

**Clerk's Call to
PACIFIC YEARLY MEETING 72nd ANNUAL SESSION
Walker Creek Ranch, Petaluma, California
Friday, July 13 to Wednesday, July 18, 2018**

Faithfulness: A Call to Practice Radical Vulnerability and Love

This year, Pacific Yearly Meeting is called to be vulnerable to faith. The radical act of faith is required in our relationship to the Divine and in our relationship to our Quaker community. Faithfulness requires obedience to the living Presence and trust to wherever it may lead us, which leaves us vulnerable to our ego, our fear, and the world. This vulnerability was required of the Apostles who followed Jesus. This vulnerability was required of those seekers who heard George Fox's call to align their lives to the Christ Spirit. No doubt there were times when the Apostles and early Friends felt like they were crazy to do what was being asked of them. But again and again they turned towards the Divine and each other.

Our Quaker tradition is rich with resources (practices) to help us deepen our awareness of, and faithfulness to, the living Presence and to experience the joy and love of deep Fellowship. The practice of Extended Worship (worship not to an appointed hour, but to the movement of Spirit) opens us to deep corporate resonance where the still small voice can be heard. Bringing our life decisions to our Quaker community by asking for discernment support through Clearness and Accountability Committees which helps align our lives with the Spirit's calling. Praying in Meeting for Worship helps us to be vulnerable to the living Spirit. Holding the Meeting and one another in prayer and taking responsibility for the spiritual formation of each other strengthens our spiritual lives. Taking the time daily to sit in prayer and worship helps us become sensitive to the ways of the Spirit at work in us. Reading Quaker writings, the Bible, or religious texts help us to understand how God has spoken to, and through, those who have lived lives devoted to listening and obeying their True Guide.

Do we dare make these practices central to our lives? Are we too comfortable in our regular routines, current beliefs and lifestyles to create the time to hear and obey the Spirit's call? Through their discipline of listening to what the Christ Spirit had to teach them, Friends through the ages reordered their lives individually and collectively to align with Spirit. They relied upon their faith community to hold them accountable to personal transformation and the inner work that is required to be obedient and faithful.

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.

Isaac Pennington

As Friends have become vulnerable and obedient to the promptings of the Spirit, some have been prompted to witness in the world to maintain integrity with the Spirit's call. They became more sensitive to the love of God for all people and, subsequently, the ills of society and to the inequality around them. Over the years many Friends have experienced continuing revelation and were faithful in their ministries in town squares, churches, and government buildings throughout the land. This included John Woolman's witness with first nations peoples, slavery

and simplicity and Bayard Rustin's civil rights living testimony through his writing and organizing. These faithful actions sometimes led to imprisonment and persecution. And yet, the power of their faith transformed the world around them. Friends' attention to God's Love at work within was present and paralleled in their relations with people and the world.

Claremont Meeting publicly declared vulnerability in their State of the Meeting report:

*Pain from past conflicts within the meeting still lingers, evoking such responses as:
"We're dwindling because of hurt feelings that we haven't worked with yet" and,
"We need to be kinder to each other"... Are we about more than a soothing
silence? Where is our center of gravity? By what authority do we act?...How can we
deepen our community to come to know that of God in each other?
-- 2015 State of the Meeting Report, Claremont Monthly Meeting --*

In examining and questioning their current state, these Friends opened themselves to divine guidance. They exposed a vulnerable place and shined a light there. They opened themselves to ongoing revelation, as we all must do to revitalize our meeting community. We need to be the loving and kind faith community that is responsible to newcomer and seasoned friend alike, supporting one another in spiritual formation and helping each other see where our behavior is not aligned with Truth. This spiritual transformation is required to live into integrity and be open to new ministries and testimonies that are relevant to our life and the times we live in.

*They were changed [people] themselves before they sought to change others.
William Penn*

This summer we will explore the theme of radical vulnerability and faithfulness. Our keynote speakers Carin Anderson and Elena Anderson-Williams will be bringing their insights to this summer's Annual Session. These Friends grew up in Pacific Yearly Meeting. They both have been vulnerable to the Spirit throughout their lives, following its direction on paths they could not have imagined. Please join us.