

Wilmington Friend
Cincinnati Friends Meeting
March 2016

In uncertain and changing times, what do we do as Quakers to affirm our commitment to our testimonies of justice and equality? We at Cincinnati Friends Meeting have been in deep discernment answering this query and now move forward as led by the Spirit that calls us to “see that of God in everyone.”

CFM has made a commitment to serve as a Solidarity Congregation as part of the growing Sanctuary movement in the Cincinnati area. As one of the newest Solidarity Congregations, we join with others as part of the Cincinnati Sanctuary Congregation Coalition and stand ready to assist as we are called and led to support those in Sanctuary care and to be a community of love, hospitality and fellowship. Sanctuary Congregations provide the physical space for immigrants and refugees who are in immediate danger of deportation. Since our Meetinghouse does not have the physical space required for sanctuary, we will work in solidarity to support those who provide sanctuary and those who must reside in sanctuary. While acknowledging that we face risks and have more questions than we have answers, we nonetheless feel the time has come for us to follow our faith tradition and responsibilities. Our journey to Solidarity has been led by our Peace & Social Concerns Committee.

We stood firm in our commitment to justice and equality by hosting a Community Conversations effort in March. Community Conversations are being held throughout the Cincinnati area under the auspices of the AMOS Project to help the coalition align its priorities with community needs in such areas as social justice for the poor, disenfranchised and young. Our Conversation (Listening) effort was coordinated by Jeff Arnold and Joe Henry, who took AMOS training to be facilitators.

Joe Henry and Suzanne Johnson have also made a commitment to justice and have been trained as certified apprentice facilitators for the Alternatives to Violence Project. This effort started as a Quaker effort in 1975. Workshops are held in schools and in prisons. Joe and Suzanne are looking forward to having a workshop at our Meetinghouse.

“No matter where you are from, we’re glad you are our neighbor.” That’s the sign we’ve placed on our bulletin board in our foyer, written in English, Arabic and Spanish. In addition to displaying the sign, we are placing a yard sign at the beginning of our driveway with the same message. We are also making the signs available for \$10.00 for anyone who would like to have one.

We continue our outreach to Tender Mercies and to Bethany House. We chose Bethany House as our service project for Christmas and donated many buckets of items to the shelter that provides services and safe haven for abused women and their children.

CFM will be hosting Quaker pastor and author Brent Bill for a workshop that will feature his book, **Life Lessons from a Bad Quaker**. The workshop will be Saturday, April 29, from 9:30 – 4:00. More information is available by calling our office at (513) 791-0788. A light breakfast will be served, as well as a carry-in lunch. There is no cost for the workshop and all are welcome.

Our pastor, Jim Newby, has been sharing the message of Quakers throughout the community and within our community. He has been teaching a class based on his book **Sacred Chaos**. On April 11, he will be leading a study of *The Passion Narratives of the Bible*, which is open to anyone who is interested. He will also be teaching *The People Called Quakers* class (Quakerism 101) on April 1 and April 8. He will even prepare breakfast at 8:30, followed by the three-hour class, which is required for membership at CFM but which is also open to anyone. Jim has also made presentations throughout our wider Quaker community and has been representing CFM at various WYM meetings.

Mike Ramos has been leading a class on Writing as a Spiritual Practice.

We welcomed Ruth Brindle from the Quaker Heritage Center and Jim Reynolds and his wife from Wilmington College for informative presentations and open discussion. Rev. Troy Jackson from the AMOS Project also joined us during our time of discernment related to affirming our commitment as a Solidarity Congregation.

It's been a time of welcoming within our community, as we celebrated with Reagan Kuhn and Thomas Mouries on the birth of their son, Eliot Alexandre Kuhn in January. His big sister is Eva. We have also welcomed our newest member, Glen Williams.

In uncertain and changing times, we are a busy, knowledge-seeking, spirit-led, open and affirming congregation that is guided by love, forgiveness and acceptance, even as we do not have all of the answers. All are welcome to walk with us in this community where faith ---- as Pope Francis says about love – where faith is a verb.