

December 2025



## The Friendly News

**Friends Meeting of San Antonio (Quakers)**

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San Antonio, Texas 78209

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**Our Meeting house is built on the Payaya People's land.**

## The Nativity Scene

By Gary Whiting

The Nativity scene evokes the tenderness of a mother and child. Where is hope for a better future, for a safe and loving world, more manifest than at the birth of a child?

Quakerism is part of an ongoing mystical tradition. That there is that of God in each person - a divine spark of life or a "seed" infused with Light - is central to our sense of a higher calling for humanity and the world. This hope is imaged in the Nativity scene. The first of the "Rhineland mystics", Meister Eckhardt (1260-1328), implores us to ready ourselves for this birth:

"Here in time we make holiday because the eternal birth which God the Father bore and bears unceasingly in eternity is now born in time, in human nature...We intend to speak of this birth as taking place in us, as being consummated in the virtuous soul; for it is in the perfection of the soul that God speaks his Word."

*[continued on page 3]*

## Query for December

*How do we move beyond words and sentiment during this season of peace and goodwill in order to become living witnesses of truth, justice, and reconciliation in our nation and our daily lives?*

## December 2025 Calendar

### Regular Activities

- **Sunday Meetings for Worship**, 10:00 - 11:00 AM
  - In-person in the Meetinghouse and on Zoom
- **First Day School Children's Program**, every Sunday, 10:00 - 11:00 AM
  - Childcare is available during forums and Meetings for Business
- **Potluck Lunch** - 1st Sunday, 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM
- **Sunday Forums** - 2nd & 4th Sundays, 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM
  - In-person in the Meetinghouse and on Zoom
- **Meeting for Worship with Attention To Business**; 3rd Sunday, 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM
  - In-person in the Meetinghouse and on Zoom
- **Friday Meeting for Worship**, 8:00 - 8:30 AM, Zoom only
- **“Meeting for Weeding,”** 3rd Saturday, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM
- For ALL Zoom Meetings:
  - [CLICK HERE](#) to join by Zoom; ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
  - by telephone at +1 346 248 7799, then enter ID#

### Special Events

December 14 Forum: SAStands will talk about their work and answer questions

December 24 Candlelight Meeting for Worship, Worship at 6:30 PM, meal at 7:30 PM.

### First Day School Schedule

December 7: Let It Glow: Following the Star to Jesus! with Gary

December 14: Let It Grow: A Solstice Celebration! with Suzanne

December 21: Turned Away At the Door: A Nativity Retelling with Suzanne and Liam

December 28: Let It Go: New Year Traditions! with Renata

## The Nativity

*[continued from p. 1]*

For Eckhardt, the humble soul that is "poor in spirit" becomes a "shelter" (Hut in German) - becomes a simple manger. The cold darkness of a winter's night, homelessness and being turned away in need - these conditions provide the necessary backdrop for renewed life and hope. The light that "shineth in the darkness" appears, like the Star. What are the conditions for this experience to come to pass in the soul? Silent night, holy night:

"All voices and sounds must be put away and a pure stillness must be there. In stillness and peace...there God speaks in the soul and expresses himself fully in the soul."

As the soul practices perfect silence, emptied of all words and deeds, vain strivings and even of all concepts, it makes a "clearing" for the Birth, for the speaking of the Word. And in this receiving, the soul learns the language of response: the soul responds to the fullness of the new life it has been given. Our Christmas carols resound with the richness of this gift, and its promise:

"The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love..."

What allows the soul to partake of such an honor? One last quote from Eckhardt names the qualities which allow for this gift, virtues which are often spoken of in our Quaker heritage:

"Only the ground of the soul is pure enough and simple enough to receive God; and only God is pure and simple enough to enter the ground of the soul."

And so the song resounds:

"Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And Heaven and Nature sing!"

## Special Events

### Candlelight Meeting for Worship

Join us on December 24 for a candlelight Meeting for Worship as we settle into communion with each other in the nurturing presence of the Spirit. When worship concludes, we'll continue the fellowship with a simple, joyful meal featuring tamales, beans, desserts, and whatever dishes Friends feel led to bring. Worship will begin at 6:30 PM, followed by our meal together at 7:30 PM.

# get to know your Friends

Friends Meeting of San Antonio

**Jim Spickard** was a teacher for 47 years, teaching everything from middle school drama to graduate school research design, but he mostly taught undergraduate courses in sociology, anthropology, and environmental studies. His favorite courses were experiential courses on homelessness and visual ethnography (the study of the customs of peoples and cultures). He can often be found with a camera, taking pictures of everything from small-scale patterns to panoramas. If you'd like to see, visit [www.centeredvision.photography](http://www.centeredvision.photography).



