



BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

A publication of the Brooklyn Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

brooklynmeeting.org

March 2016

What's in a Seat?

Every week, there is a reassuring sameness to Meeting for Worship – the peace in the room, the light streaming through the high windows, the fellowship of Friends. And yet there is variety as well, in the blooms on the front table, the warmth or coolness of the room, and the messages shared by Friends.

Similarly, when observing the meeting, you may see some stalwarts seated in the same spot from week to week, while other Friends try out different positions around the room. Why do people choose the spots that they do?

In an informal poll, the most commonly mentioned factor was sunlight -- but that didn't mean those seeking the light all opted for the same seats. Some, like Thor David, pick seats on the side to get direct light from the windows, while others choose the rows in the back for indirect light. Robin Puskas was one of the latter, though she commented that she no longer has a regular spot -- and often finds herself in childcare during meeting!

Yana Landowne sits on the left side of the meeting room, for the sunlight from the windows. However, on the days when she has Welcoming Committee duties, she sits on the top

bench behind the facing bench so that she can count people as they come in. She notes that she loves seeing the wonderful diversity among the people assembled, and sends love toward all of them.



Other Friends mentioned that they chose seats not for the seats' sake but for the people near them. Ella Frederick sat near Boyce Bengé before he passed away, and now sits near Molly Rusnak. Lucy Sikes sits next to Molly as well, though she also sits in front to better hear messages and announcements. Lucy also sits in front because if there are too many people in the back, latecomers need to walk past rows of silent worshipers. Willie Watkins sits in the same place every First Day, because it holds the memory of her sister, Mary, who passed away a year ago. Every week Willie would drop Mary off and then go park the car. When she got back, Mary was always in that seat. Willie feels her spirit there.

Finally, some people had unique reasons for their choices. Jonathan Fluck, for instance, sits near the piano

because of his affinity for musical instruments. Naceo Giles likes the facing benches because they have a closeness that the more open spaces don't.

Whatever the reason, the variety behind the choices shows just how many perspectives there are in the meetinghouse during any given week.

--Melissa Cavanaugh

February Meeting for Business: State of the Meeting; Financial and Committee Reports; A Memorial Minute

Memorial Minute for Tom Glynn Accepted

Friends remembered long-time member and dear friend, Tom Glynn, and accepted a memorial minute from the Committee on Ministry and Oversight. The minute is reproduced in this newsletter.

Finance and Collections Committee Reports on the Socially Responsible Donation Fund

Finance and Collections Committee Clerk Paul Flint reported that there is a surplus in the Socially Responsible Fund. He suggested that this surplus go to the American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on National Legislation (a Quaker lobbying group), the Quaker United Nations Office and Powell House (a Quaker retreat center in upstate New York). Friends approve.

Meeting Treasurer Reports, Appointed for Fifth Term

At the end of 2015, Brooklyn Meeting had \$3,678.09 in a savings account and \$69,111.85 in a checking account. The treasurer recommended closing the savings account and transferring the funds to the checking account. The Meeting approved.

At the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, Danielle Dybiec was approved for a fifth term as treasurer of the Meeting.

State of the Meeting Report Accepted

The committee charged with writing the annual State of the Meeting Report brought a revised draft, which was accepted and will be sent to New York Yearly Meeting. The report is included in this newsletter.

New Combined History and Library Committee Gives First Report

This past June, the History and Library Committees were combined by the Meeting for Business. The new committee reports that it plans to meet six times a year. It has reviewed the tasks set out by the Meeting for Business. The committee has published Volume Two of interviews conducted with long-time members. Copies are available at the Book Table for \$9.00.

All Meeting Committees and Friends are invited to contribute flyers, notes, etc. to the archives on the Third Floor. See Molly Rusnak or Bill Parrot.

-- Molly Rusnak

Brooklyn Meeting's "State of the Meeting" Report

With New York Yearly Meeting's query "what is the spiritual condition" of our meeting comes a request for an

in-depth reflection on the essence of what makes us friends, understanding that our spiritual lives are reflected in many different ways.

