

STRAWBERRY CREEK MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

MAY 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

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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: Sunday May 21** (for June 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)

May 7 - Advices & Queries on The Meeting Community, read aloud by Nominating Committee
12:30 p.m. Listening Meeting on Our Community Sharing Fund, hosted by PESW

May 14 - 12:30 p.m. Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business
2 p.m. Strawberry Creek Annual Board Meeting

May 19-21 College Park Quarterly Meeting at Quaker Center, Ben Lomond

May 21

May 28 – Spring Retreat (after Rise of Meeting for Worship)
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 Jiltonilro 510-658-7995.



Upcoming Change in May...

Strawberry Creek Sunday Worship

Starting in May (2023) Strawberry Creek Friends Meeting will have Side by Side (rather than Blended) Sunday worship hours on the first and third Sundays. Blended (hybrid) worship - when we all see/hear you wherever you are! - will be second and fourth Sundays of the month.

As usual we meet for worship at 10am Sunday morning and 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. Every month Meeting's online calendar shows which Sundays the two gatherings will be blended: <https://www.strawberrycreekfriends.org/calendar> Newcomers visiting in person are welcome to sign our hard copy Guestbook located onsite, and Zoom newcomers are invited to sign our online Guest Book. Meeting's 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 <http://oaklandquakers.org>

Berkeley Friends Meeting (BFM)

For more information about our sister Meeting in Berkeley which also has Sunday worship, see <http://www.berkeleyfriendsmeeting.org>

Quaker Center Morning Worship (Zoom)

Every morning (7:30-8am) Quaker Center Ben Lomond offers worship, and worship sharing is Wednesday at 10am. For these and other Quaker Center events, see www.quakercenter.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.

Community Sharing Fund - Sunday May 7 Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness (PESW) is hosting an online Listening Meeting on the subject of our Community Sharing Fund. The Zoom link is the same as for Sunday worship.

College Park Quarterly Meeting May 19-21

This Spring College Park quarterly meeting will gather at Quaker Center in Ben Lomond, CA (and online for some activities). The theme for this quarterly meeting is "Nurturing the beloved community across the divide – digital, generational, ideological..." The flyer with more information is available by [clicking here](#). To register for the event, [click here](#).

Spring Retreat Sunday May 28

The Events Committee has announced that this Spring's Retreat for Strawberry Creek Friends will be at Berkeley Technology Academy on Sunday May 28, after the Worship Hour.



Woolman at Sierra Friends Center is offering a guided wild flower walk on May 6! [Click here](#)



(Still) Seeking a Newsletter Editor

Interested in serving as newsletter editor? Contact editor@strawberrycreekfriends.org Note: If no one volunteers, June will be our last newsletter (at least for awhile). Luckily, much of the information now provided by the Meeting's newsletter will be available online, see <https://www.strawberrycreekfriends.org>



PacYM Annual Session July 21-26

The theme of 2023 Pacific Yearly Annual Session is *Beloved Community Part II: Centering the Voices of the Next Generation*. It will be held both in person and online from Friday, July 21st to Wednesday, July 26th. The registration window will be shorter and earlier this year, and the requested contribution amounts will be a little higher. [Click here](#) for Pacific Yearly Meetings Clerk’s Call for full details, or contact Ragni Larsen-Orta, SCMM Representative to Pacific Yearly Meeting.

Quaker Earthcare co-sponsors with Green Faith...



For more information, including full agenda, [click here](#)

From May 8-11, 2023, people of faith will gather to learn about how banks and asset managers continue to invest in the fossil fuel industries that are destroying communities in the U.S. and around the world. We’ll then find out how to hold these financial institutions accountable. Together, we can commit to taking the bold steps necessary to effect real change.

This year’s three day summit will amplify the voices of frontline leaders of Turtle Island (what we now call the United States) and the Global South, whose communities bear the direct brunt of financial decisions made by Chase Bank, Bank of America, Vanguard, BlackRock, and others who invest in harmful oil and gas extraction.

This summit is for you if you’re just making the connections between faith, finance, and climate, if you’re a money manager rooted in just climate values, or if you are part of a community wrestling with these questions.

