship on February 28th and posted on the list serve for seasoning: Larry Strain and Stephen McNeil continuing from the working group; plus Susan Black and Beth Wrightson. The working group heard concerns after posting the names that there were no people of color on the subcommittee. The working group reached out to a number of Friends including Friends of color, and all declined to serve on the subcommittee but many offered to serve in an advisory capacity. The names for the subcommittee were approved.

New Business

State of the Meeting (Rick Herbert) A draft report [see text below] was shared, crafted by Rick Herbert (appointed by Care of Meeting), Roberta Schutz (appointed by Worship and Ministry), and Barbara Birch (appointed by the Clerk). Several friends had suggestions, which will be considered by the committee. The draft report will be posted on the list serve. It will be seasoned for a month and brought back to next Meeting

for Business for approval. Friends are encouraged to contact the writing committee members with suggestions for amendments to the draft. Appreciation was offered for the committee's efforts.

Care of the Meeting (Stephen McNeil) recommends that we appoint a representative/liaison to Youth Spirit Artworks, for mutual benefit. This recommendation will be posted to the list serve and seasoned until next business meeting.

Reports

Care of the Meeting (Stephen McNeil) reported on the actions of the Institutional Memory working group (Peter Lin, Ralph Murphy, and John McCarthy). The committee endorses the recommendation of the working group that we use Dropbox for cloud storage. A two-page document outlines the details of the working group's deliberations and is available upon request. Those with questions are encouraged to contact Stephen. Sensitive documents will be password protected. Peter Lin will be available to help Friends retrieve documents. Ralph Murphy is being released from the working group, and Sarah Hawthorne added.

Care of Meeting is looking into how Friends can access the meeting Zoom room. They will confer with the Communications Committee.

PacYM (Nancy Wilkinson) shared her report on Rep Comm, and also sent a written report to groups.io March 13th, with links to committee reports.

Announcements

March 21st at 11:50 a.m., Power Privilege and Race subcommittee will share Othering and Belonging, based on the work of John A. Powell at UC Berkeley. Details are on the Meeting's calendar and were shared via groups.io. on March 12th.

Tom Rothschild will be leading a conflict resolution workshop. April 5th at 5:30 a.m. Pacific time. Details were posted March 14th on groups.io.

May 1st 10:00 – 5:00 there will be a retreat via Zoom. The coordinators are Shelley Tannenbaum and Rhea Farley. More details to come as plans are formulated.

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, James Hosley asked Friends who have not heard from the committee to contact him or co-clerk Ralph Murphy.

Avotcja thanks friends for donations to people in the mountains of Puerto Rico. She also recommended that Friends check out the movies available at AfricanDiasporaDVD.com

Next Meeting for Business will be April 11th, 2021 at 11:50 a.m.

The meeting closed with worship at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Moses Strain, Presiding Clerk
Beth Wrightson, Alternate Clerk
Paul Jolly, Recording Clerk

Reflections: Advices & Queries on Spiritual Life From Peace, Earthcare & Social Witness

At the March Meeting for Business, Kris Muller read aloud the reflections of PECSW Committee:

One member said that the hardest part of this is to discern when leadings are from higher power or my own ego. Another said his perception of spiritual life is particularly one of personal challenge. "That doesn't come out in Advices and Queries. I sensed it in 'obedience to the Holy Spirit,' but the idea that you call on the Holy Spirit to challenge you to face reality is not there." "But it surely is the essence of Quaker spirituality, and of Quaker worship. We don't wait for leadings, we ask to what we are called."

Another said she came to spiritual awakening through 12 step work. "I am in the hand of God, there is a state in which I can remember that's refreshing, nourishing. But it hasn't meant spending time reading sacred texts or meditation. My mind is flooded sometimes, so being able to speak slowly is part of connecting with spirit. I am not so much moving into where Spirit wants me to be as doing the best I can do. How my offerings are received may be because that's not part of their path. I can connect with spirit in gratitude and fears."

