

You who ache, hear this word. You who long, you whose hopes lie wounded, whose hearts are broken, hear this word: Blessing and comfort to you, and assurance that God is with you in infinite tenderness and healing.

We hear this word, we bear this word, as we sing and pray, as we shop and decorate.

We are always mindful of this: this word is for you who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death: you who survive the slum, who endure the abuse, the trafficking; you who are profiled, bullied, enslaved, abused, tortured or forgotten; you who rage at the evil of the powerful and are not satisfied; you whose diagnosis is not good, whose job is not appearing, whose marriage is a wound; you whose people are called no one, refugees, prisoners, outcasts, who are too poor or queer or honest for us, you whom the world rejects, God embraces - we sing to you.

If this comfort is not for you, then we sing it in vain. Unless what we do will bring comfort to you we believe nothing.

Steve Garnaas-Holmes

***First Friends Meeting
December 10, 2017***

Gather and Center

Prelude *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* arr. Rice

Welcome and Announcements Sheila Hoyer

Joys and Concerns

Silence for Centering Prayer

Listen and Respond

Hymn 153 *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

Young Friends Message Beth Joyce

Anthem *All Earth is Hopeful* arr. Bobb
Janice Kirkman & Diane Burns, percussion

Offertory Invitation and Prayer Mary Nelle Smith

Offertory *Triptych on Divinum Mysterium* Lovelace

Advent Song *Come Now, O Prince of Peace* Hymn 157, stanzas 1&2

Scripture Reading Isaiah 40:1-11 Mary Nelle Smith

Hymn 155 *Comfort, Comfort Now My People*

Message "Prepare the Way" Don Durham

Waiting Worship After the Manner of Friends

If led to speak, please stand and wait for a host to bring a microphone.

Please allow for a few minutes of silence between messages.

Go Forth in Spirit

Benediction Don Durham

Sung Response

Rejoice, Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Please close Meeting for Worship by shaking hands with your neighbors.

Joining Don on the facing bench is Mary Nelle Smith.

Mary Nelle is a retired teacher and counselor. She likes to swim, read and walk her mutt, Einstein. She highly recommends getting to know First Friends' refugee families--they are a joy! The Tariq children love outings, and the Saleem babies are adorable. If you want to get involved, just ask Mary Nelle.

Anthem—All Earth Is Hopeful

All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last!
Furrows lie open for God's creative task:
this, the labor of people who struggle to see
how God's truth and justice set everybody free.

People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell:
"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel";
she conceived him "God with us," our brother,
whose birth restores hope and courage to children of this earth.

Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared;
new highways opened new protocols declared.
Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace!
All clear every gateway, in haste, come out in haste!

We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib.
This same Lord Jesus today has come to live
in our world; he is present, in neighbors we see
our Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.

First Friends warmly welcomes visitors.

Please complete the visitor card and place it in the offering plate.

We invite you to contact pastoral staff with any questions.

Please help yourself to Quaker literature in the foyer.

Activity packets are available for children as well as a fully staffed nursery.

Hearing devices are also available.

Please see a morning host for assistance.

Gentle Reminder: Please silence all electronic devices.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. The Lord will feed the flock like a shepherd; and will gather the lambs in protecting arms, carry them in a loving bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

JOY AND THANKSGIVING

Dawn Carter. We celebrate with Dawn her ongoing recovery from breast cancer and hold her in the light that she will continue to receive good news!

IN THE LIGHT

Hattie, Beth Joyce's mom has been moved to Rehab at Whitestone. She will be there for at least 30 days. Please hold her in our prayers.

Jean Small has returned to Wesley Long Hospital and would appreciate our continued prayers.

Este Rayle. Please continue to hold Este in the light.

Patti Culberson, Lou Gordh's sister-in-law's surgery was successful. She is doing well and recuperating at home.

Brad McHargue. We continue to hold Brad in our prayers.

