



The Tote Bag

PYM Religious Education
& Family Resources



Dear Friend,

On the PYM website, [*"First Day Programs: What do you need?"*](#) reflects on the different needs we're encountering as we connect with families and young people. I recently spoke with a family who are not participating online. The children miss the meetinghouse, and their friends; Zoom on Sunday morning feels too much like school. (It occurred to me that it might feel like entering the First Day space at meeting and being asked to take a seat in rows of desks.) I've also heard from Friends who are calling children in the meeting, sending notes and "spiritual-care packages." We're listening for what speaks to their needs, and finding ways to stay connected across our different experiences of this time apart.

The *"What do you need?"* article also asks meetings who are offering online religious education programming if they might be willing to share their program? **Third Haven Friends Meeting (10:15am) and West Chester Meeting (10:00am) are happy for visitors to join their online children's programs.** If you're interested or want to share these possibilities with others, please be in touch and I'll connect you with Friends. Also be in touch if your meeting is willing to "open your virtual doors."

News below includes two Sharing Circles next week hosted by the Quaker RE Collaborative, with the invitation: "Come to share your experience and insight, the challenges you have encountered, what you are led to explore further, and potential you see even in challenges." I hope to see you there!

The next issue of the Tote Bag will be devoted to **Annual Sessions, July 29-August 2**, and sharing the creative plans our Youth Programs staff are cooking up for Children, Middle School, and Young Friends program spaces online. Onward to summer!

In service and hope,

Melinda Wenner Bradley
Youth Religious Life Coordinator
mwennerbradley@pym.org



Programs for Youth & Families

Where are the opportunities in this time apart to widen the circles of who gathers in community?

- Who can join virtually who was unable to travel, or who might be more comfortable trying this format as an introduction to a new community?
- Are there families and young people in your meeting who you can encourage to try out a youth program event?
- *Please help us to spread the invitation!*



Young Friends Friday Check-ins: *Grades 9-12*

Fellowship and programs on Friday afternoons from 4:00-5:00pm

On June 12, we'll be making cards to send to friends in the Young Friends community. You need to register in advance by May 28 if you are participating, so that staff can mail the materials to you!

[Program details and one-time registration for the Friday series.](#)

Middle School Friends Hangouts: *Grades 6-8*

June 13, June 27, and July 11 from 1:00-3:00pm

MSF staff are planning a movie hangout, crafting, and hangout/workshops to learn more about the Poor People's Campaign and youth witness!

[Register on the MSF Events page](#) and we'll send you the Zoom information before each event. (Attending all three is not required!)

Connecting with K-5th Grade Families in Meetings!

The Children & Families program staff, Kimani Keaton and Crystal Hershey, are sending **Friendly notes to PYM Kids**, checking in with encouragement and care, and extending an invitation to join the fun for children in K-5th

Grade during Annual Sessions, July 29-August 2. **We could use your help to connect with Families and their children about the opportunities to be in community with our wider Quaker Family!** If we can send you a packet of notes to distribute to children in your meeting, [please reach out to the Youth Religious Life Coordinator](#). *Thank you!*

QREC Sharing Circles: May 26 and 28

Online Quaker RE: challenges and creativity in our pastoral and educator roles



Take a collective breath and reflect on what we have learned about Religious Education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Come to this circle to share your experience and insight, the challenges you have encountered, what you are led to explore further, and potential you see even in challenges.

Quaker religious educators often serve as pastoral first responders for children and families in the meeting. However, connecting with the emotional and spiritual needs of children and parents may be challenging when we are limited to remote communication. At the same time, we might find ourselves riding a wave of creativity released by the need to switch to virtual gathering or struggling to find new ways of doing things.

Bring your innovations and your questions as we look at:

- What have we learned so far?
- How do our meetings support the needs of children and families during a time when so many struggle with hardship, illness and grief?
- How do we cope with differences in access to electronic devices and connectivity when we are doing outreach?
- What learning strategies work in a virtual setting? What is less effective?
- How have our financial resources shifted (i.e. postage for mailing packages)?
- What can we share as we plan for the fall?

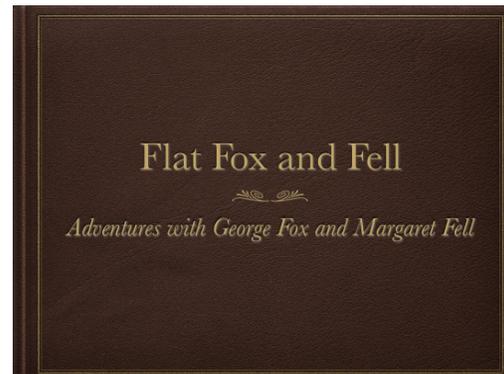
Attend one conversation or both! Registration is required:

Tuesday, May 26 at 1:00 PM Register [HERE](#)

Resources for Meetings & Home

Adventures with "Flat Fox and Fell"

Inspired by "Flat Stanley," the Friends at [Faith & Play Stories](#) sent George and Margaret on a pilgrimage to England and "1652 Country" to walk in their own footsteps. Images in the ["Flat Fox and Fell"](#) movie and slideshow allow children to visit some of the places important to early Quaker history and places where Friends gather and worship today. [Share the accompanying lesson plan](#) with families at home, and encourage young people to cut out their own Fox and Fell to document travels, home life, and adventures in the coming weeks.



[Annie Patterson](#)
[Concerts Online!](#)

Laughter Yoga!



Annie Patterson and Peter Blood have been performing and leading songs for hope and change around the globe for over 30 years, and compiled the our favorite songbook, *Rise Up Singing*.

Watch them perform live online every Wednesday from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., or view past concerts. Click on the headline above for more information!

[\(Photo: Rise Up and Sing website\).](#)



Join Joel Cook (Treasure Coast Worship Group in Southeastern YM) at 5:40 pm Monday thru Friday for 20 minutes of Laughter Yoga. Sense of humor not required! Laughter Yoga is the unique concept that anyone can laugh for no reason at all. You will feel great as you get the most fun workout you have ever had.

[Join Zoom Meeting Link](#)
Meeting ID: 700 674 976
Password: 011053

Poor People's Campaign: Engaging Meetings and Youth

AFSC is in partnership with the Poor People's Campaign, and has recently welcomed a fellow, Sophia Burns, to engage Philadelphia-area Quaker meetings. The Mass Poor People's Assembly and Moral March on

Washington will be the largest digital gathering of poor, dispossessed and impacted people, faith leaders, and people of conscience on June 20, 2020. **In preparation for this gathering, meetings have the opportunity to schedule a "Poor People's Campaign 101" workshop to introduce Friends to the campaign and ways to get involved. Sophia has a particular interest in connecting with youth and young people.** To find out more, contact Sophia Burns at sburns@afsc.org or 856-449-5941. To learn about the Poor People's Campaign and the upcoming digital march, visit june2020.org.



Stay in touch!



[The Quaker Religious Education Collaborative \(QREC\)](#) has created a group, **Valiant Together** on Facebook for sharing of religious

education support and resources during the coronavirus health crisis.

On the PYM website: **Friends Who Care for Youth**

"I have a question about resources, programs . . . or a great idea to share!"

Reach out to Melinda Wenner Bradley, Youth Religious Life Coordinator,

MWennerBradley@pym.org

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Our mailing address is:

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

1515 Cherry Street

Philadelphia, PA 19102

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