

Questions & Answers for Newcomers

RED CEDAR FRIENDS (QUAKER) MEETING

1400 Turner, Lansing, Michigan 48906

517-371-1047

redcedarfriends.org

Autumn 2010

WELCOME TO RED CEDAR FRIENDS MEETING

Welcome to Red Cedar Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, or Red Cedar Friends Meeting. We're glad to have you with us, and we know that it can be tricky for newcomers to figure out who we are, what we do, and why. Some of our practices as a Meeting have become such second nature to us that we forget that new people are not as familiar with our ways as we are. We created this booklet to answer some common questions newcomers have. If you have questions that are not answered here, feel free to approach the clerk. The clerk will introduce herself/himself at the rise of Meeting for Worship and can answer your questions or direct you to someone who can.

CREDITS

The first edition (summer 2006) of Questions and Answers for Newcomers was written by Patty VanLuven, Judith Morrigan, and Jim Bloomfield. It was edited and produced by Su Penn. This is the second edition (autumn 2010) of this booklet. The Membership and Outreach Committee with input from newcomers updated, edited and produced this version.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Quakers.....	1
Who are the Red Cedar Friends? When and where do they meet?.....	1
What is an “unprogrammed” meeting?.....	1
Why is it called a “Monthly Meeting” if we meet every week?.....	1
What are the Quarterly and Yearly Meetings?.....	2
Are there other kinds of Quakers?.....	3
What are the people of RCF like?.....	3
Who is the Clerk? What does the Clerk do?.....	4
Attending Meeting for Worship.....	4
When I go to Meeting for Worship what will it be like?.....	4
What do RCF members do when a visitor comes?...5	
How will I get to know people?.....	6
What should I wear to Meeting?.....	7
Where do I sit?.....	7
What if I have to sneeze, cough, cry, go to the bathroom or leave?.....	7
What are concerns about fragrances?.....	7
What if I fall asleep?.....	7

What if I come late?.....	8
Are there formal or informal rules I need to know?.....	8
Being in Community.....	8
Is RCF a welcoming community?.....	8
What is RCF's attitude toward people coming from different religious backgrounds or experiences such as Christian, Earth Centered, Buddhist, and so on?.	9
What if I really need help understanding something about RCF?.....	9
What if I do something accidentally that offends or bothers someone?.....	9
What if someone says or does something that upsets or confuses me?.....	10
What if I need an accommodation?.....	10
What if I'm uncertain about some of the Quaker Testimonies?.....	10
How do I become a member?.....	11
Children at Red Cedar.....	12
How many children attend RCF? And how old are they?.....	12
What is the relationship of children to the larger RCF community?.....	12
If my children come to Meeting for Worship with me, what will happen?.....	13
What if my child needs to be with me?.....	13

What about nursing babies?.....	13
How can my children get to know the other children of RCF?.....	13
What if there are no children the age of mine?.....	14
What is expected of children? How can I prepare them?.....	14
Are there formal or informal rules regarding children?.....	15
What if my child breaks a rule or upsets someone?.....	15
What if my child needs an accommodation, or I have a concern about First Day classes?.....	15
Who teaches First Day classes?.....	16
What do they teach?.....	16
How can I get to know other parents?.....	16
In addition to Worship.....	17
Are there adult-oriented activities? And what do I do with my children while I'm there?.....	17
What are Friendly 8s?.....	17
What is Meeting for Business?.....	17
Are there other regular meetings?.....	18
Do I need to be invited or ask someone if I can go?.....	18
How do I find out where a meeting is?.....	18

