

Friendship Times

January 2010

Calendar

- Sun, Jan 10 10:00 am Group singing, Meetinghouse
10:30 am Meeting for Worship. A potluck meal follows, then Monthly Meeting for Business
- Sun, Jan 17 9:00 am Friendly Bible Study
10:00 am Group singing, Meetinghouse
10:30 am Meeting for Worship
Forum: Raleigh Bailey, "Iraqis, Jordanians, and Palestinians as Displaced Peoples"
- Fri, Jan 22 7:00 to 10:00 pm Game Night, Meetinghouse
- Sat, Jan 23 All-day ESR workshop, Meetinghouse
- Sun, Jan 24 9:00 am Deepening the Life of the Meeting
10:00 am Group singing, Meetinghouse
10:30 am Meeting for Worship
- Tue, Jan 26 Last day to send newsletter material to Editor
- Sun, Jan 31 9:00 am Worship and Ministry, Care and Counsel, Peace and Social Concerns meets
10:30 am Meeting for Worship
- Weekly 10:30 am each First Day, Meeting for Worship.
Child care available for Worship and Business Mtgs.
7:30 pm Fourth Day, Midweek Mtg. for Worship, in Prayer Room, 7th floor Woolman Hall, Friends Homes, occasionally followed by discussion at 8 pm.
9:00 am fifth First Day (when there is one), Extended Meeting for Worship.
- Salem Worship Group.** Meeting for Worship, 9:30 a.m. First Day, at The Blessings, 823 Reynolda Road, Winston-Salem.
Contact: Meg Zulick. 725-2377

In this Issue

Minutes from Twelfth Month's meeting for worship with a concern for business are not available. This abbreviated issue consists of news from the Library and several announcements. In addition you will find comments made by Ted Benfey at the Friendship Meeting Christmas Eve worship service held at Friends Homes Guilford. There are no updates for the *Handbook Directory* this month.

From the Editor

My intention is to distribute the newsletter no later than the last Sunday of the month, which will be January 31st for the February issue. Material for the newsletter should be submitted, preferably by email, ***no later*** than **Tuesday, January 26th**. Thanks to everyone in advance for your help.

Cyril Harvey, cyrilhh@triad.rr.com

GAME NIGHT

7:00 to 10:00 pm on Friday, January 22nd

First Month's Query Meeting for Worship

Do we faithfully uphold our testimony for worship which is based on silent waiting, and for a free and unprogrammed ministry that may be shared by all? Is there a living silence in which we feel drawn together by the Light of Christ, the power of God in our midst; and is this inspiration carried over into our daily lives? Do we come to meeting with hearts and minds open and ready to worship in silence or in vocal ministry or prayer as the Holy Spirit leads us? Does our Meeting encourage those who may have a gift in the spoken ministry?

First Month Birthdays
of our Young Friends
Max Pierce Coleman, 1/5/99

Minutes — Synopsis

Minutes are unavailable from the Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, gathered on the 13th of Twelfth Month 2009.

News from the Library

A list of books added to the meeting library during 2008-2009 is posted on the bulletin board in the library. Three books on the list have been added since the last report in April.

Nan Bowles has given a compilation of some of her essays, many of them in the form of letters, with her illustrations of photographs and paintings and a few by Sandy Bowles. Look for the black notebook with the title "Into the Heart." Please do not remove the notebook from the meetinghouse since this is an irreplaceable item, but do take time to enjoy and be inspired by her reflections on the natural world her experience and understanding of Quakerism, expressed with her characteristic depth of insight. More could be said; you are left to discover the beauty and wonder of the book yourselves.

Delivery Options (ESP)

You may receive the *Friendship Times* in one of three ways: (1) **E**mail delivery, (2) **S**nailed mail delivery (US Postal Service), or (3) **P**ick up at the Meeting House (Personal delivery is possible at Friends Homes/Guilford).

If you would prefer to change your current mode of delivery, please let me know: Cyril Harvey, 925 New Garden Road, #2110, Greensboro, NC 27410 (336) 299-8269, or cyrilhh@triad.rr.com

Handbook Changes

Please call Claire Koster (766-9769), clerk of the Handbook Committee, if you have questions about the *Directory*. Give corrections, additions, or deletions for the *Directory* to Claire, or email them to the editor, cyrilhh@triad.rr.com.

The Editor knows of no *Directory* changes since the December issue was published.

Announcements

January Forum

Forum: "Iraqis, Jordanians, and Palestinians as Displaced Peoples" — Powerpoint presentation by Raleigh Bailey based on some research and a couple of recent visits to the area. Following Meeting for Worship, January 17th, 2010.