One said she connects with Spirit through beauty, silence, nature, connections with people when openhearted, gratitude. "I am challenged by discomfort, fear, and need to work with that." Another said she does her work on faith though she has no idea if it will work. "Feeling connected with every living thing on the planet helps to guide me." One member said she lived in a state of perpetual revelation as an artist before hear of Quakers. "If something I write is about something I know nothing about it has to come from Spirit. I'm just a tool, a building block in the hands of the Creator. My creativity is always there, and I don't know where it comes from and I don't care. My life is a Spirit dance. Listen to everything, whether agree with it or not. Spirit can come through anyone." Quaker 101 wanted by some, or Bible study.

Someone pointed out there are lots of opportunities to connect with Bible study, although it hasn't been gotten off the ground in our Meeting in recent years. One member reads Daily Word. There are

many actions people can do along to connect with Spirit on their own. This member feels a need to engage more in doing things with the Meeting as a Meeting.

Thinking about Quaker 101 as with other history, it matters how much history matters and how much it is misrepresented. He recalled that Quakers got a reputation for supporting indigenous people but the truth is less positive. "We need to think of that in looking at Quaker history and need to explore what really happened."

"Meeting for Business is another place that brings us together to face reality."

Another member said she missed the witness of Peter Creysdale and Helen Haug and Pam; they were Christo-centric Quakers and would quote Bible verses that were deeply meaningful to them. She valued this because it revealed to her their connection to Spirit and she honored that. She felt she grew when hearing where people's spirit is rooted.

Going to Meeting is another member's discipline. He doesn't have a regular practice of meditation separately. In that common shared space he feels growth of spirit.

Another member said that one of the ways he feels challenged is to not look away from what is uncomfortable. "The challenge is to be in the discomfort and be with how things are right now, trying to understand. Revelation needs to happen right now, facing what is in front of me and not take the easy way of going on being oblivious of my privilege."

One woman said, "It's nice to listen to people in Meeting with different spiritual origins, but sometimes people don't want to hear. I believe all things have spirit, and a person I think of as a friend, when I said this, said NO, not true and argued against it. People often listen only to use what they already believe and incorporate what fits that."

One added, "the profiles of Strawberries in the newsletters are invaluable contributions to our spiritual understanding of one another."

State of the Meeting Report 2021 (3/5/2021) (DRAFT)
Writing Committee: Rick Herbert, Roberta Schutz, Barbara Birch

On Sunday, February 21, Friends gathered on Zoom and responded to three queries in a listening meeting for the State of the Meeting Report. In addition, some reflections were received by email after the meeting.

Joy, Hope, and Spiritual State of the Meeting

So many of us have been able to get together virtually, to hold meeting, see each other, hear voices, and visit, but we are aware that this reflects our privilege in comfort level with technology and access to devices. We feel joy in having Friends join us by Zoom who are far away or cannot travel to attend meeting. We look forward to returning to in-person worship and hope this can continue without losing people. Also, we have enjoyed the world online - outside readings, concerts, dance, events, videos, worship - and we hope some of this keeps going in the post-pandemic world.

We appreciate the steadfastness of meeting on Zoom; it allowed our meeting to survive the pandemic. Friendly Sevens by Zoom have continued to be effective for some, allowing connection and sharing from near and far. Our strong spiritual community has kept us grounded and anchored, and has been central to our ability to weather this year. For many, the silence is deep, and our meeting feels interconnected and vibrant. Our meeting was described as calm and mature, like a banked fire from which flames can come up, but without a lot of vocal ministry. Our meeting feels sustainable, like a tree with deep roots; aging but alive. As we meet remotely, without a sense of a room, the mystical is laid bare.

Many people give so much of themselves to the meeting and work so hard; we are grateful for their time, care, and meticulousness. So many people offered to serve on Nominating Committee that it seemed easier this year to find a strong committee. Committee service has helped people stay connected, and people want to continue their connection. We have offered each other and the meeting a rich spiritual depth and strength in a year of duress.

