

Interest groups for Annual Session 2017.

Everything Is Connected

Time is set aside in our program for opportunities to share and learn, to go deeper with a smaller group than plenaries may allow, or to meet with those who share a special concern, or who need an alternative to the more general program. We encourage Friends to propose and to attend these Interest Groups as a chance for spiritual growth and building friendships.* A list of scheduled Interest Groups with descriptions follows; and is available on line at npym.org and offered at Annual Session. This list is updated as new groups are proposed. We will announce new interest groups at regular intervals until 7/10.

PLEASE NOTE: where there are limits to participants, places will be assigned on a “first come, first served” basis. Later registrants may not be able to attend a limited participant Interest Group. You can indicate your preference upon registration (which can be updated at any time by returning to the registration site), or upon arrival at the University to check in (space permitting). We ask you to sign up as soon as possible so that appropriate spaces may be reserved. If no one signs up, leaders may choose to cancel their groups.

Thursday

IG 11. Friend-in-Residence: Going Deeper

Peterson Toscano

Friends can meet with Peterson to ask questions about anything he raised in his plenary, dig deeper, **seek interconnections** and consider next steps for themselves and their Quaker meetings.

Limit: 25 persons

IG 12. Quakers throughout the Americas: *Vivir la Paz - Living Peace*

Ann Stever, Lucy Fullerton, Elinor Jordan and others involved in FWCC

We will be discussing what **new light has emerged** from the Section Meeting of the Americas in March, where we gathered many different Quakers from all over the Americas. Also, plans for an upcoming regional gathering!

IG 13. *Way of the Spirit 2.0: New Times, Renewed Commitment to Spirit-led Action*

Christine Betz Hall

Hungry for potent spiritual tools? Wishing to better integrate inner experience of the Life and Light with outward actions? Yearning for supportive spiritual community? For an energizing vision of personal and societal transformation?

In the upcoming retreat-study cycle, *Way of the Spirit* offers a hybrid program of shortened retreats and on-line reflection to foster spiritual grounding in troubling times. Attend this interest group to sample contemplative practice and grow in hope and strength to make goodness visible. <http://goodnewsassoc.org/spirit/>

Max. participants: 20

IG 14. Quaker Homeschooling

Nora J. Percival

Do you want to take or keep your children out of the formal school system because of your values/beliefs? A veteran Quaker homeschooler will offer **a framework for creating a Quaker home school** for children from preschool through middle school.

Max: 20

IG 15: What is Forgiveness?: A Seeded Worship Sharing Experience

Rocky Garrison, Ph.D.

Forgiveness is presented as a process with three interacting aspects: (1) forgiving others, (2) forgiving oneself, and (3) asking for forgiveness. A modified worship sharing process facilitates an exploration of the personal meaning of the forgiveness process. Participants will get various quotes about forgiveness and be asked to share either the quote or a personal statement about forgiveness as part of a worship sharing experience.

Max Participants: 25

IG 16. The Whole Gift

Rick Ells

A workshop on how learning about life, the universe and everything can deepen our insight and spiritual life. In this workshop, we will take the big overview on The Whole Gift we have been given in being human, part of the community of life, on our planet, in our solar system, and in our universe. We will briefly consider recently developed ideas in each of those topics and then discuss what it all means in a worshipful discussion format. Some of those ideas include the unity of all life on our planet, the importance of cooperation in evolution, and the complex, interdependent dynamics of our one and only planet.

Max: 25

IG 17. Minute on Racism from PNWQM

Olympia MM, Steven Aldrich et al. [stvnald@aol.com]

What is systemic racism? How does systemic racism benefit members of NPYM? How are we harmed? **What can we do** to reduce systemic racism? What does our testimony(ies) ask of us?

Recognizing the need for all Friends in NPYM to support Olympia Friends work on systemic racism for that work to have meaningful impact, Pacific NW Quarterly Meeting (PNQM) Coordinating Committee forwarded this minute to NPYM; it was distributed to all monthly meetings.

This will be an opportunity for additional seasoning of the minute and to help NPYM seek unity to provide increased structure to our efforts. These build on the work begun at NPYM in 2015 when an interest group on Institutional Racism led to a committee to help monthly meetings season the issue of racism and to develop a minute to describe NPYM's position on the issue and how we plan to address it. We believe the minute that has been distributed creates a detailed plan on how this committee will do its work in 2017 and 2018 to support NW Friends engage to reduce systemic racism.

See the PNQM minute

IG 18. Upholding the “New Thing” from NW YM

Promise Partner and Avery Welkin

Our evangelical counterpart, Northwest Yearly Meeting, is currently restructuring in response

to division about accepting LGBTQ+ folks. Avery and Promise have been supporting "The New Thing," those churches who are separating from NWYM, in their early discernment process. In this group, we will explain the basic who and why of this new body and our leading to support it. Most of our time together will be in unprogrammed worship, a time for vocal and silent prayer to uphold our Friends.

Friday

IG 21. The Quaker Religious Education Collaborative: Sharing educational resources

Virginia Wood

The Quaker Religious Education Collaborative (QREC) strives to create spaces where Friends from across the branches of Quakerism can **share resources, inspiration, and support**. Learn about this resource and how you might engage in conversations throughout the year with Friends on three continents! A portion of our time will be spent in Listening Circles considering what support services and resources would be helpful for us here in the Northwest. What are the areas of challenge and struggle you encounter?