As we prayerfully considered the task before us, two Biblical passages came to light: "*I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly* (John 10:10b)." "*By their fruits they shall be known* (Matthew 7:16)."

The spiritual fruits of Brooklyn Meeting abound. We find them in our three weekly meetings for worship, through the dedication of our Care Relationship committees as they work with Brooklyn Friends School and Mary McDowell Friends School; through our young adult friends who meet for worship and fellowship; and through our ever-growing children's First Day School. Our monthly community dinner is blessed to have help from members, attenders, various neighborhood schools, and church groups.

Brooklyn Meeting is a large robust urban meeting with a strong core membership. Many come and sojourn with us for a while and many join and stay. Our membership has grown with six adults, two transfers, and four children. Whatever brings us to Brooklyn Meeting and from whatever tradition, we all are on this journey as seekers of truth.

Our 11 a.m. first day meeting often draws over one hundred people. This meeting usually opens with a deep gathered silence from which arise heart-felt messages and queries. Time is given just before the rise of this meeting when anyone who is so moved may speak of her/his joys, her/his sorrows, or to ask that loved ones be held in the light. The response is often an indication of our individual struggles as we continue our spiritual journey and search for meaning and answers. Our 9 a.m. first day meeting and our 6:30 p.m. third day meeting serve those who desire a small and mostly silent meeting. Within all these meetings spirit is present.

Corporate and individual leadings also strengthen our spiritual condition. Leadings are nurtured and seasoned through clearness meetings offered by Ministry and Counsel, as well as through endorsements by established committees.

Our witness is also expressed through our donations made through our Social Responsibility Fund which makes donations to support leadings that speak to our testimonies of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, and Equality. Each offering is, indeed, a testament to our Quaker principles of faith and practice and that which makes us friends. Ministry belongs to all of us and we minister to each other. Our Childcare Committee ministers to the very young. Pastoral Care ministers to our aging community. Our spiritual condition is nurtured through various activities offered in the meeting such as spiritual friendships, memorial services, social interactions such as contra dancing and game night and as we say good-bye to those friends who move away. In 2015, we witnessed two weddings; the deaths of four members and two attenders; and at least four members who have moved away. We grieve deeply for those we have lost and we care intensely for those who remain with us.

Whether those who walk through our doors are of faith or of no faith, seeking hospitality or seeking respite from their burdens, Brooklyn Meeting welcomes all. We do struggle with truly "knowing" all who enter our doors. However, the presence of spirit in our worship and in our actions, offers comfort and perhaps renewal from our well of spirit.

One friend remarked after a day at Brooklyn Meeting which began with early meeting at 9 a.m. and ended after the rise of meeting for worship with a concern for business, that the spirit is alive and well.

Another friend describes a poetic sense of spirit within the meeting. It is like a tree needing water and air to

live and breathe, which is our spirit. This spirit allows for growing and branching out. Our members and attenders are like some of the leaves that fall off and scatter, providing further nourishment wherever they land. Yet, no matter how many fall away, there are always many that remain. The spring awakens the barren tree and we trust that new leaves will again appear.

With deep reflection and prayerful consideration of 2015's letters for membership and of our memories of memorial services, we know that it is our love, our faith and practice, and our knowing that there is that of God in all of us, that makes us friends.

The spiritual condition of Brooklyn is that of a gathered meeting with an eclectic group of friends. Our faith and practice draws us together, uniting us in the divine spirit. So in that spirit we remember Larry Jaeger, Susan Laughter, Joel Wolfe, Consuelo Grushin, Adam Chirwit and Scott Barrett; Glen Bibler, Heloise Rathbone, Emily & Eli Gwynn, and all who have sojourned with us and moved on.

Respectfully submitted,

Naceo Giles, Mary Pagurelias, Helen B. Mullin

Memorial Minute for Thomas Peter Glynn

Thomas P. Glynn, a longtime member of Brooklyn Meeting, died on May 3, 2014 at home, cared for by his wife, Patricia, and his children, Brendan, Siobhan and Julie. In the days before his death, visited by his grandchildren, he remarked about how much joy they brought him and how much he loved them.