We will build on the momentum sparked with the 2022 launch of GreenFaith’s Climate Finance Campaign. This year we have a lot to celebrate, and the work continues! We hope you will join us and a growing number of partner organizations as together we:

- Root in our faiths for resilience, inspiration, and joy for the journey ahead
- Learn more about Indigenous-led campaigns in the U.S. and East Africa
- Find out how to move your money
- Take action in our closing Action Hour

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting
Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business
April 9, 2023, draft minutes

For review and approval at the May 14, 2023, Meeting for Business

Meeting for Business opened at 12:30 p.m. by settling into worship on Zoom. Elizabeth Strain clerked the meeting. Twenty-eight Friends were present.

Rachel Findley shared the reflections of the Worship and Ministry Committee on the Advices and Queries on Personal Relationships.

The Clerk reviewed the agenda, which was first posted by the acting Recording Clerk, Charlie Blanchard, to groups.io on April 8, 2023.

The acting Recording Clerk then read the March 2023 minutes. The minutes were approved with a correction in the report by Worship and Ministry Committee and after changing “silent worship” to “worship.”

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

Care of Meeting Committee administers the Quaker Events scholarship fund, which has not been used during the pandemic. Guidelines for the use of the fund are posted on the Meeting web page under “Our Values.” Care of Meeting Committee is reviewing the guidelines. Requests should be submitted to the committee with sufficient lead time for the committee to meet.

Laura Boles has requested membership. Her request will be forwarded to Care of Meeting Committee. Eighteen years ago, Laura was the first person to request an endorsement from Strawberry Creek Meeting for her chaplaincy. She is again requesting an endorsement as she returns to chaplaincy work. This request will be forwarded to Worship and Ministry Committee.

Old Business

The State of the Meeting report writing group, Cindy Trueblood, Jeanne Diller, and Andrea English, reported that several additions were made in response to suggestions provided by Friends after the first draft was read at the March Meeting for Business. Some editing was done to keep the report within two pages. The revised report was read and approved. Friends expressed considerable appreciation for the report.

New Business

Susan Black presented a slate of nominations for Nominating Committee, which will be seasoned for one month. The committee worked well together and nearly all positions have been filled. One more member is needed for the Events Committee. Nominating Committee is also seeking to fill two positions on Communications Committee, librarian and newsletter editor. Please contact Sarah Hawthorne for further information about those positions. Facilities Committee has been restructured to include working groups with coordinators, who will schedule volunteers; Ragni Larsen-Orta will help coordinate volunteers. Loaves and Fishes Committee has been put on hiatus. Please contact Susan Black for more information or to volunteer for a position.

Reports

Michelle Bellows reported on her ministry work with Friends General Conference (FGC) Annual Gathering. Michelle is currently clerking the FGC long-range conference planning (LRCP) committee. She was called to LRCP by her life-changing experiences at Gatherings beginning with attending her first Gathering in 2002, including the couple's enrichment workshop. Other rich workshops have included "Forgiveness as a Spiritual Practice." Dealing with conflicts has been the most challenging aspect of her work with the Gathering. Her SCMM anchoring committee helps keep Michelle grounded. The 2023 Gathering is in Monmouth, Oregon, clerked by two former Strawberries. In the future, in-person Gatherings will be held in even-numbered years, virtual Gatherings in odd-numbered years. One Friend requested that the written report be printed in the newsletter, which will be done.

The treasurer, Nancy Wilkinson, presented a written report for first quarter, 2023. Meeting has benefited from some large contributions but also had several early-year expenses to cover. Although expenses have exceeded donations to date, Meeting's financial position is normal for this time of year.

The Pacific Yearly Meeting Representative (PacYM), Ragni Larsen-Orta, presented a report. PacYM now has two paid staff positions. The administrative position is on a trial basis; it has provided valuable support to PacYM. Representative Committee meetings were held February 25 and March 4. Teens met March 10 to 12 to plan Junior Yearly Meeting. The Yearly Meeting will be July 22 to 27 on "Beloved Community: Part II, Centering the Voices of the Next Generation" at Mt. Madonna Center and online. PacYM will be looking for another site in the future that functions better for families, camping, and hybrid meetings. Friends appreciated the depth of the report.

