

Introduction to Memorial Meeting 2025

Welcome, Friends—I'm sorry not to be you in person, but grateful for this virtual connection.

A few years ago our Friend Jean McCandless shared this with me—she told me it had given her much comfort over the years and hoped I might find some in it as well. In that spirit I share it with you. She called it “A Quaker Prayer”

“We seem to give them back to thee dear Lord who gavest them to us. Yet as thou did not lose them in the giving, so we have not lost them by their return. For what is thine is ours always; and life is eternal and love is immortal; and what we sometimes call death is only a horizon and a horizon is nothing but the limit of our site.”

Many faith communities have found words to describe their understanding of God and how their beliefs create a relationship with the Divine. Our religious society has been of the understanding that there can be no single set of words adequate to embrace the Divine. I like that about us. It is, I think, one of our greatest strengths.

But how then do we come to know God? We are a people of the story—we recognized the Divine in our lives—in seeing how Friends have lived close to Spirit and have been the hands and feet, the eyes and ears of God. In olden days, Friends would reflect back on their lives in Spiritual autobiographies—some of us still read them today. In today's world the Memorial Minute, lovingly written in a Friend's home community and read in quarterly and yearly meeting shares those gifts and ministries and how they played out in the life of the Friend.

We come this evening to celebrate these Friends. For sure. Absolutely. Even more than that we come to learn—to see how their ministries, their gifts brought the Presence into the world—we come to learn at the feet of those gone before. Hallelujah.

This year we have 21 Friends to learn from. Their full minutes are in the Memorial Minute booklet. We'll share into worship a condensation that will hopefully catch the flavor of these Friends. In part because of the number of minutes and our limit of time we'll have of these Friends' works in three clusters, while their photos are shown on the screen and with time for ministry between and then a longer period of open waiting worship at the end.