

# *Welcome*

## *to the*

# *Chapel Hill Friends Meeting*

## **About the Religious Society of Friends**

The Religious Society of Friends began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century during a time of political and religious turmoil. George Fox, like many of his time, was seeking answers that spoke to his spiritual condition, and traveled throughout England seeking religious guidance from many sources. He came to the revelation “that there is one, even Christ Jesus, who can speak to thy condition,” recognizing that a personal, intimate relationship with God is available to each of us. Early Friends conceived the Society as a revival of first-century Christianity, grounded in the teaching of the Holy Spirit and the conviction that there is that of God in each person. While Quakerism is historically rooted in the Christian faith of its founders, beliefs among today's Quakers vary.

Quakers' spiritual truths lead them to be committed to living their beliefs with personal integrity and accountability. In living these beliefs out, Quakers refuse to acknowledge human authority over that of the inner spiritual authority. The act of living out their spiritual beliefs has often put Quakers at complete odds with the existing political, social, and religious authorities of their time. As guidance for our daily living, Quakers recognize several principles or “testimonies” which allow and challenge us to live deeper and richer spiritual lives. These are the testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, and equality in all things.

**Chapel Hill Friends Meeting**  
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## **Meeting for Worship**

“When I came into the silent assemblies of [Quakers] I felt a secret power among them which touched my heart and as I gave way unto it I found the evil weakening in me and the good raised up.” -- Robert Barclay 1676

Welcome to the Chapel Hill Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. Meeting for Worship is the heart of our Quaker community. When we enter the meeting room, we quietly take our seats on the benches. Feel free to sit anywhere. Our meeting is of the Quaker “unprogrammed” tradition, meaning that we gather together in silence and "expectant waiting for divine guidance," without clergy or liturgy. During the hour or so of worship, anyone who is moved by the Spirit may rise and speak. It is best to leave sufficient time for everyone to reflect on what has been said before speaking yourself. A good test of whether or not to speak is to consider whether the message is one that enriches the whole Meeting community or the message is for you alone. After an hour, a designated member of the Meeting closes worship with a handshake which is then shared with all those gathered.

We hold two Meetings for Worship each First Day (Sunday) at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Our children join us for the first fifteen minutes of the 11 a.m. Meeting for Worship, after which teachers and parents lead them to “First-Day School” classes for the remainder of the hour.

If you are new to the Meeting, we look forward to getting to know you. You will be invited to introduce yourself at the end of worship. If you have questions, feel free to ask. Someone will be available in the Library afterward to talk further with you. Please pick up a copy of the *monthly newsletter* to read about upcoming events and the various opportunities to enter the life of the meeting. Help yourself to leaflets in the lobby and feel free to sign out pamphlets or books in the Library. Be sure to sign our guest book in the foyer. You may also find us at [www.chapelhillfriends.org](http://www.chapelhillfriends.org), where you may want to subscribe to our *listserv*.

We believe that there is that of God in every person. In this spirit, we welcome all people regardless of age, race, differing abilities, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

### **About Our Meeting**

Chapel Hill Friends Meeting was started in 1937. It is a part of the Religious Society of Friends, also called Quakers. We are affiliated with *Piedmont Friends Fellowship* (a regional group of Meetings in the Carolinas), and with *Friends General Conference*, an association of meetings and yearly meetings in the U.S. and Canada.

Between the two Meetings for Worship there is a Forum at 9:45 on some topic of interest. Child care is provided for all Meeting events, including Meetings for Worship. Between 11:15 and 12:00, “*First-Day School*” classes are offered for pre-school through high school-aged children and youth. If you are a new parent to the Meeting, you will be introduced to these classes and to the curriculum by our *First-Day School Coordinator*. On the first Sunday of each month, all are

welcome to join us in a potluck lunch in the Schoolhouse next door to the Meetinghouse.

We are called a “Monthly Meeting” because we hold our *Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business* once each month. These are held on third Sundays beginning with worship at 8:30 a.m. and ending just before the 11 a.m. Meeting for Worship. All are welcome to attend and it is a wonderful way of entering into the life of the community. The Business Meeting is conducted in worship and decisions are made, not by vote, but as guided by the Spirit and the gathered sense of the Meeting. The Business Meeting delegates responsibilities to committees, receives their reports, and acts upon them; it moves on membership applications and requests for marriage under the care of the Meeting; approves the budget, and considers whatever other matters may be brought before it for decision.

Without clergy or office staff, we all share responsibility for what happens in the Meeting. Ongoing activities are for the most part carried out by committees.

The *Ministry & Worship Committee* is responsible for nurturing the spiritual life of the Meeting. The *Care & Counsel Committee* does much of the pastoral work of the Meeting. There are three committees for Religious Education – children’s, youth, and adult. Other *committees* include Peace & Social Concerns, Environmental Concerns, Library, Publications and Records, Hospitality, Finance, Buildings and Grounds, and Nominations. Joining a committee is an excellent way to become part of the Meeting community. More detailed descriptions of these committees may be found in our *Meeting Directory* and on our web site.

Members also serve on the boards of *Quaker House of Fayetteville*, started in 1973 to counsel armed service personnel, primarily at Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune, and of the *Carolina Friends School*, started by the Meetings in Chapel Hill and Durham in 1964. One of the three Carolina Friends Early Schools (pre-school) is housed in the Schoolhouse next to our meetinghouse.