Are the activities announced after Meeting open to everyone?.....	18
I think I recognized RCF Friends holding signs by the road! Was that an RCF activity?.....	19
Are there other Quaker activities in MI?.....	19
Can newcomers go to Quarterly or Yearly Meeting?.....	19
What are these events like?.....	19
Will I see anyone from RCF?.....	20
Potluck.....	20
If I come to Potluck, what will it be like?.....	20
Is there any food I should or shouldn't bring?.....	20
Where do I put the food during Meeting?.....	21
What if I come and discover it's Potluck but I brought no food?.....	21
Committees and Officers.....	21
What are the Committees?.....	21
What do the Committees do?.....	21
How are committees formed?.....	22
Who is on each committee?.....	22
How do I connect with a committee?.....	22
What is a Clearness Committee?.....	22

Who are the officers of Red Cedar Friends?.....	23
Where can I obtain more information about committees and officers?.....	23
How do Quakers make decisions in committee and business meetings?.....	23
I also wonder.....	24
What if I feel a need to talk in depth with other Quakers about something I'm experiencing?.....	24
What is that hospitality sign up thing being passed around? If I sign up, what would I be expected to do?.....	24
What if I want to make a donation?.....	25
Are there other ways to donate or help?.....	25
I hear RCF has a Library. Can I check out or donate books?.....	25
How can I learn more about RCF and Quakerism?.....	26

About Quakers

WHO ARE THE RED CEDAR FRIENDS? WHEN AND WHERE DO THEY MEET?

We are the local Quaker group, the Religious Society of Friends. Red Cedar Friends Meeting is an unprogrammed Quaker meeting.

We meet for Worship two times every Sunday in our Meeting House located in Old Town Lansing at 1400 Turner Street:

9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. (Childcare provided)

10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (First Day School and childcare are provided, beginning at 10:15)

A social time follows the 10:30 Worship.

WHAT IS AN “UNPROGRAMMED” MEETING?

At an unprogrammed meeting for worship, Friends gather in expectant silence, out of which those who are led to speak offer vocal ministry. Unprogrammed meetings do not have pastors, a formal program for worship, organized communal prayers, or planned hymn-singing. Red Cedar Friends Meeting is an unprogrammed Quaker meeting.

WHY IS IT CALLED A “MONTHLY MEETING” IF WE MEET EVERY WEEK?

Red Cedar Friends (RCF) is called a monthly meeting because we have a Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business once a month. You will also hear about “Quarterly Meetings,” “Half-yearly Meetings,” and

“Yearly Meetings.” These names also reflect the frequency with which the body meets to conduct business. In general, only Monthly Meetings meet for weekly worship.

WHAT ARE THE QUARTERLY AND YEARLY MEETINGS?

Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting (GPQM) provides community and support for the eight unprogrammed Friends Meetings and five worship groups in lower Michigan. One of its responsibilities is oversight of Friends School in Detroit, a K-8 school. GPQM meets on the third Sunday in May and September to conduct business; it meets on the first Sunday in August for outdoor worship and fellowship at Quaker Park in Battle Creek. During January or February, one of the monthly meetings hosts a workshop or retreat to which all are invited.

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting (LEYM) meets annually during the summer for business and worship. Unprogrammed Friends Meetings in Ohio, Michigan, and parts of Pennsylvania and West Virginia belong to the LEYM Yearly Meeting.

Friends General Conference (FGC) is a national organization that serves unprogrammed Friends in North America. It does not meet for business as Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meetings do, but is governed by a Central Committee that includes members from meetings across the country. According to its Minute of Purpose, its mission is to

educate Friends and help them experience “God’s living presence.” FGC Gathering is a week-long convention, over Fourth of July week each year, that is an important opportunity for deepening Friends’ knowledge and spiritual experience.

ARE THERE OTHER KINDS OF QUAKERS?

Yes, there are. Broadly, in addition to Unprogrammed Friends like those at Red Cedar, there are Conservative Friends, who also have unprogrammed worship but are often more explicitly Christian in their orientation. Some traditional Quaker practices can be found among Conservative Friends, including paying recorded ministers and wearing plain dress.

Quakers of Friends United Meeting (FUM) are also explicitly Christian, employ pastors and have “programmed” worship, with sermons, prayers, and hymns. A long period of “open worship,” similar to our expectant waiting, is also a part of FUM meetings for worship.

