

Dear SAYMA Friends,

May 31, 2024

SAYMA's annual retreat and sessions is right around the corner. ***The last date to register for in-person participation is this Thursday, June 6. The virtual registration deadline is Wednesday, June 19.*** Here is a link to the registration page:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/becoming-breath-of-spirit-2024-sayma-sessions-and-retreat-registration-811879071157?aff=oddtcreator>

A long-time Friend recently shared that the most meaningful aspect of our yearly meeting is the relationships we build and maintain here. It is these relationships that have motivated him to work on understanding and to deal with our ongoing conflict. He feels sad that many have turned away from SAYMA.

Quakerism is an experiential religion. What is your experience? What is your story?

*Daryl:* The one woman in my highschool physics class chose me as her lab partner. We became best friends that year. The experience of that non-romantic relationship provided opportunity for me to form and transform how I relate with women. I was just beginning to date. I had been raised with societal expectations of sexualized relationships with women. I was changed by how my friend and I interacted. We had a lot of fun working and playing together, and I unconsciously transformed my expectations of ways to relate with women.

*Margaret:* My best lessons in right relationships occurred while working in an 800-bed teaching hospital. Every day I witnessed people of color (patients and co-workers) being treated as less important, less deserving by many of my white co-workers and patients. My faith was tested every day that I worked in this environment. How could those who proudly proclaimed their Christianity violate the second commandment with so little awareness of the impacts of their behavior? "You shall love one another as you love yourself." In God's eyes, there are no "others." Right relationship is sacred work. It is the core work of integrity, of peacemaking, of stewardship, of equality, of maintaining community life.

Quakerism is an experiential religion, for the individual and for the group. The experiences of our encounters with Spirit and with the Divine in each other enable us to grow, to change how we live our lives. The basis of our faith community is sharing our experiences, sharing our stories, building relationships. Annual sessions and retreat invites us to build and deepen relationships with Friends from across our region. It provides opportunity for each of us to be changed, to grow in Spirit and in life.

SAYMA Friends are inviting you to be part of a racial conflict transformation process during our annual sessions and retreat. We envision creating a brave and sacred space where all Friends can be heard. This is the appropriate space to bring your concerns and questions regarding conflicts within our yearly meeting, rather than to meeting for business. Professional mediators will be guiding this work, and we will be part of the process. We hope you will join us on this "Path to Racial Conflict Transformation."

We will complete the agenda for business sessions on Sunday, June 16. This means that we ***need all items submitted no later than Saturday, June 15.*** This schedule is to allow our Recording Clerk to assemble the skeleton of the official Minutes before our departure date of Tuesday, June 18. Any business items submitted after June 15 will not be on the agenda for our annual business sessions. There will be an opportunity to amend the agenda, but there is no guarantee there will be time for items requested after the deadline. We prioritize agenda items that require corporate discernment and that have been well-seasoned.

Please keep checking the SAYMA home page for updates and for reports from committees and wider Quaker organization representatives. We receive reports over several days, posting them as they come in (thanks to our web manager.) We ask, in the interest of being able to get through a busy agenda, that you prepare by familiarizing yourselves with the items that will be brought forth for discernment.

We look forward to seeing you in-person and virtually at the Berea gathering.

Daryl Bergquist and Margaret Farmer  
Outgoing Presiding Co-clerks  
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