**How many states and/or countries have you lived in?**

I've lived in 3 countries (U.S., Germany, and Austria) and visited 52, some of which no longer exist.

I've lived in 5 states (WA, CA, NY, DC, and TX) and visited all but Mississippi.

**Where did you attend your first Quaker Meeting?**

Santa Cruz, CA. It was like coming home.

**Which of the Quaker testimonies speaks to you most right now?**

Truth (because we need it right now, paired with integrity)

Service (the second 'S' in my version of the Quaker SPICES)

Humor (the silent 'H' in SPICES)

**What is sustaining you right now?**

My photography

My writing

Deep conversations with friends

1

Book or Movie

BOOK

2

Driving or Shotgun

DRIVING

3

Shopping Mall or Nature

NATURE

4

Coffee or Tea

COFFEE

## Press Release from SA Stands

### 150 Community Members Detained in San Antonio Immigration Raid: SA Stands Calls for Transparency

*Local groups urge the San Antonio City Council to hold an oversight hearing into SAPD's involvement and the impact on local residents.*

(San Antonio, Texas)--San Antonio Stands (SA Stands) is appalled and outraged that the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) worked in tandem with several federal enforcement agencies including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to terrorize our neighbors, detaining 150 San Antonians. This is the largest enforcement raid San Antonio has seen to date.

SA Stands, our partners, and allies condemn the continued violence impacting our communities as a result of these shameful collaborations between local law enforcement and other federal agencies.

SA Stands strongly disavows the racist stereotypes which are being used as tools to dehumanize our migrant neighbors, specifically our Venezuelan communities who find themselves as the main targets of the current immigration inquisition. The reality is that as of now, any ties to *Tren de Aragua* are merely speculation by law enforcement.

This administration has repeatedly attempted to broadly label Venezuelans as members of *Tren de Aragua*, a narrative that local police departments in Texas have dangerously embraced. However, the administration's claims have continued to be proven unfounded. Cases like Kilmar Abrego Garcia's highlight the risks of blanket scapegoating— allegations remain unproven, with no solid evidence of gang involvement.

In a prior Hays County raid, criminal charges against those accused of being involved in gang activity were dropped, yet raids continue to put communities at risk. We are deeply concerned about how many wrongful or discriminatory detentions will result from these actions in San Antonio.

The San Antonio raid on November 16, 2025, shows exactly why San Antonio residents deserve answers. We demand the City Council's Public Safety Committee hold an oversight hearing on SAPD's role in this operation, and we urge the community to email and call their council members now to demand transparency and accountability.

###

*SA Stands is a strong non-partisan collaborative of 18 organizations in the city of San Antonio and Bexar County that works through organized campaigns, advocacy efforts, community education, and direct action, to mobilize against any laws and efforts that criminalize, incarcerate, deport and divide our communities. For more information visit <https://sastands.info/>*

## Reflections

By Frances Frey

Those of you who have read past newsletters may notice that I've shortened the title of this segment to remove "on Friends Journal." I'm making this change because I no longer feel led to read the Friends Journal each month and offer reflections on its contents. However, as I was contemplating what, if anything, to do instead, I received an email from Friends Journal about a new podcast episode focused on Quakers and the Mystery of Worship, and it felt like an opening to broaden this segment to share reflections on Quaker content more generally.

The episode featured a variety of content, but one part really spoke to me. Specifically, the hosts shared a new format for meeting for worship called "Meeting for Worship with Attention to Worship." It's a way of worshiping that pulls back the curtain on what's happening in a meeting for worship and gives newcomers a peek at the invisible, internal work of worship.

