

Worship at Annual Meeting Reisterstown, Maryland 2010

Especially in worship, we enter with reverence into communion with God

Morning Worship

After breakfast and before each morning business session, Friends will have the opportunity to worship together. Each morning, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Friends from a different worship tradition will lead us in worship. Together we will experience some of the ways Friends find spiritual comfort, guidance, hope and strength. It is intended that the business sessions flow directly out of the morning worship time. The clerk will determine when a break is needed.

Small worship groups; Thursday evening, Friday and Saturday afternoon

The worship groups are designed to provide a place to worship, pray and share together around our theme. We encourage everyone attending Annual Meeting will participate in their assigned worship group. We ask that you stay with the same group for all three sessions so that you may begin to know each other on a more personal level. This is a wonderful opportunity for heart-to-heart connections among Friends. Spoken contributions need to be brief, with time left between contributions so that we may understand the words and spirit of what has been said. Those listening will do so with respect, sincerity and prayerfulness. Experiences and thoughts shared with the group need to be held in confidence within the group.

Do not try to answer or debate what others in the group have offered. Speak from your own experience in truth and with love.

We anticipate that most groups will be English-language only; one or two may be Spanish-language only, or bi-lingual. We will make every effort to mix the participants in the group to ensure that Friends from different traditions and yearly meetings are included in each group.

Sunday Worship

As the final event of our Annual Meeting, we will gather together in worship.

Quiet Room

A room will be made available for those wishing a quiet place for retreat. Those wishing a place for silent reflection or prayer may use this room.

Queries for Small Worship Groups

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (NRSV) **John 13:34-35**

Session 1, Thursday evening

Jesus often spread his message among people by telling stories. These stories were used to teach, inspire and challenge people to be better Christians. Each of us has our own stories that reflect our experiences with Jesus' teachings. Through these stories we too can teach, inspire, and challenge each other to be better Christians. Share among your group the stories of your experience of the love of Christ in your life, including such love from strangers.

Session 2, Friday

Many Christian denominations, including Quakerism, struggle with the question "What makes us Christian?" Some of us believe that our proclamation of Jesus as our Savior and our attendance at church or meeting makes us Christian. Some of us believe that it is how we treat others that makes us Christian. Think about how you have experienced Christianity. What makes you Christian? How can you tell that someone is Christian?

Session 3, Saturday

Throughout this gathering we have explored our experiences with the love of Christ and struggled together with the question "What makes us Christian?" As we return to our homes, how might we bring the theme of this conference with us? "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." - John 13: 34-35 (NRSV). How might you spread the love of Christ a little more among the Religious Society of Friends, as well as beyond it?

Guidelines for Small Worship Groups

FWCC Annual Meeting 2010

Speaking:

- We speak from our heart, out of personal experiences and feelings; avoid abstract ideas and generalizations beyond our experiences.
- We speak for ourselves, out of prayerful silence.
- We may speak, or pass (and perhaps speak later), to any query.
- We avoid speaking more than once until everyone has had a chance to speak.
- We leave space between speakers.

Listening:

- Between speakers we pray and reflect on what was shared.
- We are hesitant to answer, disagree, dispute, or comment on the thoughts of one another.
- We respect confidentiality; we repeat nothing beyond the group that we have heard from others within the group.
- While others are speaking, we listen attentively—rather than “tuning them out” to prepare what we will say.
- We seek to hear what God may be saying to us through another’s words—especially when we feel resistant to those words.

Good Order:

- We are mindful of the allotted time, so that everyone who wishes can share.
- When needed, the facilitator will remind us of time limitations.
- We support the facilitator’s efforts to maintain good order.
- We trust God to guide our group.