Meeting supports many things we are doing with anchoring committees and clearness committees. Our spiritual lives inform our ministries, and people who are spiritually grounded here have been able to go out in the world and become involved in positive change. Our meeting seeds and anchors many ministries. Meeting members and attenders support ministries through direct volunteering and through the work of our active committees.

Many expressed appreciation for the love and support they have received from the meeting to help deal with difficult life circumstances, including help with death of loved ones and support to ease isolation. We are grateful for no COVID deaths in meeting, and aware this reflects our social and racial privilege. Quaker practice is important in our meeting (and perhaps should replace Roberts Rules in the world). The original Quakers still have a lot to teach us; we might offer another Quakerism 101 to help us remember where we came from.

Sorrow

It's been a very hard year, full of stressful news and events, and grief, anxiety, and loss. Some of us feel off-balance from isolation. We miss people who have not been able to join us on Zoom; we are not whole as a family without those who cannot worship with us. Aware of our leading to be more inclusive and of how far we have to go, some of us have visited meetings across the world that seem more welcoming to Black and Indigenous People of Color. Other meetings have things to teach us about how to welcome all. At least one of us has experienced a COVID death in the community where we live, and it is a different level of reality. We hold in the Light those who are not with us, and those suffering from losses during this time.

It is different to meet over Zoom. For some, it doesn't work at all, and we miss them; for others it has been difficult to center down on Zoom. For some, it has become easier over time as we have 'exercised new muscles' to maintain the meeting and the beloved community. We miss each other, without physical presence

and in-person contact. As one Friend mentioned, we are mammals and we are meant to be together. With social connections harder to keep, we need to overcome introversion or shyness to reach out to one another. We are sad that the children's program has not transitioned to Zoom; wish we could do something for the children if they want it. More broadly, for the future of the Religious Society of Friends, we recognize the need to grow the children's program, and to bring children, young people, families, and people of color into the meeting. We need to connect our meeting more to the community around us.

Subcommittee and Minute

The Power, Privilege and Race subcommittee and the Minute on Engagement to Uproot and Dismantle Racism both support the mindfulness of the meeting. PPR activities have been a robust expression of our meeting and they have helped us meet the challenges of this year. We appreciate them because they strengthened our community and helped us learn. The many suggested readings and resources related to white fragility and racism have caused us to question our feelings and responses. Some PPR activities have been uncomfortable, but the discomfort is supported, and people have been willing to speak frankly. PPR gave us a mirror to see something so ugly that is so much a part of everything, and a safe space to look at it together with people who have skill, and we have learned and grown.

The Minute on Engagement to Uproot and Dismantle Racism is larger than our meeting. It has been integrated with love in our meeting, encouraging and speeding up learning. We've found we can say 'dumb' things without fear of judgement as we've worked with it. The minute has been effective both in guiding the meeting's work and in supporting the work of individuals in the communities around us. It is helping us become less exclusive and more connected to the world outside the meeting, and has led to the development of a community sharing fund now in the works. We need to continue pushing ourselves further in this area. One Friend encouraged us to open our hands, noting that our meeting tends to come from a place of scarcity as to what we can do, but that we don't have scarcity.

Quaker Action Worship Group provided powerful experiences for some, and earlier, contributed to the creation of the minute, which educates us and gives guidance for both individuals and the meeting to live into. QWAG work has been restorative and enriching, if sometimes a struggle, leading some to more participation in the local community.

Earthcare continues as a deep concern of our meeting, with many of us addressing environmental concerns as individuals, such as stopping buying water in plastic jugs, and firing their bank. A Friend suggested our work on racism is interconnected with earthcare and that caring for people will save the earth, and noted that across Indigenous cultures, earthcare combines place-based and community-based concerns. We would like to find a collective action in which we could participate, something that is bigger than our meeting, something that might include both earthcare and dismantling racism.

One Friend affirmed that even though she hasn't seen us in the flesh for almost a year, she still believes we exist, and her faith stays strong in our Meeting.

STRAWBERRY CREEK MONTHLY MEETING

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

TO:

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