

JHYM Retreat Staff Notes

AND

December 6-8, 2019 @ Woolman Hill

We are Anne Anderson, Tom Antonik, Marion Athearn, Carol Baker, Buddy Baker-Smith, Steve Ball, Dave Baxter, Kevin Lee, Rob Levin, Cynthia Rankin, and Wendy Schlotterbeck. A special shout-out to Wendy for joining us! She is a long-time RP in Young Friends who brings a wealth of experience, grounding, and heart. And a thank you to Tom, who jumped over from staffing the YF the same weekend when I put out a call saying we needed more staff. I am so grateful for this beloved community.

Joining us are 23 JH'ers (at the moment that's the number – it's a moving target these days). Woohoo!!

Timelines

Arrival on Friday:

I will be arriving by 3:00pm. Let me know your e.t.a.

Registration begins at 6:00.

Supper on Friday:

Yes, we'll share one – at 7:00.

Wrap-up on Sunday:

Sunday Morning Worship is at 10:30.

I'm hoping we'll all be on the road by 1:30, but that depends on how many can stay to help clean up. **Please try to stay. Last retreat we did not have enough folks staying, and we did not get on the road until after 3pm.**

DIRECTIONS are on our website. The address is 107 Keets Road, Deerfield, MA. The office phone is 413-774-3431, and my cell is: 508-287-6441.

The Theme: AND

THE BLURB: At Sessions, one of our JH'ers shared an experience of being led to give vocal ministry during Lisa G's Plenary that was just this one word. Then, I learned that theologian Elton Trueblood wrote that **and** is the most important word in the bible! I'm paying attention to this – and – thinking about it as a query or invitation. Come to this retreat to share what's shifted in your heart, spirit, actions and/or life after receiving truth, sacred wisdom, or inspiration – at Sessions or elsewhere. What canst thou say (or do), dear Friend?

- Most everyone and everything are complicated, layered and nuanced.
- Many are more similar and connected than we can imagine.
- Our individual responses or actions have an effect.
- Experiencing something can lead to the next growing edge. (Sometimes we must learn a lesson multiple times.)
- Each of us has wisdom and perspective to add from the Light within us to our communities'.
- Together – you *and* me – can see and understand and do more than alone.
- There is always unknown. There is always room for silence and grateful awe.

More than usual, I am approaching this retreat with open hands and heart, wondering what arises if I loosen my grip, even a little, on the program content. I am hoping that this retreat feels more spacious than some. I am hoping many have ah-ha moments deep within their beings. I'm also hoping that we can feel connected, present, and surrounded in grace and Light. **AND** I am hoping that we all leave on Sunday feeling re-charged with hope, Light, friendship, and joy.

Quotes on the Theme

Gathering quotes on a theme helps me to explore a variety of aspects as I prepare for each retreat. Staff frequently comment that the quotes are helpful for priming the pumps of their own spiritual wells, too. You'll find some for this retreat along with these staff notes.

SMALL GROUPS and Meaningful Conversations

JHYM Small Groups are rich and meaningful for many, **AND** they are tediously not for others. I've been thinking about how engaged the "choose your topic" conversations were that Lisa G. offered on Tuesday morning at Sessions in JH. I've been pondering how this retreat theme can invite personal engagement. I've been yearning for the conversations to be less adult directed. I want to try a different configuration this weekend. *Remember: it's an experiment!*

Friday night (45-60 min.)

*Here I am **AND** this is what I'm bringing with me.*

I will name everyone to these groups, and they will run like a traditional JH Friday Night Small Group with a round of check-ins. Friday nights' are usually extensive. I will have a short get to know you game ready should your group have time. This time is key for helping JH'ers feel like they've arrived and are connected to the group.

Saturday morning: (45 min)

*Working it out: How spirituality supports **AND** challenges us.*

A brief large group circle will launch these conversations, which everyone will self-select into. (They will run like small groups by starting with brief check-ins, observing the same commitments to confidentiality, and being mindful of a balance of listening and talking.) I would like 1-2 Staff for whom the topic personally resonates (esp. if you "don't have it all figured out yet") to anchor each conversation. I think the critical element for these conversations is how honest and authentic they are.