Tom was born March 8, 1935 in Montreal, Canada, where his father

was studying. The family subsequently returned to Chicago, where he attended public school. His boyhood interests included Sea Scouts, natural history, bicycling around his part of the city and repairing and driving -- first a Model A -- then other cars. His love of cars led him to study mechanical engineering at Northwestern University. His love of reading and questioning led him to transfer to the University of Chicago where he earned a degree in philosophy.



His work included a year at the movie studios in Los Angeles. He moved to New York City in 1960 and worked in publishing, where he met Patricia (Weaver). He also worked in advertising until he couldn't take it anymore and began to freelance and write fiction. He loved to build things; sometimes functioning things and sometimes art. He worked in wood and metal as well as words, pen and paint. Tom wrote novels and short stories which went on to be published. In the mid-seventies, Tom was encouraged by his children to attend Quaker Meeting and he became an engaged Member of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting getting involved, notably, in the Vigil Against the Death Penalty and the Community Dinner. He also served on Ministry and Counsel, the Communications Committee, Finance and Collections, and for many years on the Property Committee. While on the Property Committee, he enjoyed bicycling to

the Meeting House when the alarm went off to find the cause -- which was usually the wind.

Tom's sense of humor and his seriousness colored his vocal ministry. He was often successful in using humor to bring a light touch to a "heavy" mood and would frequently bring forward messages of love and hope in an easy to understand, down to earth way. When he became ill, the Meeting gave him and his family boundless love and support. Visitors engaged him in conversation during his alert and interactive times, read to him and worshiped with him at other times. He died quietly in his sleep with his wife at his side during the early morning of May 3, 2014.

Remembering Boyce Benge

On March 5th at noon, we will gather at the Quaker Cemetery to spread Boyce's ashes. All are welcome to attend. Directions to the cemetery and other information are available at www.nyqgm.org.

We will gather for Meeting for Worship with a Concern for the Departed in the afternoon of April 10th, 1:00 pm at the Brooklyn Meetinghouse. A potluck reception will follow.

Friends of Bill W. (AA) are planning a memorial for Boyce on March 10th at 7:30 pm. There will be an evening of AA Remembrance at the meeting



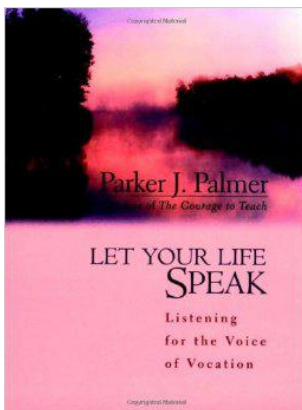
place of the Seventy Ninth Street Workshop. This is located in the basement of St. Monica's Church, 413 East 79th Street (between First and York Avenues). This

AA meeting is open to the public; all are welcome to attend.

Book Review: Let Your Life Speak Details a Spiritual Evolution

In *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* (available from the Book Committee), Parker J. Palmer states that “Today I understand vocation...not as a goal to be achieved but as a gift to be received.” He then goes on to say that “True vocation joins self and service, as [theologian] Frederick Buechner asserts when he defines vocation as ‘the place where your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need.’”

Palmer’s ambitions -- first as an academic and then as an activist -- led to a fall from grace, even though he spent a decade as dean of studies at Pendle Hill Quaker retreat. He suffered clinical depression until a therapist remarked, “‘You seem to look at depression as the hand of an enemy trying to crush you....Do you think you could see it instead as the hand of a friend, pressing you down to ground on which it is safe to stand?’”

