

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is a community of worship and witness that emphasizes the immediate and direct experience of God as a loving Presence or Inner Light. Out of Quaker worship come several “testimonies,” or practical principles for living, among them simplicity, equality, integrity, and peace. Quakers invite all people to join in developing a just and peaceful world through efforts guided by non-violence and reconciliation. We welcome you to our meeting for worship and invite you to learn more about us.

Meeting for Worship

Friends worship together in silence, remembering the words of Jesus: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them” (*Matthew* 18:20). In a meeting for worship in the “unprogrammed” tradition of which Berea Friends Meeting is a part, there is no one minister and no prearranged service. Instead, there is a common will to be gathered in prayer. The silent worship provides an opportunity for all present to open hearts and minds to the presence of God and to join in active waiting for the guidance of the Spirit. The silence may be broken from time to time, as a worshipper feels moved by the Spirit to share. Sometimes the worship hour passes in sustained silence, without spoken messages.

Berea Friends Meeting has a particular commitment to nurture the spiritual development of children and young people and to involve them in all aspects of the life of the meeting. All ages come together in meeting for worship. Children under twelve who are not yet participating in the teen group attend meeting for worship for the first fifteen minutes, then leave for first day school. The teen group meets for their own programming during the first part of meeting for worship, then joins worship for the last fifteen minutes.

After about an hour, the meeting for worship closes as one Friend turns to a neighbor and all in the circle shake hands. Berea Friends Meeting then has time for sharing and for announcements. This provides an opportunity for all those present to introduce themselves, to offer any messages that did not rise to be spoken during meeting for worship, and also to communicate something of what is happening in their lives. Following the sharing circle, worshippers announce meeting and community events and then have a break for refreshments and conversation. On the first Sunday of the month, Friends gather for a potluck directly after

announcements. On the third Sunday of the month, Friends gather for the continuation of meeting for business following the visitation time. In the hour before meeting for worship, Friends usually convene for Adult Religious Education.

Quaker Beliefs

The Religious Society of Friends began in seventeenth century England in the midst of great controversies among Christians. From the beginning, Friends have had no formal creed or dogma. Friends strive to respect the integrity of personal beliefs. For Quakers, freedom is essential to the search for truth. The lives of Friends express their faith.

Friends believe that it is possible for every person to know God directly and to find and share truth and love from that source. While united by this basic understanding, Friends in an unprogrammed meeting often represent a broad spectrum of beliefs, ranging from Christian to Universalist. Similarly, while Quakers have always held that religious faith should lead to action, the balance between activism and contemplation differs in each Friend and in each local meeting.

The Berea Friends Meeting library includes a variety of books on Quakerism. Among them are the *Guide to Our Faith and Our Practice* of the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting (SAYMA), which concludes with a series of queries and a reading list on Quakerism.

Friends in Berea

A small group of Quakers has worshipped in Berea since the 1940s. In 1959, Berea Friends united with six other worshipping groups in a regional association. In 1970, the Berea Friends Meeting became a formal meeting within the newly formed Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA). Berea Friends Meeting is also affiliated with Friends General Conference, a national organization of unprogrammed meetings. The meeting and individual members are involved with a range of wider Quaker organizations, including the American Friends Service Committee, the Quaker Committee on Kentucky Legislation, and the Friends Committee on National Legislation. Locally, Berea Friends Meeting participates in Berea Faith Communities Outreach and has observer status with the Kentucky Council of Churches.

All members of Berea Friends Meeting share responsibility for the work of the meeting. Each year individuals assume specific roles. Committees oversee meeting activities and coordinate meeting involvement in outward projects. The Ministry and Nurture committee, comprised of four or five Friends, is specifically responsible for tending to the spiritual life of the meeting and for pastoral care of members and attenders. Donations from members and friends cover the financial needs of the meeting and allow the meeting to contribute to a number of Quaker organizations and to a variety of peace and social justice projects.

After many years of worshipping on the Berea College campus, Berea Friends moved to the current location on Silver Creek in 1993, and purchased the meetinghouse building in 2005.

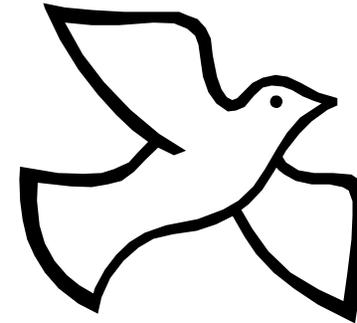
In addition to meeting for worship and activities on First Day (Sunday) mornings, the Berea Friends Meeting calendar includes a number of other opportunities for Friends to come together. As individuals and as a meeting, Berea Friends are involved in many activities that testify to our understanding of our responsibility as a faith community in the wider world. Attenders as well as members are welcome to take active roles in the life of Berea Friends Meeting. Please ask if you are interested in further information about these activities or about membership.

Whether you join us or journey with us, Berea Friends welcome you to our meeting and encourage you to listen and to respond to the loving word of the Spirit within your heart whenever and wherever it comes to you.

*Approved at Berea Friends Meeting for Worship for Business
19 September 2004*

Thanks to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Tallahassee (FL) Monthly Meeting, Chapel Hill (NC) Friends Meeting, and Princeton (NJ) Friends Meeting for portions of this text.

BEREA FRIENDS MEETING RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



Meeting for Worship	10:00 a.m.
Adult First Day School	9:00 a.m.
Meeting for Worship for Business	Third Sundays

**Berea Friends Meeting
300 Harrison Road
Berea KY 40403
www.bereafriends.org**