PRAYERS FOR ONGOING HEALTH CONCERNS

Laura Mason Altizer's mother, Fred Small, Jim Wilkinson, Ray Hurley, Norman Rider, Helen Hoffman's mother, mother-in-law and husband. Dawn Davis and her mother, Heidi McLaughlin's son Christopher, Rose Corbett's mother Betsy Wray. Janis Hammett's cousin, Alan Cochran, Beth Joyce's mother Hattie, Edith Shepherd's friend Jan, Mary Elizabeth Barwick and Patrick Tillman's mother Marian and nephew, Harrison Tillman. Mary Elizabeth and Patrick's cousin. Traci Cossman's Aunt Polly and Uncle Bob, Maryann Phillips Eisenbrand, Dawn Carter and Akil Ramsey.

CALENDAR AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

DRESS REHEARSAL TODAY: Attention Actors: There will be a full dress rehearsal for this year's Christmas Play, "Room for Everyone," at 3 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall (there is no morning practice this week). The play will begin at 4:30 p.m. followed by the Soup Supper.

Children participating in the nativity dressed as anything that might have been at the nativity need to be in the downstairs room across from the food pantry by 4:15 p.m. Adrian and Cidney will be there to greet them.

PLAY AND SOUP SUPPER TODAY: This year's Christmas play, "Room for Everyone," will begin at 4:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. This play is written and produced by Bill Hass and features the youth and children of our Meeting in an old-style radio play, presented by the First Friends Young Radio Players. Please plan to arrive as early as possible because the seats fill quickly. The play will be followed by the annual Soup Supper, featuring the wonderful home-made soup of Ian Joyce and served by the Hospitality Team. You don't want to miss this fun event.

This Advent, we will be learning one of the new hymns in our hymnal, Come Now, O Prince of Peace. Geon-yong Lee wrote the music and words in 1988 while attending a workshop in Geneva with the World Council of Churches. Mr. Lee was born in 1947 in Pyongannam-do, in what is now North Korea. His father was a minister. Following the Korean War, the family moved to what is now South Korea in 1953, where Mr. Lee grew up in Seoul.

Korea was divided into two countries in 1953 at the end of the Korean War. Though fighting has ceased, the region remains tense. Mr. Lee is among the many Anglicans actively working toward reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

Each stanza of this hymn is a petition requesting the "Prince of Peace" to "come" to us and to "reconcile" us to "all people" and "all nations." It is a timely and appropriate prayer for our world today, and so we join our voices with our brothers and sisters in Korea who long for and pray for peace.

Support our food pantry with our beautiful "In Honor" cards. They are the perfect gift that keeps on giving through the year! First Friends Food Pantry feeds approximately 60-75 families a month. During the holidays we give away 150 turkeys with the fixings for Thanksgiving dinner and 150 hams with the fixings for Christmas dinner. You can help feed a family by contributing \$25 per meal. You are welcome to donate any amount and take as many cards as you need. Cards will be in the office and available during office hours as well as in the foyer after Meeting for Worship on Sundays through Christmas.

Food Pantry Christmas Meal Giving will take place on Monday, December 18 at 11:00am. We will need help picking up food, organizing it, handing it out and carrying it to cars. If you can help, please contact Sheila or show up at the Meeting house by 10:00am on that Monday.

Sunday, December 10, 10:00am Gatherings:

Children who would like to be in the Christmas nativity (but are not doing a speaking piece) can meet Sheila and the youth group downstairs in the room across from the food pantry. We will talk through and walk through what will be happening this evening.

Adult Gathering, in Room 208, we will be continuing our discussions of *Quakers and Social Justice Movements: Nonviolent Direct Action*. Our focus will be the Birmingham Children's March of 1963, part of the Civil Rights Movement.

Ministry and Counsel will meet today, December 10, 2017, 12:00pm in the Library.

United Society of Friends Women will meet at Bravo's, on Monday, December 11, at 11:30 am for a special Christmas luncheon.

Pecans are still on sale! United Society of Friends Women (USFW) are selling pecans. If you wish to purchase, see any USFW member or look for the sale in the foyer at the Rise of Meeting on Sundays.

Daisy Newman will meet on December 13, 6:15pm in Fellowship Hall. It will be hosted by: Nancy Dixon - Rnak1215@bellsouth.net, and Kathryn Straughn - luemas@bellsouth.net. Please bring your favorite salad topping and a couple of items for the food pantry. Please remember to RSVP one of the hosts so we will have the proper number of table settings. Come prepared to enjoy a wonderful salad bar and fellowship as we enter into this Christmas season.