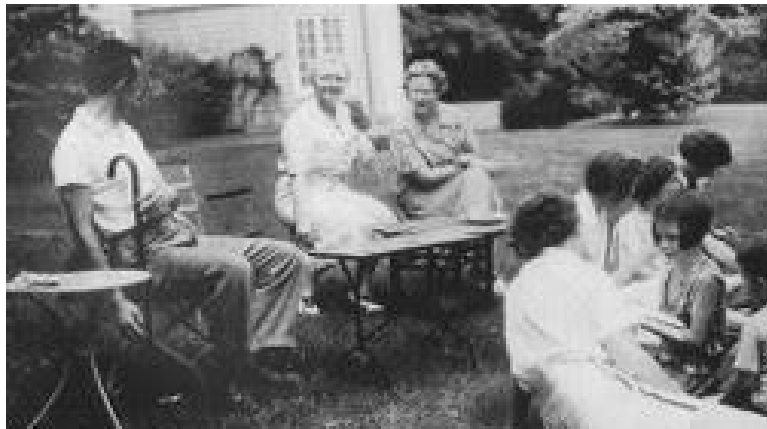


In Friendly terms, Palmer recognized, “I had to be forced underground before I could understand that the way to God is not up but down.” In fact, the most dramatic (and only funny) moment in the book is when he rappels over a cliff on an Outward Bound trip. He overcame his fear by

embodying the group’s motto: “If you can’t get out of it, get into it.”

So what is Palmer’s vocation? Teaching and writing against the grain of institutional and intellectual expectations. He discovered these gifts because, in Quaker parlance, “ways opened before him” only after “ways closed behind.”

Palmer is recognized as a spiritual leader, as anyone who has heard him



Molly’s father, at left during a gathering on the lawn at Bryn Mawr. Molly is the little girl sitting on the grass (facing the camera).

on Krista Tippett’s NPR program, “On Being” knows. But having been through (manic-)depression myself, I don’t think he would mind me saying, “The more you write like you are hanging from a rope for dear life, and the less as if you’re sitting behind a desk philosophizing, the better you will be.”

Carl Blumenthal

Event Announcement: Fed By the Spirit Dinner Club

Fed by the Spirit dinner club will have its first gathering Sunday, March 20, 5:30-8 pm, at Sheila O’Hara’s, 674 Union Street (2nd bell), between 4th and 5th avenues in Park Slope. (The Union Street R train is nearest.) In addition to worship-sharing and conversation, we’ll have traditional food celebrating Spring,

the Persian New Year, Easter, and Purim. Child care will be provided. RSVP to Carl Blumenthal: carlblumnthl@gmail.com or (718) 871-3275.

Eighty Years Ago, a Quaker Commitment to Equality: A Personal Story

In 1934, Bryn Mawr College, a Quaker college for women, opened the first of several free summer schools for working women. These women, one hundred or so, came mainly from factories (and particularly

the textile industry). They typically had a grade school education, or less. For the last two summers of his life, my father, who was in pain from cancer, gave his time and expertise to Bryn Mawr Summer School. The second summer, when I was eight, I joined him along with my mother and five-year-old brother.

The schools were organized by the workers themselves, along with the unions. My father was an economist and college professor. The economics curriculum he designed at Bryn Mawr included workers rights and benefits, the history of trade unions, the role of government, an overview of how the economic system works and discussion about how it could be changed for the better. The goal was to educate and empower women in the labor force and to work for a better society for working people, particularly women.

Today there seems to be no such effort among workers in our society. The

emphasis is almost completely on wages and safety, rather than educating people in low wage jobs so that they may advocate for themselves in the workplace. The larger discussion is taking place in politics and the election.

-- Molly Rusnak

Information Session Offers Guidance on Membership Process

On Friday, January 22, Callie Janoff opened her home for an information session, with Danielle Dybiec, on the process of becoming a member of the Brooklyn Monthly Meeting. Members Tom Rothschild and Ella Frederick (with her children, Ray and Lee) were also on hand to answer questions. Six curious attenders benefited from the members' insights, all while enjoying a delicious potluck dinner (including Callie's homemade soup).

The session covered each step of the membership process, which begins with a letter from the applicant to the Meeting. Upon receiving the letter, the Ministry & Council Committee will form a Clearness Committee to meet with the applicant and explore his or her reasons for wanting to become a member.

