



Yearly Meetinghouse, McNabb, Illinois

ILLINOIS YEARLY MEETING

of the Religious Society of Friends
(Quakers)

Consisting of 20 Quaker Meetings and Worship Groups
in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Wisconsin

2010 Epistle of Illinois Yearly Meeting

To Friends everywhere,

It is with wonderful joy that we take this opportunity to share our greetings with the global community of Friends, both as individual local communities and as the collective community that makes up the Religious Society of Friends. During Sixth Month, 16th-20th Days, 2010, we gathered for the 136th annual sessions of Illinois Yearly Meeting near McNabb, Illinois, under the theme of “Seeking and Sharing Our Spiritual Home.” During our gathering, we followed the leadings of the Spirit and paid special attention to our many “homes” – homes among one another, within the fellowship of Quakers across the globe, and amidst the natural and built environments that make up our yearly meeting campus. Our theme was explored not only in adult programs but also in youth programs that explored creating and sharing sacred space, and envisioning plans for new site usage in the context of the Testimonies of Stewardship and Community. The Peace Testimony, a context in which we also share our spiritual home, was a theme in various workshops, presentations and a business session in which we worked on our response to torture. Through the course of our business sessions, we paid special attention to keeping our physical and organizational homes in order – our physical home in relation to the property development and maintenance, and our organizational home in relation to the process of composing and seasoning a major portion of our new *Faith and Practice*.

The reflections of our community were aided by various presenters who shared their spiritual journeys, the value of their spiritual homes, and provided insights into how we are connected to the work of the wider Quaker community. These presenters included Sandra Tamari who is a member of the board of the Quaker United Nations Office and a member of ILYM’s St. Louis Monthly Meeting, Micah Bales who is a Friend in traveling ministry under the care of Great Plains Yearly Meeting, Mary Pikul of Chicago Friends School, Sonia Tuma of the AFSC Central Regional Program, Emma Condori of the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund, and Phillip Gulley who is a recorded minister in Western Yearly Meeting.

We rejoiced in being able to utilize and explore the opportunities of the new house and six acres that were purchased last year. The house has been completely refurbished over the last six months thanks to the considerable time, effort, and energy of various yearly meeting members. As our physical home had been expanding, our spirits had been nourished through worship, workshops, speakers, worship sharing, and the fellowship of hayrack rides, intergenerational square dancing and games on the lawn. We also appreciated sharing our campus with various other companions including a barn cat who our youth named “Jamie,” a family of great horned owls nesting in the barn of the newly acquired land, the red-winged blackbirds, who after a long absence from the area are now nesting in our recently reclaimed prairie grass field, and the fireflies, who in lighting up the campus at night, reminded us to let our Inner Light shine.

The annual sessions of Illinois Yearly Meeting were held with joy, challenges, intergenerational community engagement, centering and focusing queries, deep listening and love – all the ingredients for the continual development of our spiritual home.

In the Light,
Illinois Yearly Meeting