There are other strains of Quakerism, but most Friends in Michigan are in unprogrammed meetings. There are also two FUM Quaker meetings near Traverse City and one conservative worship group meets in the Flint area.

WHAT ARE THE PEOPLE OF RCF LIKE?

We are open, affirming, and appreciative of spiritual seekers. We are diverse by age, and people come from many religious backgrounds and traditions, including

Christian, Jewish, Pagan and Buddhist. You will find both Christocentric and Universalist Friends here, as well as plenty of people who are not simply one or the other. Some members and attenders include elements from other faith traditions, including Buddhism and Wicca, in their spiritual practices. As a community, we are committed to traditional Quaker testimonies of equality, simplicity, social justice, integrity, and peace. RCF is comprised of people from about 60 households and is growing. Most of our members live in Ingham, Eaton, Shiawassee, and Clinton counties.

WHO IS THE CLERK? WHAT DOES THE CLERK DO?

The Clerk of Red Cedar Friends Meeting is the principal designated representative of the Meeting's activities. General oversight of the Meetings' activities is the Clerk's major responsibility. The Clerk oversees Meeting for Worship, with appropriate involvement of the Committee on Worship and Pastoral Care. The Clerk and other officers are nominated and approved by Meeting, usually serving three consecutive one-year terms. Committees and ad hoc groups also have clerks or conveners.

Attending Meeting for Worship

WHEN I GO TO MEETING FOR WORSHIP WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE?

Worship lasts for about an hour. People approach the meeting room quietly and are silent within it; worship

begins when the first person sits down and begins centering. People will usually trickle in during the first 15 minutes. At 10:30 worship, children are in childcare or First Day School (FDS) during the first 45 minutes or so; babies often attend worship with their mothers. We do offer childcare, but no FDS, at 9:00 worship. We worship silently for about 50 minutes, though vocal ministry may be offered. Toward the end of worship, the Clerk of Meeting will call for joys, sorrows and concerns. During the following ten minutes or so, people will respond, leaving some space between each message. Children enter worship at around 11:20, in time to experience the silence, and participate in shared Joys and Sorrows. When the Clerk shakes hands with the persons next to him or her, everyone else will shake hands and the Meeting for Worship is said to have risen [ended]. The Clerk will call on the children to tell about their activities. Then we all introduce ourselves and share announcements. After that we will gather for snacks and social time in the social hall -- or for a potluck lunch one Sunday a month.

WHAT DO RCF MEMBERS DO WHEN A VISITOR COMES?

After silent worship ends, we go around the circle and say our names. You'll also have an opportunity to meet individuals during the social time that follows. We hope you will stay. Usually someone will make a point to welcome you personally.

HOW WILL I GET TO KNOW PEOPLE?

We have a social time at the rise of the 10:30 meeting and Potluck after meeting one Sunday of the month. We offer some intergenerational activities such as visiting the corn maze in the fall, sledding parties in the winter, and camping in the summer. Programs to explore Quakerism and study groups are common; there are active Spiritual Formation groups in the meeting, which are generally open to new members in the fall of each year. Other ways to get to know Friends are to attend Meeting for Worship with Attention to Healing (Meeting for Healing) or volunteer for a work project.

Announcements of both Quaker and wider community activities are included in the monthly newsletter, which is sent out via e-mail and shared after Meeting for Worship. Announcements often include activities that will bring us together during the week. The newsletter is helpful for understanding Meeting and its activities. Copies of recent newsletters are available on request. Ask the Clerk, a member of the Membership and Outreach Committee, or the newsletter editor to find you a copy. We also have a newcomer's packet and brochures that are available on the welcoming table in the Worship room and a sign-up sheet for those interested in receiving e-mails and newsletters.

Attending Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business each month is a wonderful way to get to know the meeting and the people in it.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR TO MEETING?

We do not “dress up” for Meeting. Whatever you are comfortable in is fine.