When the Clearness Committee feels that the applicant and the letter are ready, the letter will be read at the next scheduled Meeting for Business, which the applicant is encouraged to attend. After this reading, any member of the Meeting who wants to express concerns about the applicant can reach out to the Clearness Committee. The letter will then be read again at a second Meeting for Business; if there are no objections at this point, the applicant is immediately welcomed as a member.

In addition to detailing the process and answering questions, Danielle, Callie, Tom, and Ella shared their own experiences as members. They

discussed the culture of Brooklyn Meeting, provided a brief overview of Quaker history and introduced attenders to *Faith and Practice*. The evening provided not just information but a sense of the warmth that is a hallmark of the Brooklyn Meeting. Those who are curious about the membership process can reach out to any member of the Brooklyn Meeting, especially those on the Ministry and Council Committee.

--Melissa Cavanaugh

Quakers and Congress: Will Brooklyn Meeting Speak?

After Meeting for Worship on February 21, Friends met with Christine Ashley from Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) for a conversation sponsored by the Peace and Social Action Committee. The conversation involved Brooklyn Meeting's priorities for the new Congress. FCNL is asking Quaker Meetings to send their concerns for national legislation, to be used as guidance in lobbying for Quakers. Brooklyn will hold two meetings to put together minutes, one sponsored by the Peace and Social Action Committee and the other by the Young Adult Group. FCNL asks that Friends limit their recommendations to seven choices and submit them by April 15.

Over the past year, FCNL worked with Congress on the following Quaker legislative priorities: peace building, climate change, economic justice, reducing incarceration, supporting Native Americans and fair immigration policies.

-- Molly Rusnak

A Take on Vocal Ministry

Is the message you speak the spirit's message or your own? Do you tune in to the voice of the spirit during silent worship? Does it start as a murmur and sometimes swirl up into a loud drum beat? My experience with vocal ministry teaches me that both times when I arose to speak, it was grounded in prayer and the impetus was irresistible. However, before I spoke, I made sure I had figured out --- discerned -- if my message was rooted in prayer. Was it bonded with the spirit, and my worship community, or was it born of my own will?

In the pamphlet *On the Vocal Ministry*, Ruth M. Pitman recommends that the speaker ponder "[T]wo questions: whether the message is God's or his own, and whether it should be given to these people now, or is it for the individual alone." It's a wonderful, informative read that deepened my understanding of Vocal Ministry, helping me to discern the source of messages. I recommend it to all – new attenders and seasoned members alike.

-- Electra Cummings

All Invited to Annual Brooklyn Meeting Retreat

Want to be "transformed"? Friends and attenders will be worshipping and socializing in a beautiful natural setting at the Meeting Retreat, April 29 to May 1. The theme of "Transformation" will be experienced through worship, community living, nature and dialogue at Powell House, the New York Yearly Meeting Retreat Center near Chatham, N.Y.

Registration forms with detailed information about transportation, fees, scholarships, housing and children's activities are available on the literature shelf in the Library.

-- Molly Rusnak

Event Announcement: Integrating Children into the Spiritual Life of the Meeting

**Saturday, March 12, 2016, 9 a.m. to
4 p.m. at Brooklyn Meeting**

You are invited to a day-long workshop focused on bringing our children into the spiritual life of our meetings.

How can our meetings better integrate our children into the spiritual life of our Meeting? How can we give them a voice in their experience of Quakerism and an awareness of Quaker process? Participants will leave with new energy, new ideas, and new tools to implement these ideas.

Sessions will explore both the worship and the community aspects of Quakerism, including:

- 1) Children in the circle of meeting life: joys and challenges
- 2) Supporting children's spiritual development
- 3) Hands-on approach to teaching children Quaker process

* Some parts of the day will be multigenerational and childcare will also be provided.