The clerk of PacYM, Laura Magnani, noted that there was a need for a team of registrars. PacYM will provide compensation to young adult Friends to handle registration and other needs, which will provide new energy for PacYM logistics and also help young adults cover income not earned when they take time away from work.

Worship and Ministry Committee (Judith Schumacher-Jennings) reported that, as suggested at the January listening meeting, greeters will not be checking vaccination cards beginning in May. Resulting from the listening meeting, spiritual life sharing groups and/or Friendly Sevens will be renewed. To create a more congenial atmosphere in the Meeting room, Worship and Ministry has asked Facilities Committee to begin placing chairs closer together; to help welcome newcomers, the Meeting closer is experimenting with a return to our past practice of asking people in the Meeting room to say their names before moving into announcements.

SCMM has attempted to address the needs of the most vulnerable, sometimes appearing to new visitors to be slow to recover from the pandemic. Meeting continues to run the fans because as of February 28, 2023 Alameda County recommends air filtration systems (provided by our HEPA filter) if the doors and windows are not open. Blended meetings will be second and fourth instead of first and third First Days, beginning in May.

Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness (Larry Strain) reported that two films were shown on the Doctrine of Discovery, in cooperation with Power, Privilege, and Race Subcommittee. A third movie will be shown in June and there will also be Quaker videos.

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?” A period of worship followed.

Announcements

Elizabeth Strain, acting Clerk, thanked the acting Alternate Clerk, Ralph Murphy, and acting Recording Clerk, Charlie Blanchard.

The next Meeting for Business is May 14 at 12:30 p.m. on the Meeting’s Zoom.
The Strawberry Creek Corporation Board Meeting is May 14 following Meeting for Business.

Kris Muller’s Memorial Meeting will be April 16 at 12:30 p.m. at Berkeley Technology Academy and on SCMM Zoom. For those who usually attend Meeting for Worship on Zoom, please let Jeanne Diller or Elizabeth Strain know if you plan to attend in person.

Robin Standish’s Memorial Meeting will be April 29 at 2 p.m. at Berkeley Friends Meeting and on SCMM Zoom.

The next in-person First Day Children’s Program will be April 16 beginning at 9:45 a.m.

Information on the Quaker Events Scholarship funds can be found on the Meeting web site under “Our Values.”

Meeting settled into worship and closed at 2:19 p.m.

Elizabeth Strain, acting Clerk
Ralph Murphy, acting Alternate Clerk
Charlie Blanchard, acting Recording Clerk





Reflections
by Worship & Ministry (4/9/23)
on Advices & Queries on
Personal Relationships

We hope for and aspire to a home where spirit's presence is felt, love is love, and all are deeply welcoming to one another.

Tender parenting and tender relationships are among the most important peace vocations. Relationships, the way we conduct our lives, are one of our best nonviolent behaviors.

Parents particularly need the support of the meeting community, as children can touch the most sensitive parts of us.

Living alone can create a false sense of peacefulness, as we do not experience the "rubbing and scrubbing" that can come from close contact with others.



It is important to appreciate the genius in individual members of our closest community, to see one another's gifts and support each other in bringing them out.

We could do more to make space for young adults to learn and grow within our community.

The spirit of love and truth requires that we see our home and our behavior clearly, not holding the image of a loving home so tightly that we cannot recognize the ways we may be hurting or failing one another, or falling short of deep kindness and connection.

We need to see our own anger and other flaws without trying to hide them.

All members of our community, including children, need to know that our Meeting stands against abusive behavior.

When we see or learn of abuse, in ourselves or others, what do we do? What can I do? Conflict avoidance is not peaceful behavior. Peace-making requires bravery.

We seek to make homes and lives that lead us all deeper and closer to Spirit. Clarity and truth, as well as love, are needed for our hopes to grow into reality.