WHERE DO I SIT?

It is good to seat yourself as far into the room as possible, so that people who come in later do not have to disturb worshippers by walking across the room to find a seat. We have a variety of chairs and try to keep the soft chairs for folks who find the hard ones impossible to sit in for an hour.

WHAT IF I HAVE TO SNEEZE, COUGH, CRY, GO TO THE BATHROOM OR LEAVE?

All of these normal human actions happen routinely during meeting. If any are prolonged, people usually step out. If you leave while you are crying, someone will probably come with you to offer comfort. Any time you need to leave, enter late, or return, it is always a good idea to check to make sure you are not moving while someone is giving a message.

WHAT ARE CONCERNS ABOUT FRAGRANCES?

Please avoid wearing scented products because fragrances may trigger allergic reactions in others who sit or stand near you.

WHAT IF I FALL ASLEEP?

We have regular members and attenders who sometimes fall asleep. We hope everyone can give

good attention to being with us, but we understand if people sometimes doze off, and will most likely just let them sleep.

WHAT IF I COME LATE?

If you attend Meeting regularly, you will notice that people sometimes arrive late. We prefer that people come on time, but we understand that being late is sometimes unavoidable, and would rather have you come late than not come at all.

ARE THERE FORMAL OR INFORMAL RULES I NEED TO KNOW?

During silent worship we encourage a period of silence after someone has spoken a message, to give everyone a chance to think about what has been said. If you offer a message, it should be of a spiritual nature. We encourage people to speak from the heart and their own experience. Generally we try to be kind and inclusive and mindful of our testimonies.

Also, we try to remember to turn off cell phones on the way in to Meeting.

Being in Community

IS RCF A WELCOMING COMMUNITY?

Yes. Red Cedar Friends strives to be fully inclusive and to welcome everyone.

WHAT IS RCF'S ATTITUDE TOWARD PEOPLE COMING FROM DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS OR EXPERIENCES SUCH AS CHRISTIAN, EARTH CENTERED, BUDDHIST, AND SO ON?

We welcome spiritual seekers whatever their previous experience. Whatever your background, there are likely to be others who share it.

WHAT IF I REALLY NEED HELP UNDERSTANDING SOMETHING ABOUT RCF?

Ask anybody. If they don't know the answer, they can direct you to someone from the Membership and Outreach Committee, or another knowledgeable individual. The Clerk would also be happy to answer questions or help you find someone who can.

WHAT IF I DO SOMETHING ACCIDENTALLY THAT OFFENDS OR BOTHERS SOMEONE?

Sometimes newcomers break the "rules" just because they're new and haven't learned all our ways; we're pretty tolerant of that and simply expect that our ways will become clearer with experience. If you say or do something that disturbs an individual, that person will probably approach you for a gentle conversation. Rarely, the Worship and Pastoral Care Committee is asked to intervene with a person whose behavior is consistently inappropriate or combative.

WHAT IF SOMEONE SAYS OR DOES SOMETHING THAT UPSETS OR CONFUSES ME?

You can approach the person, if you feel comfortable doing that. If not, we hope you would feel comfortable speaking to the Clerk about what happened and how you're feeling. She can give you guidance about how to proceed. To connect with the Clerk, ask for help from someone in the meeting with whom you feel comfortable, or watch for the clerk to introduce herself at the rise of Meeting.

WHAT IF I NEED AN ACCOMMODATION?

Our meetings for worship are in an accessible building. There is reserved barrier-free parking in the small lot north of the meetinghouse and a door-opener at the door on the east side of the meetinghouse. To avoid triggering allergies, we avoid wearing fragrance or perfumed lotion in the Meeting House. We make accommodations for members, attenders, and children with visible or invisible disabilities. Let us know about any needed accommodations. Speak to a member of Worship and Pastoral Care or the Hospitality Committee if there is an accommodation or an arrangement that would better suit you.