Who should attend? Religious Education Committee members, Ministry & Counsel Committee members, Parents, Families, and anyone with a concern for the spiritual life of our children. ***It is recommended that meetings send two or more participants to the session. There is no cost to attend.***

For more information, contact Melinda Wenner Bradley at mwennerbradley@gmail.com

Facilitators:

Mary Harpster has served on Ministry & Counsel and Religious Education Committees. As a First Day School teacher she develops programming that gives the students input into meeting life.

Melinda Wenner Bradley leads religious education workshops for yearly meetings, FGC, Pendle Hill, and Friends schools. She serves on the NYYM Youth Committee, and is the former clerk of the Children's Spiritual Life Committee of Philadelphia YM.

Submission Guidelines

The Communications Committee welcomes Brooklyn Meeting News contributions from all Meeting members and attenders. Our newsletter includes a variety of content which may be of interest to our community, including but not limited to:

- Recaps of recent Meeting events
- Previews of upcoming events
- Issues pertaining to our Quaker faith and history

The newsletter is published on the first Sunday of each month, and we request that submissions for the next issue be submitted by March **21st**.

General Guidelines:

- Please send an email to newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org so that we may briefly discuss your contribution, as regards its timeliness, appropriateness, and length.
- Contributions should

- generally be brief, between 150-450 words in length.
- Please send your newsletter submission as an attached Word document.
- Keep in mind that contributions will be copy edited, and may not appear in the newsletter in exactly the same form as how they were submitted.

Thank you for your interest - we look forward to your input!

Regularly Scheduled Activities

Meetings for Worship

9:00–9:50 AM and
11:00 AM–NOON on Sundays,
in the meeting room
6:30 PM Tuesdays,
in the meeting room

Childcare

Sundays during 11:00 AM worship, for
children of 3 months to 3 years, in the care
of an early childhood teacher and dedicated
volunteers

First Day School

10:45 AM – 11:45 AM, Sundays, September
to June. Three classes, roughly related to
age: Bodies (4-6), Minds (7-9) and Spirits
(10-12).

Social Hour

12:00 PM Sundays,
Ground-level dining room

Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

1:00 PM, first Sundays, in the meeting
room

Hymn Singing around the Piano

10:00 AM, first Sundays, in the meeting
room

Readings of Spiritual Texts

10:00 AM, second Sundays, in the meeting
room

Worship Sharing

10:00 AM, third Sundays, on the third
floor

Community Dinner

1:00 PM-3:00 PM SET-UP
3:00 PM-4:00 PM MEAL/SERVING
4:00 PM- 5:00 PM CLEAN-UP, COME FOR
SOME OR ALL!
Last Sunday of every month, ground-level
dining room; volunteers appreciated for
this monthly dinner for anyone who wishes
a free hot meal. Children encouraged to
volunteer.
Contact: Andres Colapinto,
acolabus@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

Ongoing additions to upcoming Meeting events are regularly added to the Meeting website at <http://www.brooklynmeeting.org/calendar>.

To submit an event, email events@brooklynmeeting.org

March

**March 12 9 AM-4 PM Brooklyn Meetinghouse:
Integrating Children into the spiritual life of
the meeting**

For more information, contact [Melinda Wenner
Bradley](mailto:Melinda Wenner Bradley) at mwennerbradley@gmail.com

March 20 5:30-8:00 PM:

Fed by the Spirit Dinner Club

Fed by the Spirit dinner club will have its first
gathering at Sheila O'Hara's, 674 Union Street
(2nd bell), between 4th and 5th avenues in Park
Slope. (The Union Street R train is

nearest.)RSVP to Carl Blumenthal:
carlblumnthl@gmail.com or (718) 871-3275.

April

**April 29th- May 1st:
Brooklyn Retreat**
Save the date!

Send additions to Regularly Scheduled Activities or Upcoming Events to events@brooklynmeeting.org.

Send inquiries or suggestions about the newsletter to newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org.

The Monthly Meeting Newsletter is published by the Communications Committee of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting.

Current members: Melissa Cavanaugh, Catherine Despont, Ben Hill, Molly Rusnak, Lucy Sikes, and Anna White.
