



Meeting for Worship with Attention to an End to Family Detention

Welcome to Reading, Pennsylvania, occupied Lenape land, where we are gathered across ages and across communities for an action rooted in generations of Friends practice: extended, semi-programmed worship.

Quakers worship by gathering and sharing silence. The silence is expectant: divine leadings arise within and among us. Everyone present contributes their Light and the depth of their Spirit of Truth.

Last fall, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was left with queries about where, and how, love and trust are supported among Quakers.

Now we must ask:

What does it mean to center love and trust, in the face of injustice?

We are here to live out an expansive notion of nonviolence, that ends not with opposition to war, but with justice and safety for every single family. We are here because to build a wall, or a fence, or a cage, is to block the Light shining. And above all, we are here because no community can thrive unless all its bodies can thrive.

We don't have meetinghouse benches here, but if you are standing and in need of a seat, ask a Friend. We have no expectation of an ordinary meeting for worship today, so bring your messages of protest and of prayer. **Messages and songs in all languages are welcome.** We hope the silence will be centered, that we will stand firmly grounded, and that we will be open, both individually and collectively, to the workings of the Spirit we are here to affirm in all.

Use Your Political Voice

Contact Governor Tom Wolf:

Mail:

Office of the Governor
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120
phone: (717) 787-2500

Further contact details & regional numbers at:

www.governor.pa.gov/contact

Contact Lt. Gov. John Fetterman:

mail (above) or phone: (717) 787-3300

Contact Berks County Commissioners:

Kevin S. Barnhardt, Commissioner
Christian Y. Leinbach, Commissioner Chair
Mark C. Scott, Esq., Commissioner
mail:

Commissioners Office
Berks County Services Center
633 Court Street, 13th Floor
Reading, PA 19601
phone: (610) 478-6136

Further contact details at:

www.co.berks.pa.us/dept/commissioners

Learn how to lobby your congresspeople:

www.fcnl.org/updates/how-to-meet-with-congress-19

*“[Dig] deep, . . . carefully cast forth the loose matter
and get down to the rock, the sure foundation, and
there hearken to the divine voice which gives a
clear and certain sound.”*

John Woolman, c 1770

Faith and Practice,

“Extracts from the Writings of Friends”

Commit to Sustained Allyship

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting minuted its resolution to provide “*spiritual, financial, or logistical support*” to resisting the continued detention of families in our region. **We are far from the only community under the weight of this concern.** A crucial part of carrying this leading and this movement forward, is sustaining the organizations doing this work full-time.

Juntos: www.vamosjuntos.org

Note: PYM organizationally signed on to support the [#ShutDownBerks](#) campaign led by Juntos.

Juntos is a community-led, Latinx immigrant organization in South Philadelphia fighting for our human rights as workers, parents, youth, and immigrants. We believe that every human being has the right to a quality education and the freedom to live with dignity regardless of immigration status.

Juntos combines leadership development, community organizing, and focused collaborations with other community-based and advocacy organizations to build the power of our community members so they may be active agents of change and work against their own oppression.

Shut Down Berks Coalition:

www.freemigrationproject.org/shut-down-berks-campaign

Free Migration Project works at the intersection of law and community organizing to promote the recognition of freedom of movement as a basic human right.

New Sanctuary: www.sanctuaryphiladelphia.org

New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia builds community across faith, ethnicity, and class in our work to end injustices against immigrants regardless of immigration status, express radical welcome for all, and ensure that values of dignity, justice, and hospitality are lived out in practice and upheld in policy.

Through grassroots organizing led by affected immigrants, we fight and win immigrant justice campaigns with our members across nationality, faith, class, and immigration status. Our community organizing in Philadelphia builds power in immigrant communities to alter the power imbalance, organizes direct action campaigns, builds the individual and collective capacity of the immigrant community and brings immigrant and ally communities together in solidarity to work for change.

Excerpts from 2018 Young Adult Friends Epistle

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions, 29 July 2018

The College of New Jersey, New Jersey

“There is incontrovertible evidence of the ongoing traumatization of immigrant communities, the most glaringly obvious of which is occurring in family detention facilities, such as Berks Detention Center. To end cycles of violence, we must address them. At the individual level, detention of families enacts violence in the form of sexual assault, abuse, neglect, and intimidation. At the systemic level, the U.S. Federal government’s insistence on separating families and on erasing domestic violence as grounds for asylum perpetuates that cycle...

“As Friends, we believe in the light in others. We stand in solidarity with those actively abused and traumatized within the walls of Berks Detention Center, and recognize that what is happening there is happening nationwide...

*“We have a leading to hold worship outside Berks Detention Center, as a form of direct action. We find this to be rooted in Quaker spiritual practice and history, and we are seeking spiritual, financial, and logistical support and participation from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in order to act on this leading... We see a direct connection between the need to address violent structures in our meetings, and to take action towards justice for migrant communities. In both cases, what we are seeking is **affirmation of the Light in all people.**”*

Note: Friends may find the full text of the Epistle on the PYM website at www.pym.org/2018-young-adult-friends-epistle

This morning’s programming has been under the care of Mary Tierney, Marian Dalke, Catherine Campbell, and the Young Adult Friends community; Meg Rose and the PYM staff; John-Michael Cotignola-Pickens and the Shut Down Berks Interfaith Witness; Sessions Coordinating Committee; and the spiritual and material support of the yearly meeting.