Max: 25

IG 22. Open Mike: the Spoken Word

Hosted by _____ [tba]

An opportunity for those who wish to **share poetry or spoken word art**, their own or works that have moved them spiritually; prose, drama or any style of poetry welcomed (including song lyrics, so bring your instruments). Let's make a Joyful Noise.

Max: 40

~~IG 23: Refocusing Our Attention Through Centered Eldering~~

~~Camille Clement~~ **CANCELLED**

In this interest group, all are welcome to participate in personal reflection on three **central aspects of eldering: inner preparation, speaking truth kindly, and recognizing appropriate eldering** opportunities. The practice of eldering is about steering our community toward a greater intimacy with God and increased faithfulness to spiritual leadings. Please join us to explore how you and your community may grow through the use of eldering.

Max no. 12

IG 24: Electronic Communications in NPYM and Beyond

Mary Klein, Nora J. Percival, and John William Gotts

Learn about the latest on-line offerings from NPYM and *Western Friend* and about future offerings under development. Mary, editor of *Western Friend*; Nora, secretary of NPYM; and John, webmaster of NPYM, will share what's new with our websites and will take your suggestions for improvements. Help shape our Friendly future by contributing to this conversation about the on-line resources we need and want for NPYM and beyond.

IG 25. Exploring Root Causes of World Crises and Identifying Significant Gifts Friends Can Offer Humanity

Betsey Kenworthy, eric maya joy, Joe Snyder, Joyce Zerwekh

After recognizing that spiritual crisis underlies all the world's problems, we will **explore the special insights Friends can offer humanity** to nurture growth, transformation, and awakening. We also need to continue practicing these gifts ourselves, perhaps as never before. Examples include working/playing with Spirit, nurturing the Light within, and applying clearness process and sense of unity in decision-making.

IG 26. Urgent Concerns and Strident Voices: What does Quaker activism look like in the age of Trump?

Maurice Warner, Tom Rawson & FCNL reps with Kate Gould of FCNL

Calls for activism on issues typically of concern to Quakers have rarely been so widely shared, so compelling, or so strident. Friends may feel called to respond. But we would like to believe that our actions are faith-based. How are Friends in NPYM finding balance between the urge to action and the desire to be grounded? What -actions or practices help maintain such a balance? Are concerns over spiritual groundedness even relevant to social activism involving diverse groups of individuals who share no common faith? This interest group is not a 'training', but an opportunity for sharing our experiences and suggestions.

Max: 30

IG 27: A New Way of Financing Annual Sessions

Lucretia Humphrey and Committee on YM Affordability

The ad hoc committee on **abundant financing for Annual Session** 2018 would like to hear your ideas. We will be taking this leap of faith together regarding money. Those attending AS 2028 will give what they are led to give and able to give in a spirit of abundance and generosity. Can this be a step towards more folks participating in Annual Session? What ways can we spread the word?

Come share your thoughts.

IG 28: How & Why to Witness the Total Solar Eclipse on August 21st

Don Goldstein

Learn where to go, what to bring, and what to look for in this unique and (for many) spiritual phenomenon that can be seen from our area for the first time in 38 years. On August 21, 2017, a total solar eclipse can be viewed within a narrow pathway across the United States from Oregon to South Carolina, the first such eclipse viewable from the continental U.S. since 1979. Don has been “chasing” total solar eclipses around the world for over 50 years in order to experience the spiritual impact of this unique celestial phenomenon. He will explain why and detail the numerous aspects of the experience that cannot be witnessed at any other time.

Saturday

IG 31. The Unitary Experience

Dan Clark

Have you experienced the unitary **Ground of all being**, or do you want to experience it? Come and share your experiences and those of others, as we deepen our understanding and awareness of the Divine Being permeating all life.

IG 32: Gender Outlaws in the Bible

Peterson Toscano, Bible scholar and performance artist

Tain't necessarily so... the things you were taught about Bible characters can prove more complex than you thought. Watch as Peterson Toscano unearths gender non-conforming people in the pages of the Bible. No Bible background required.

IG 33. Glass Houses: Let there be social justice and let it begin with me.

Sea Gabriel

We will talk about what social justice means, and our own (and only our own) **prejudices and missteps** in our journeys toward it. Awards will be given to those of us with the most admissions around the inappropriate ways we have thought, felt, or behaved (or wanted to). No one knows how to be socially just because humanity's never accomplished it, but it's time we try— let's make some missteps joyfully among Friends.

Max: 24 participants

IG 34. Vocal Ministry: Getting clear on Who is speaking

Joe Snyder, Paul Christianson, Adrian Nelson

How do we develop the depth our meeting needs in the ministry that is shared out of the Silence? How do we **develop our spiritual gifts** and elder others to dig deeper, speak from That of God, speak up and/or wait, as necessary?

Max: 15

IG 35 Eldership: Living our Peace Testimony in our Meetings

Pablo Stanfield

Regarding the conflicts that distract us from our Seeking, we will look at the role of those who are “ahead on the path”, elders of whatever age – Friends with experience on Ministry and Oversight committees are especially encouraged to come and share what they’ve learned. How do we **build the culture of nonviolence** and a model of the Beloved Community in our meeting life? How do we agree on the norms and expectations of our life together?

IG 36: Known Strategies to Reverse Global Warning

Joyce Zerwekh

Let’s inspire each other by exploring 80 climate change solutions already happening. Prominent environmentalist Paul Hawken has pulled together top scientists to describe and evaluate proven interventions. Together we will review strategies from *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warning*.

Maximum 25