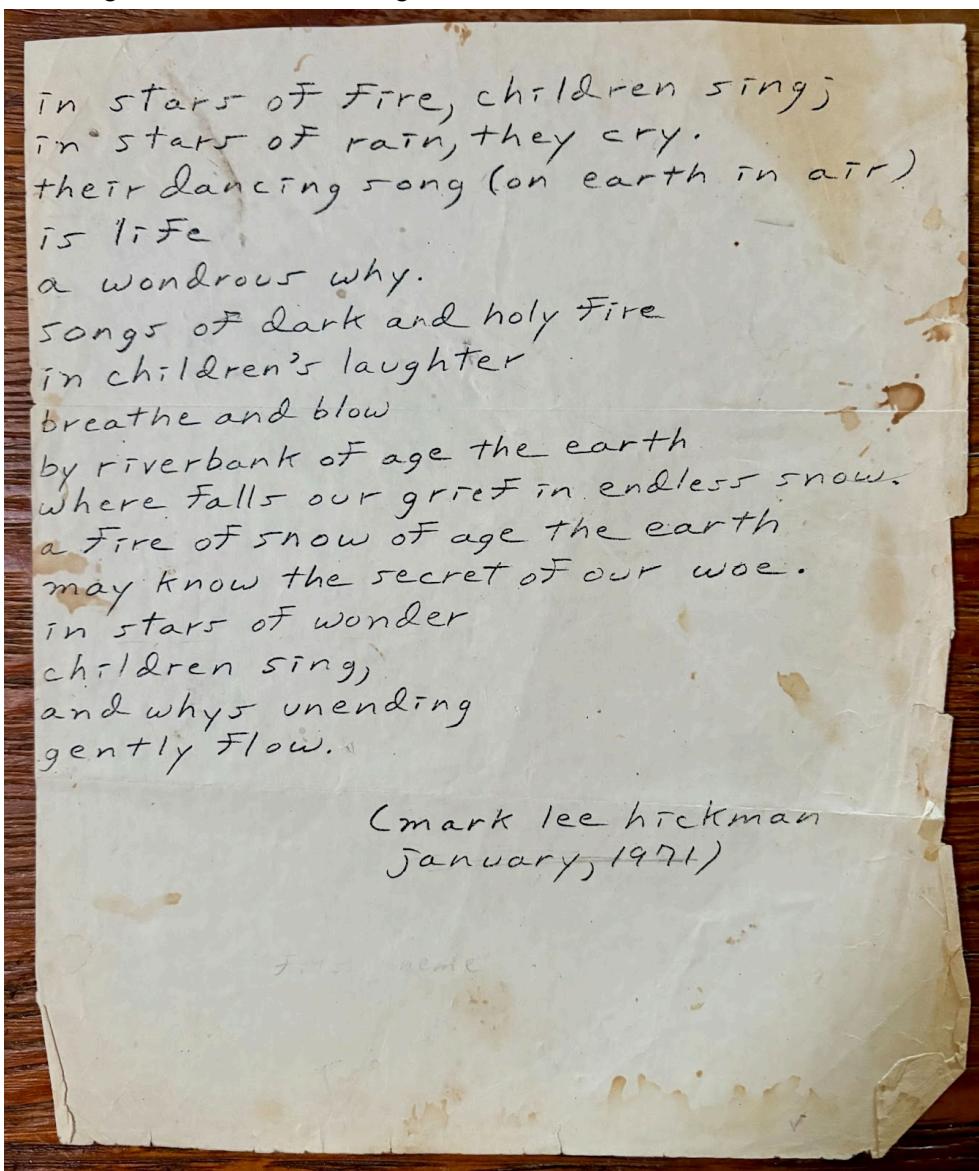
In this kind of meeting, 2 volunteers who are experienced Quakers help open and close the worship. After 5 minutes of silence, the volunteers stand and introduce the purpose of meeting for worship and briefly describe how they personally settle into worship. They also explain the general format of a meeting for worship (e.g., how long the silence will last, how you know when it's over, and what spoken ministry is). At the rise of meeting, the 2 volunteers describe what their worship was like - "where their minds went, what they felt in their bodies, what distractions or moments of clarity they noticed," and then everyone introduces themselves as usual with an invitation to share a bit about their own worship experience if they want to.

I love this idea because even after 20+ years of attending Quaker meetings, I am still not confident of how to approach the silence. In some ways, I also feel like a newcomer every time I enter meeting, because I am different each time I walk through the door - what worked for me last week doesn't make sense today. I'm not suggesting we adopt this particular practice, but learning about it made me curious; what would I say if I were one of the volunteers? What would you say? To learn more, visit the [Quakers Today](#) podcast. If you ever have reflections you'd like to share in the newsletter, please submit them to [newsletter@saquakers.org](mailto:newsletter@saquakers.org).

## Community Updates

### Poetry by an Old Friend

Long-time attenders of FMSA likely remember Mark Hickman. He was known for his poetry, which he shared with the community. This poem was recently found in the FMSA archives, and we thought it was worth sharing.



## New Growth

Two new trees near the meeting house were planted by Vandy from the Plum Branch Sangha meditation group that meets in our meeting room. Thank you, Vandy!



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<https://sanantonioquakers.org/newsletters/>

We welcome input for newsletters. Please email [newsletter@saquakers.org](mailto:newsletter@saquakers.org) if you have any news, articles, poetry, etc. to share. Photos are great, too!

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