



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, 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Days, 2010, we gathered for the 136<sup>th</sup> 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 whom 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

## **Illinois Yearly Meeting Adult Young Friends Epistle**

To Friends Everywhere,

The Adult Young Friends met with joy and exuberance in our opening session. We welcomed traveling Friend Micah Bales, who shared his spiritual journey with us. We also welcomed several new members to our expanding group.

Together we examined the purpose of our group as a whole and our sense of AYP's direction by holding a visioning workshop. We discussed how we want to witness our service testimonies. We want to strengthen our community while connecting to the larger meeting. We came out with a stronger sense of who we are – providing a spiritual home to Adult Young Friends in a transitory state of their lives. We help to facilitate the transition from Young Friend to Adult Friend by serving on committees in the larger meeting, and leading children's groups and worship sharing sessions, while supporting and nurturing each other with conversation and a trip to the nature park of Starved Rock.

Speaker Phillip Gulley's address resonated with our sense of community and reinforced our determination to support and nourish each other. During our session we lived our transition from Young to Adult. We were touched by acts of kindness, explored our theme and our Meeting for Worship, and met the challenge of Quaker business process.

As our group matures, we continue to build more organic processes and bring our members together. We send our love to the wider Quaker community, and invite them to join ours if they are ever near.

The Adult Young Friends of ILYM

## **High School Friends Epistle**

Dear Friends,

It's one in the morning on Sunday, and we are finally sitting down to write the epistle. We are so sleep deprived; we don't remember much of what happened.

One thing we do remember is yoga on Thursday and Friday mornings. In addition to this strenuous exercise, we played ultimate frisbee. We all agree that nap-time is time well spent. We would wake up early for breakfast, and then fall asleep once more.

Also on Thursday and Friday, we talked to Vanessa Julye about ethnic Friends and their struggle to be recognized. We also had worship sharing about what Quakerism meant to each of us. We described Quakerism through positive words of what we do, instead of what we do not do which is often easier.

There has been a stray black cat around the campus of Clear Creek that has become a Friend. According to Sam, its name is Asmodeus. Sam thought that it was a cool name. The name Asmodeus is surprisingly a demon of hell, according to the internet. Asmodeus, the cat, is actually very nice. However, he bites your arm if you pet his stomach. See Sam.

Friday, we played tag in the rain, and played cards. After the rain abated, square dancing excited our hearts and feet. The last dance, the Virginia Reel, was last because it initiated some more rain, and most of us huddled in our bunkhouse, dry and warm. During the storm, a pillow fight ensued, where Quinn lost pathetically to Mason. Quinn fake cried to psyche him out. It worked. Kevin and Sam played minor roles as well.

Saturday is the day of the out-trip. We did a service project at Starved Rock, where we picked up trash and recyclables, and our shoes were drenched in mud. After a picnic lunch in the shade and a cuddle puddle, we continued to Ottawa for Green Fete Festival. Our hopes and dreams were crushed upon arrival, for the festival lacked appeal. We walked around downtown and overwhelmed the local ice cream store. 20 ice cream treats and happy bellies later, we slept drooling in the car.

Shake it up,

ILYM High School Friends

## **Illinois Yearly Meeting 9-13 Year Old Friends Epistle**

Dear Friends,

This year we did lots of things, including walking the grounds of the meeting, seeing one of the great horned owls that live in the barn, and recognizing parts of nature. We watched a movie called *The Man Who Planted Trees*. It was about a person who changed barren land into a healthy environment over many years. We talked about the Quaker testimonies of Community and Stewardship. We brainstormed ideas for improving the Illinois Yearly Meeting Grounds and talked about where they might be located on the site. Lastly, we made our plan for the site. We included a pond, a bee farm, windmill, orchard, and a library with good books (not about Quakers). We decided not to include a roller-coaster, water-park or a Quaker museum. We had a fun time except for the rain storm.

Your Friends,

Sage, Amal, Liam, Kaleigh, Lindsay, Marlena, Sophie, Laure, Murphy

## **6-8 Year Old Friends Epistle**

Greetings from the ILYM 6 to 8 year olds. We are Ashley, Dustin, Ethan, Henry, Jad, Jasmine, Kiran, Kiva, Liam, Lilly, Nathan, Quinn, and Stella.

Each day we met with all the FUN kids for songs at the playground. Then our group played name games and read stories having to do with homes both physical and spiritual. We made a mural/collage about homes. We went outside to seek our own ILYM spiritual homes. We made them out of string, sticks and yarn. Some of us shared houses with each other. Some of us shared with trees, flowers, grass, ants, spiders, birds, walnuts, bark, sticks, mulberries, blackberries, lightning, rain, more rain, sunlight, stars, dark, sky, and wind. We can visit our ILYM homes every year – even when we are old. We can remember our ILYM homes when we are away – even when it is winter.

We read nine books. Our favorites include *The Little House*, *Frida the Wondercat*, and *Cinderella's Rat*. We joined the 3 to 5 year olds to hear a story about Abraham and Sarah, who lived in the desert and had Isaac.

## **3-5 Year Old Friends Epistle**

Dear Friends,

We are the FIREFLIES, the 3-5 year olds at the ILYM annual meeting. We have had a good time this summer. We did art projects, including making cards for members of our families. We sang songs. We read stories. We visited each other's tents and cabins and it was fun sharing our 'homes'. We also really liked snack.

We missed Hollis until today. He swallowed some poisonous pods from a false blue indigo plant. He rode from Monmouth to Peoria in an ambulance and then had to stay all day in the hospital in Peoria. We are glad he didn't die.

Today we saw the story of Abraham and Sarah and *The Great Family in the desert*. Abraham and Sarah did die but they were very old so it was sad but it was their time. We are part of the great family they started. Gwen shared that her Grandpa Harold is dying. That is sad for her.

We also liked just being at the meetinghouse, even though we had storms. Last night we danced and we ate watermelon.

In Friendship,

Zara, Lorelei, Gwen, Mackenna, Signe, Heidi, Priya, Hollis, Jasmine, Anya, and Faith