**Western Oregon University,
Monmouth, Oregon
July 28, 2023**

An advance program is now available online. Find more information at FGCgathering.org Or ask Michelle michelle.l.bellows@gmail.com

Join Friends from across the continent at the 2023 FGC Gathering "Listen So That We May Live"! Experience a week of Quaker worship, workshops, and community for all ages at Western Oregon University in Monmouth, OR from July 2 - 8, 2023! There will also be livestreamed plenaries and Bible Half Hour online for those not in person.

View the [Gathering Schedule](#) or read the [Advance Program](#)

**Faithfulness in Ministry vis-a-vis
FGC's Long Range Conf. Planning Comm. from
Michelle Bellows (3/24/23)**

A sticky note at the bottom of my computer screen asks, "How am I being faithful?" A note next to it asks, "How does this decision support FGC in its goal to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community?" Another sticky note has loving words from my husband. Around my computer screen and on the wall, I have posted fragments of prayer, including one which says, "To pray for one part is really to pray for the whole, and so we do." The prayer of St. Francis suggests that I can be an instrument of Peace. From my desk, I can see a small enclosed courtyard, with a barrel of flowers, the birds in nearby trees, and the sky. At hand to my left are Faith and Practice, the Quaker Hymnal, along with policy books for Friends General Conference and its Long Range Conference Planning Committee. Paper files in a box include rosters, meeting minutes, and various Gathering documents.

The hours I spend each day at this computer, whether working (writing emails, attending zoom

meetings, etc), or just dinking around on the internet for fun, are framed by prompts and resources: important reminders that what I do here matters, important reminders to be faithful.

Currently I serve Friends General Conference (FGC) as clerk of the Long Range Conference Planning Committee (LRCP). This committee, comprised of representatives from throughout North America, is charged with overarching care of FGC's Annual Gathering of Friends. We are responsible for Gathering policies, for site selection and Gathering dates, for supporting the Junior Gathering, High School, and Adult Young Friends programs, and for selection of Gathering clerks. We represent the Gathering to FGC's specific working groups and larger governance bodies, including Executive Committee and Central Committee. As clerk of LRCP, I work closely with FGC Conference staff and an assistant clerk, on whom I rely deeply.

The Gathering is FGC's single largest program. In essence, what LRCP does is to ensure the strength of the container in which the spirit can work in the lives of Friends – we work on the structure, and we support each year's Gathering Committee as they fill the structure with program. The tasks I am called to do in this work may seem secular, but for me, in total, they are a loving service, inspired by the call to keep all the good things that are possible in the Gathering available to many, now and on into the future.

I was called to LRCP's work by the life-changing experiences I have had at the FGC Gathering – beginning early in my Quaker life with my first Gathering in 2002. For me, Gathering workshops have been key to my growth and transformation, including Couples Enrichment, Forgiveness as a Spiritual Practice, and Writing to Know and Be Known. The call from FGC's Nominating Committee to clerk LRCP was less clear to me.

It took me a long time to say yes. I know that there are other people who could do a better job at this or that aspect of the work. I also know that I am the one who was called. I am "holding multiple truths" – my doubts, and the trust that I am here now

FGC Long Range (cont.)

because this is somehow the right thing for me to be doing at this time. I trust that doing my best is what is asked of me.

It is a gift to me to be supported in my work in many ways. The assistant clerk balances my strengths and weaknesses and takes up many tasks. The Anchoring Committee given to me by Strawberry Creek Meeting helps me to stay grounded in the Spirit – grounding which transforms this work from service to ministry. Their loving care has also been the source of practical tips as well as a safe place to share the challenges I face from time to time. I know they hold me in the light. I am grateful.

The Gathering is important to many people, for many different reasons. My role is likely invisible to most of them, which is as it should be. But I try to keep their spiritual yearnings in my awareness as we look at the work that needs to be done.

The gifts I brought with me include some organizational skills, sensing the rhythm and flow of an agenda, the capacity to get stuff done, persistence. One piece of my job description is to convene a committee to address difficulties among Friends at the Gathering. Dealing with conflicts is probably the scariest part of the work, to me. I have not always succeeded in helping to transform conflict. My capacity to see that of God in everyone has definitely grown, due to a lot of exercise in this job.

