

Clerk's Call to
2017 PACIFIC YEARLY MEETING ANNUAL SESSION
Walker Creek Ranch
Friday, July 14 to Wednesday, July 19, 2017

AWAKENING TO THE PRESENCE

“The Society of Friends arose as a rediscovery of the ever-open inward springs of immediacy and revelation [...] Dedicating themselves utterly and completely to attendance upon this Inward Living Christ [...] Aflame with the Light of the inner sanctuary, they went out into the world, into its turmoil and its fitfulness, and called [people] to listen above all to that of God speaking within them, to order all life by the Light of the Sanctuary.”

~ Thomas Kelly, “A Testament of Devotion”

Our strength as a Religious Society comes from our connection with the Spirit, its presence and guidance. Last year's theme, “Lifting the Veil,” explored what it means to open ourselves to a reality that underpins our lives, and is at times overshadowed by our ego and/or intellect. This year's theme builds on last year's foundation and will explore what it means to awaken to Spirit's Presence, which is always within and among us.

Why have Quakers been in the forefront of social movements? Early Friends developed practices that helped guide us to incrementally understand the Spirit's intentions. These practices help us, both individually and corporately, to notice the unfolding revelations of the Spirit. Individually, we become conscious of concerns and leadings. Corporately we seek the guidance of Spirit and as we surrender to it, we come to unity on a way forward.

Thomas Kelly wrote, “John Woolman [...] resolved so to order his outward affairs, so to adjust his business burdens, that nothing, absolutely nothing would crowd out his prime attendance upon the Inward Principle. And in this sensitizing before the inward altar of his soul, he was quickened to see and attack effectively the evils of slave-holding, of money-lending, of wars upon the Indians.” Awakening to the Presence is part of a transformation of the heart, a radical vulnerability to the Inward Principle. This happens when we wake up from our fears, judgments, habitual behaviors and thinking; and true ourselves towards the Spirit's north star. Early Friends were first transformed by Spirit before they went out to transform the world.

What is Spirit calling us to change in ourselves? What is Spirit calling us to do?

Our keynote speaker, Zachary Moon, grew up in our Yearly Meeting. His work in the world grew out of his own personal transformation and discernment of God's will. His leading has taken him to unexpected work in unexpected places. For the past eight years, he has served as a chaplain with military service members, drawing near to the impact of war and accompanying those suffering from it. Zachary will share how his experience of awakening to the Presence informed his leading.

Please join us as we open ourselves to Spirit's Presence during our week together in community and contemplation. Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends 71st Annual Session will be July 14th to July 19th at Walker Creek Ranch in Petaluma, California. We are opened, strengthened, and comforted when we join one another in this centuries-old Friends practice of gathering as a Yearly Meeting body.

Like last year's annual session, this annual session is scheduled differently from previous years. Plenary sessions are designed to allow time for Spirit to guide us. Furthermore, the first day of Annual Session will be on Friday and the last day will be on Wednesday. We know that many Friends work and may not have a full week off, so we hope that you can come at least for the weekend if not the full five days. The Meeting for Memorials will be held on Sunday so that more people can attend.

When we open ourselves to Spirit, we can expect the unexpected. I hope that you are able to attend this year's Annual Session. Come join several hundred Quakers who together will discern God's will the way Friends have for centuries. Come experience how Spirit would like us to manifest its will in the world.

In the Light,

Diego Navarro, Presiding Clerk