Adult Religious Education

beginning in January

Friendly Bible Study

3rd Sundays, 9:00 am

Benji Hebner will facilitate a Bible Study group based on the Friendly Bible Study approach on Third Sundays, starting with the Gospel of John. Friendly Bible Study is a way to explore the Bible through the lens of our personal experiences. Visit www.read-the-bible.org/FriendlyBibleStudy.htm if you'd like to read more about this approach.

Deepening the Life of the Meeting

4th Sundays, 9:00 am

Hannah Morris will facilitate this group based on queries, which will explore who we are individually and as a community, and how we experience our connection to the broader Society of Friends.

— The Religious Education Committee

Game Night

Come one, come all to Game Night at the Friendship Friends meetinghouse on Friday, January 22nd at 7:00 to 10:00 pm. Bring your friends, family and a favorite game to share! Any questions, please contact Don Smith and Kembra Howdeshell (323-1537).

Earlham School of Religion

The Earlham School of Religion is sponsoring a free day of workshops on Saturday, January 23rd, celebrating 50 years of ESR's Ministry of Education. Reservations should be made by January 15th to Matthew Mosey by calling (800) 432-1377 or emailing moseyma@earlham.edu. Check the Meetinghouse bulletin board to see the topics of the workshops.

Christmas Eve 2009

Right now, the Fox Art Gallery wall is adorned with your Christmas cards. But before that, the wall carried Jo Leeds' beautiful water colors, including, you may remember, one of a man leading a donkey, on which rode a mother and child. And we knew exactly what that picture depicted – it was Joseph guiding his wife and HER baby but not HIS baby across the Sinai desert to Egypt. Jo Leeds reported that three men residents asked if they could buy that picture but she was not selling it. She was puzzled. Why did all three requests come from men?

A year ago my thoughts were mainly focused on Joseph – how he chose not to get rid of his pregnant wife but continued to love and cherish her. How he chose to heed the rumors or dream message or both about Herod's murderous plan to rid Bethlehem of all babes, two years old and under, in order to be assured that no future challenger of note was likely to plot a revolution. This was genocide and ethnic cleansing and, given Herod's reputation, Joseph knew it had better be taken seriously. And he had the intelligence and the fortitude to evade Herod's henchmen and also to pack what was needed for the arduous journey across the Sinai desert to Egypt.

In addition to being homeless - they had been that in Bethlehem - they are now refugees. But why should devout Jews choose Egypt as a refuge?

My thoughts for some time now have focused on that question: Why Egypt? Egypt is an Arab country, and a view has become widespread that Arabs and Jews have always been implacable enemies. However, there was an earlier Joseph – son of Jacob – who saved Egypt from starvation. In gratitude the Pharaoh welcomed Jacob and Joseph's brothers and their families to settle in Egypt. There they prospered till the expanding Jewish community was seen as a threat by a later Pharaoh who enslaved them. We remember Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egypt to settle in Palestine.

During the last years, since 9/11 and al Qaeda and the Taliban and the recent Fort Hood massacre, the feeling has resurfaced – in its new form - that Jews and MOSLEMS are inveterate enemies. That too would be strange since the two religions share the same Old Testament, they even venerate Jesus though neither Jew nor Moslem recognize him as the Christ.

In fact in the early centuries of Mohammedanism, from the 8th to the 13th centuries, Baghdad, the intellectual center of Islam, welcomed Jewish and Christian scholars so that they could continue their studies in alchemy, physics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, and religion, when scholarship had practically died out during the Dark Ages in Europe. During the 12th century, when Saladin was Sultan of Egypt and conqueror of huge areas of the Mediterranean world, one of the greatest Jewish scholars, theologians, and physicians, Moses Maimonides, became Saladin's personal physician and, after Saladin's death, remained the family physician. A Jewish doctor caring for a Moslem royal family!

And what about since then? Wolf Mendl of the War Studies Department at Kings College London wrote that for centuries Jewish and Moslem communities have lived side by side until very recently when the United Nations gave Israel some land in the Middle East, and in response Arab countries expelled their Jewish populations, tens of thousands of whom settled in Israel.

That sojourn in Egypt presumably allowed Jesus' family to create a new life for itself without leaving the slightest residue of anger or bitterness. How else explain Jesus' calling on us to love the stranger, the outsider, to venerate the Samaritan – despised by the Jews of his time. That time in Egypt must have made him realize that love and caring can be and should be universal, it should not be confined to the in-group of your own religious faith. The sojourn in Egypt may well have been the source leading to Jesus' realization that only the profoundest unconditional love can overcome interpersonal and group hatred and suspicion and violence.

This brief meditation about Jewish, Moslem, and Christian relations might give us hope that Moslem and Jew and Moslem and Christian may find once again a way to peace and mutual love one for the other.

— Comments made by Ted Benfey at the Christmas Eve Gathering at Friends Homes Guilford.

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