I am a spiritual being and

- I play/love competitive sports. (Buddy)
- I struggle controlling/expressing my anger. (Gretchen)
- I am imperfect. (Marion)
- I love horror/action/violent movies and books and video games. (Rob)
- I love nice/expensive stuff – toys, clothes, gadgets, lifestyles.
- I neither believe nor disbelieve in God.
- My life is super-packed (and not simple).

General Questions (but let the conversation be free flowing)

- Where are the tensions for us as Friends or Seekers in this area of life? How does being a Friend guide how we navigate the nuances and pitfalls so that we can live with integrity while engaged? What questions nag at our hearts? Is there something in our actions or words that needs to shift? What moments of witness have been presented to us in this area? How can we embrace what we love while living as mindful, spiritual beings?

Saturday night conversations (45 min)

More Conversation Starters

Again, I envision these running like small groups (start with check-ins, etc) that everyone self-selects. Again, please let me know which conversation you would love to facilitate or support. Do be mindful that there may be none, one or two who choose some conversations and then lots in others.

- *Things I've been thinking about:* Recent revelations or questions about life I've had or am having. A free-ranging, thoughtful sharing of what we're pondering, especially things we haven't quite worked out yet.

- *The Art of Listening*: How to listen to our Inner Guide and to others when everyone seems to be shouting. It could include what we've learned about discerning inner leadings. It could be about how we're trying to hear other points of view while keeping honest and thoughtfully centered in what we believe.
- *'Tis the Season*: How to spiritually and emotionally survive and thrive through the holidays. What helps you stay centered? Where do you find meaning? What do you love about this time of year? What's a struggle?
- *Judgmental Anonymous*: How can we recognize this tendency in ourselves and work to break the pattern? How does it show up? How can being perceptive and intuitive be a gift as well as a weakness?
- *I Care About Social Justice and I'm in Middle School*: What are you learning or concerned about? What work/service/action/campaign/witness/intention have you found to be accessible? Is ageism an issue for your participation? What do you need in order to be more actively engaged as led or interested? **(ROB)**
- *Team Building, Relationship Building*: Are you someone who has a gift for this? How can you nurture this? Where have you had a positive influence? What have you seen happen? How can this combined with connecting spiritually (in a broad sense) be a positive force for change?

Other aspects of the Weekend

Saturday Afternoon Service Work for Woolman Hill

Wood stacking has become an annual thing for us and the Hill. We'll have to see what is possible with snow on the ground! We are to check in with Will (caretaker extraordinaire) and Janna on Friday afternoon. PLEASE BRING WARM GLOVES IF YOU HAVE THEM. Buddy and Steve – will you please lead us yet again in this annual hour of good work and unending whining? 😊

Saturday Afternoon Workshops

JH'ers will have the opportunity to attend one 60-75-minute workshop on Saturday afternoon. Here are my current ideas -- but I'm open to others -- or different staff being in them, so let me know!!

- Hike – Steve & Rob (get in a car and go to a trail in Greenfield or Deerfield???)
- Watercolor Painting (meditation and some 101 instruction) – Tom & _____ (in the dining room)
- Paper Snowflake Making (way beyond what you learned in Kindergarten) – Marion & _____
- Yoga – Carol (Meeting House)
- Anyone have one more to offer? (Not sure we'll need it, but we might....)

Saturday Night Christmas-Fest

We'll gather round the wood stove for a jolly time singing Christmas songs and carols, drinking hot chocolate, and listening to Anne's very special rendition of The Christmas Story. This is always a lovely evening.

Ticks and Wildlife

As of Thanksgiving, the ticks were still very much present on the Hill, but I am assuming they are now under the snow?? Also, there have been sightings of porcupines, bobcats and other wildlife..... Here is yet another aspect of this wonderful retreat theme: This weekend we are surrounded in the beauty and spaciousness of nature **AND** wildlife lives here, too, so we must be aware of that.