On Dec. 17 at 11:00am Worship, the choir will be leading a service of readings, music and silence.

Christmas Eve at First Friends Meeting:

- 9:00am Unprogrammed Meeting for Worship, Gathering Room
- 11:00am Meeting for Worship with Carrie Paz, guest musician. Carrie Paz began her singing/songwriting career around age three, by which time she already knew that her life's work was to "sing for Jesus." A dozen years and a few guitar lessons later, she began leading worship in her church and at youth conferences across eastern North Carolina. She served with Youth With A Mission in Nashville, TN, before packing up and moving to Chicago, where she majored in Music and Pastoral Studies at Moody Bible Institute. Carrie now lives in Greensboro, where she writes and sings regularly in the sacred spaces of churches, bars and coffee shops. On Sundays you'll usually find her at Deep River Friends, and you can typically find out where she'll be singing at carriepaz.com.
- 5:30pm Christmas Eve Candlelight and Carol Singing Service
Joe and Tommy Wrenn singing, the Rowlett/Gilbert string quartet, and the ABCs of Christmas.

The Financial Peace University class will meet for nine consecutive Mondays, beginning on January 22, from 6:30 - 8:00 pm at First Friends. Childcare will be available (donations appreciated). Participants may purchase materials and register at <http://www.fpu.com/1053286>. This class will be open to the public - if you know anyone who might be interested, please share this information. Contact Elizabeth Vance with any questions, evance878@gmail.com or [336-686-6847](tel:336-686-6847).

Quaker Environmental Justice Group Forming

Are you interested in working collaboratively on environmental issues from a Quaker perspective based on the model of the Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT)? Committed to nonviolent direct action, EQAT is active in the Philadelphia area in efforts to combat climate change, and there is interest among local Quakers in learning from their work. If you would be interested in participating, please contact Margaret Rowlett or Deb Staves.

High Point Friends Meeting—Christmas Music:

December 17, 5:00pm Candlelight Service (The Story of Christmas) Choir, Organ & Oboe featuring Heidi Gordon. Mark Your Calendars.

The Randleman Friends Meeting Saxophone Ensemble would like to invite your meeting to join us for our Christmas concerts.

Saturday, December 23, 2:00pm (Friends Homes at Guilford, Greensboro, NC)

Saturday, December 23, 7:00pm (Sunset Theatre, Asheboro, NC)

Agape Retreat, Thursday February 8 through Sunday February 11, 2018. Contemplative Outreach of Central and Eastern North Carolina.

Please go to our website: www.contemplativeoutreachnc.com

and click on Special Events. There will be a link to the

Registration Form. ***Please register by December 15, 2017.***

If we don't have 12 participants by December 31, 2017 we will have to cancel the retreat. For more information, contact Leslie Bellard at: 919-906-3110 or lsbellard@gmail.com.

NOTES, DOODLES AND REFLECTIONS ...

COLORING PAGE



**First Friends is a Quaker Meeting
building healthy relationships
with God, one another, and all creation.**

**336-299-8869
www.friendlymeeting.org
office@firstfriendsmeeting.org**

**Office Hours:
Monday: Closed
Tuesday-Friday: 10:00am-3:00pm**

Ministers: Everyone

**Don Durham, Intentional Interim Pastor
Sheila Hoyer, Pastor of Education and Outreach
Monica Citty Hix, Minister of Music
Ellen Ramsey, Office Manager
Pam Reese, Treasurer
Sidney Holliday, Nursery Care
Adrian Quarles, Nursery Care
Bill Davis, Monthly Meeting Presiding Clerk
Beth Joyce, Clerk of Ministry and Counsel
Anita Lewis, Clerk of Personnel Committee**

To email a Clerk or Staff: (first name)@firstfriendsmeeting.org
Don, Sheila, Bill, Beth, Monica, Jean, Ellen or Pam

Sunday Gatherings

Unprogrammed at 9:00 a.m. in the Gathering Room
Choir Practice at 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Morning Gatherings at 10:00 a.m.
Semi-programmed at 11:00 a.m. in the Meetingroom

*Childcare available in the Nursery
(Six years of age and younger)*