Just like each one of us, FGC and the Gathering have had to adapt our ways, to make the changes necessary in the pandemic. We know we won't go back to "the way things used to be." I have been part of making the hard decisions to hold virtual Gatherings for three years, along with trying a new approach in 2022 focused on in-person Gathering for youth and young adults ("YAY"). We gained more than 450 first-timers in those virtual years, and we also lost many regular attenders. Financial challenges arose with overall lower attendance numbers and trying a "pay as led" system for fees. The work load on staff had become untenable even

before the pandemic, and was stretched beyond reason by the switch to virtual. We can clearly see that substantive change is needed, while taking care to preserve the spiritual core of coming together to share our journeys of faith.

This year I put a lot of time into a project called "Gathering Anew," where several dedicated Friends listened deeply to more than 200 different people in focus groups, comprising a diversity of identities, ages, locations and roles, to hear what is essential in the Gathering and what new ideas we might try. In early 2024, we will be embarking on some experiments that arose in the light of this work, to try new ways to gather, both online and in-person. The 2024 Gathering is planned to be held in-person. Beginning in 2025, we will gather virtually in alternate years, with in-person Gatherings in even years and virtual Gatherings in odd ones. The Youth and Young Adult in-person event will be offered in the years of virtual gatherings.

Together on LRCP we seek the leading of the spirit as we try new things, remaining open to making changes as we learn and grow. We keep the guiding anti-racism query in front of us. I understand that part of my role as clerk is to try to keep a grounding spiritual awareness present in our meetings and our discernment. Faithfulness and integrity ask me to do what I say I will do, to not over-promise myself. I am responsible to model openness to change, to enlist the help of capable Friends in moving the changes forward, and, underlying it all, to answer that of God in everyone. I am doing my very best to be faithful in this ministry.



**Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting
Nominating Committee
Proposed Slate of Officers, Committees, and Representatives for 2023**

Officers

Clerk: Beth Wrightson
Alternate Clerk: Elaine Emily
Treasurer: Nancy Wilkinson
Recording Clerk: Paul Jolly
Recorder/database Coordinator: Peter Lin

Representatives

AFSC: David Rutschman
Ben Lomond Quaker Ctr: Jay Cash
CPQM: Carl Magruder
FCLCA: Rick Herbert
FCNL: Laura Boles
PacYM Representative: Ragni Larsen-Orta
PacYM Observer: Julia Bazar
PacYM UwN: Shelley Tanenbaum
Sierra Friends Center: Cindy Trueblood

Care of Meeting

Co-clerks: Kathy Barnhart, Chris Hogness
Members: Carl Anderson, Susan Burr, Andrea English, Tom Rothschild

Communications

Clerk: Amy Dewey
Web coordinator: Sarah Hawthorne
Members: John McCarthy, James Hosley
Newsletter Editor: _____
Librarian: _____

Events Committee

Clerk: Laura Miller
Members: Philippa Barron,

Facilities

Clerk: Erik Wilson
Set up Work Group (WG) Coordinators:
Erik Wilson, Ragni Larsen-Orta
Zoom WG Coordinators:
Deborah Marks, Paul Jolly
Audio Visual WG coordinator: _____

Finance

Co-clerks: Lee Douglas, Peter Trueblood
Members: Rick Herbert, Frank Satterwhite
Treasurer: Nancy Wilkinson

First Day School

Co-clerks: Josh Gallup, Andrea Parriott
Members: Rhea Farley, Em Holmes, Ellen Levin

Mutual Care

Co-Clerks: Deborah Marks, Margaret Schneider
Members: Michelle Bellows, Kat Stenstedt, Barb Tittle, Janet Piggins, Charlie Blanchard

Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness

Clerk: David Rutschman
Mary White, Avoteja Jiltonilro, Betsy Morris, Shelley Tanenbaum

Worship and Ministry Committee

Co-clerks: Larry Strain, Ralph Murphy
Members: Rachel Findley, Heather Levien, Sarah Hawthorne