TLCs

Please look in your staff notebooks when you arrive for a blue TLC sheet, asking you to keep a special eye and ear out for one JH'er over the weekend.

The JHYM Leadership Experiment

This retreat, we will have committees to help us with Care (of the community and world), Free Time Support, Munch Mates, and Singing. I am nominating JH'ers to the committees this time. I've assigned various staffers to be elders of these committees and will give you specifics.

Staff Assignments

Exalted Food Wizard: Carol

Stupendous Kitchen-Super-Duper-Side-Kick: Cynthia

Registrar: Dave

Retreat Nurse: Buddy

Name Tag Fairy Squad: Marion & Friends

Photographers: Buddy & Kevin

Convener of Games: Buddy, Rob, Dave

Sunday Morning Man of the Hour: Buddy

Sunday Morning Baggage Elder: Anne or Steve

Keepers of the Coffee Pot: Steve & Kevin

Keeper of the Wood Stoves: Steve

Elders of the Craft Table (really being present to JH'ers): Wendy & Tom

Committees

Care: Marion, Wendy, Kevin

Munch Mates: Dave, Steve

Free Time Elders: Buddy, Rob, Tom

Singing: Gretchen, Anne

AND

Wisdom and Quotes

Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.

Neale Donald Walsch

Those who have a strong sense of love and belonging have the courage to be imperfect.

Brene Brown

What would I do if I were not afraid?

Martha Manglesdorf

A ship in the harbor is safe, but that's not what a ship is built for.

John A. Shedd

How can you know what you're capable of if you don't embrace the unknown?

Esmeralda Santiago

Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely.

Karen Kaiser Clark

Perhaps the most neglected of all the advises is that we should live adventurously. If there is one wish I would pray the Spirit to put into our Christmas stockings, it is warmth, openness, passion, a bit of emotion that doesn't mind making a fool of itself occasionally.

Gerald Priestland

Once we believe in ourselves we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit.

e. e. cummings

The art of listening needs its highest development in listening to oneself; our most important task is to develop an ear that can really hear what we're saying.

Sydney J. Harris

You must learn to be still in the midst of activity and to be vibrantly alive in repose.

Indira Gandhi

Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.

Advices & Queries, Quaker Faith & Practice, Britain Yearly Meeting, 2nd ed.

Leadings rarely include instruction sheets or directions.

Margery Post Abbott

A leading does not come to us simply so we may have one. Eventually its inwardness takes outward form and affects the rest of the human community. When we are led to truth it is so we may live by it and do something with it.

Paul Lacey

We do well to remember that being led by the spirit depends not so much upon God, who is always there to lead us, as upon our willingness to be led. We need to be willing to be led into the dark as well as through green pastures and by still waters.

Gordon Matthews

Grace is when we see the world through God's eyes rather than our own.

Marion Athearn

Jesus promised those who would follow his leadings only three things: that they should be absurdly happy, entirely fearless, and always in trouble.

Marty Babcock

I prayed for twenty years but received no answer until I prayed with my legs.

Frederick Douglas

What I always wanna tell young people now: Pay Attention. This isn't going to happen again. Rather than try to understand it while it's going along, have it go along for awhile and then understand it.

Carrie Fisher

I'll play it first, and tell you what it is later.

Miles Davis

And your growth in the Seed is in the silence, where ye may find a feeding of the bread of life....and there is innocence and simplicity of heart, and spirit is lived in, and the life is fed on.

George Fox

Under this fine rain I breathe in the innocence of the world. I feel coloured by the nuances of infinity. At this moment I am one with my picture. We are an iridescent chaos.

Paul Cezanne

Listen to the mustn'ts, child. Listen to the don'ts. Listen to the shouldn'ts, the impossibles, the won'ts. Listen to the never haves, then listen close to me... Anything can happen, child. Anything can be.

Shel Silverstein