

# Evanston Monthly Meeting of Friends

1010 Greenleaf Street Evanston, Illinois 60202

847 / 864-8511

[www.evanstonquakers.com](http://www.evanstonquakers.com)

Evanston Friends Meeting  
State of Society  
2007

***“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 1667

Greetings to Friends everywhere from all who worship, learn and grow in the community of the Evanston Friends Meeting.

## Spiritual Nurture

Our Meeting for Worship remains the center of our life together. Most First Days 60-80 of us gather to open our spirits and hearts to the presence of the Divine. We are a fairly consistent group of members and attenders, enriched almost every week by several visitors. We joyfully welcomed seven new members in 2007: Dana Des Jardins, Carol Moschandreas, Jason Orloff, Mary Theis, Sue Tursman, Danielle Schultz, and Paul Barker.

We have found that our familiar practice of admitting late-comers only when our children leave after about 20 minutes enhances our ability to center down. We continue in our practice of inviting prayers of concern or gratitude during the final five minutes or so of Meeting for Worship, finding that this opens us to one another in deep ways. We discontinued our experiment of inviting “afterthoughts” just before the rise of meeting as we seemed unable to find the right words for this kind of participation. Vocal ministry is often deeply offered among us while we work to find ways to help us all understand its role in our community worship.

We renamed our “Second Hour,” now calling it our “Meeting for Learning.” With that change some have noted their expectations for becoming engaged have increased. Our practice of sharing spiritual journeys one First Day each month continues to be rich in building bonds among us as well as in revealing ways to grow in our own lives. This year, as an experiment, we have had panels of members and attenders share how specific life circumstances (illness, parenting, etc.) have drawn from and contributed to their spiritual journeys. The willingness of participants to share openly and honestly has been a gift to us all.

First Day School offers opportunities for learning and growth for our children and youth, as well as for the adults who serve as teachers. We have had classes for children in three age groups during the past year---lower elementary, upper elementary and middle school. We appreciate those who faithfully work with the children, but have struggled to find enough teachers and curriculum with which we are comfortable.

Approximately one quarter of our meeting’s members and attenders now participate in small spiritual development groups. Most of the four groups meet monthly in homes or at the Meeting House for disciplined worship, sharing, and discussion. Our traditional silent retreat at Lake Geneva in October deeply refreshed the 22 persons able to attend.

## Service

Members and attenders continue to feel strong spiritual promptings to serve and to work for justice in their own communities and across the world. Examples of individual leadings range from interpreting for the deaf at the annual demonstrations against the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, GA to extending hospital care to civilians in war-torn and AIDS-afflicted countries; from creating life-size puppets for peace demonstrations to networking with city officials who seek to end violence; from reaching out in musical performances to advocating solutions to global warming. Even without formal support committees, Friends have felt their personal leadings uplifted in prayer and encouraged in many informal ways.

Our annual yard sale again yielded \$1,000-plus donations for Right Sharing of World Resources and three other worthy organizations. By selling refreshments, our older elementary school children made a substantial donation to the Heifer Project. Our Friends of Latin America continue to fund higher education for two students in Guatemala. Each fourth First Day all friends are invited to gather for a simple meal...soup, rice, and bread, and to contribute what they would spend if dining out to Right Sharing of World Resources.

Evanston Friends hosted a weekend for Adult Young Friends in addition to the annual Youth Quake for high schoolers from several states, and we were again invigorated by their presence. During 2007, a number of us had our hearts warmed and our vision enlarged at gatherings of Metropolitan and Yearly Meetings and FGC. Nevertheless, we struggle with the limitations of time and energy that prevent many of us, particularly young families, from participating in the wider community of Friends.

We were delighted to record Madeline George of our meeting as a conscientious objector.

## Knowing One Another in That which is Eternal

To grow together as well as to “bear with one another,” we must know one another. We have developed a variety of occasions and traditions to help that happen.

- We try to remember to wear name tags on First Day mornings.
- We celebrate birthdays each month with cake and song following Meeting for Worship.
- We brought Christmas caroling to the homes of four of our elders members and attenders in December.
- We have breakfasts on the first First Day morning and potluck on the second each month.
- We have “friendly dinner” groups that gather regularly.
- Our young adults often enjoy informal fellowship together.
- Video nights are held at the meeting house two times a month.
- We work on things together...the yard sale, yard clean up, and various hosting events.

And so our year has gone, rich in retrospect with connections with God and one another. We are grateful to all whose presence has brought the meeting with them for our many gatherings, celebrations, and worship.

Our prayer is that with steadfast faithfulness to worship, discernment, and service, God’s amazing work in the world may be done by us all.