WHAT IF I'M UNCERTAIN ABOUT SOME OF THE QUAKER TESTIMONIES?

Join the club! Most Friends are uncertain about some of the testimonies at least some of the time; we work

both individually and as a community to discern what they mean and how they work in our lives, and this understanding is always open to change. We welcome discussion of any questions you have. The Adult Religious Education committee regularly offers programs that focus on these discussions. Such conversations are welcome across the table during potluck as well. If you are really troubled or want an opportunity to explore your questions further, the Worship and Pastoral Care Committee can help you find an individual or a clearness committee to talk with.

HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER?

Regular attenders of our meeting who are committed to Quaker testimonies and practices and who are involved in meeting activities are considered members. When people feel moved to record their membership, they write a letter to the Clerk of the meeting requesting clearness for membership. The Membership and Outreach Committee will then convene a clearness committee; that committee reports its recommendation to the business meeting, which records membership.

This is a highly individual process. Some people are “regular attenders” for many years before they decide to become recorded members, some become recorded members shortly after they begin attending, and some continue as non recorded members without ever seeking formal membership. We do not generally distinguish between recorded and non recorded

members and regular attenders. Red Cedar Friends bylaws do require the Clerk to be a recorded member of the Meeting.

Children at Red Cedar

HOW MANY CHILDREN ATTEND RCF? AND HOW OLD ARE THEY?

Currently we have about 43 children. Ages range from infants to teens.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF CHILDREN TO THE LARGER RCF COMMUNITY?

We delight in welcoming infants and children to Meeting and watching them grow to maturity. We offer support and encouragement for their spiritual and personal growth. We include them in Meeting for Worship and offer First Day instruction to help them understand Quakerism at their level. We have special Meeting for Worship to honor the naming of new babies and also at the time of graduation from high school. Once a year, in May, we gift children in Meeting with a book for their personal library.

In the wider Quaker community, the Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting has annual family events and has children's activities at each Quarterly Meeting.

Children are also an integral part of the Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, which offers an excellent youth program at its annual sessions. At the national level, there are organizations of Young Friends and Young Adult Friends.

IF MY CHILDREN COME TO MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ME, WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

Your children will attend First Day classes from 10:15 to about 11:15. The greeter at the door of the Meeting House will help you find your child's group in the social hall or classroom. You may attend First Day with them if you like or go on to worship.

The children will join worship between 11:15 and 11:30. This is the period of Meeting when joys, sorrows or concerns may be shared. At the rise [end] of Meeting, children will share what they did in class. After announcements, we will all move to our social time and have snacks in a different area. Children can join us and play.

WHAT IF MY CHILD NEEDS TO BE WITH ME?

The caregivers will be sure to let you know if your child needs you. Sometimes parents leave worship to be with their child; sometimes children are quietly in worship with a parent; and sometimes another adult is happy to leave worship to spend some time with a baby or child.

WHAT ABOUT NURSING BABIES?

We welcome nursing mothers and babies in worship.

HOW CAN MY CHILDREN GET TO KNOW THE OTHER CHILDREN OF RCF?

We hope they will have an opportunity to develop friendships in their First Day classes and to play

together during the social hour after Meeting. We also have activities throughout the year, such as an Easter Egg Hunt, a sledding party in the winter, and a visit to a corn maze in the fall, which give all of us opportunities to have fun and get to know each other.

WHAT IF THERE ARE NO CHILDREN THE AGE OF MINE?

Our First Day classes are organized groups from infants to high school. We try to divide our children into sensibly sized age and interest groups, and groups can change depending on who is attending regularly. The Religious Education Committee will help you and your child find an appropriate group.

There are additional opportunities to get to know children of all ages at gatherings of Quarterly and Yearly Meeting, and at Friends General Conference Gathering.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF CHILDREN? HOW CAN I PREPARE THEM?

Children six and older usually join worship for 15 minutes at the end of Meeting. We hope they can sit quietly during that time. Some parents bring toys or books so they have something to do. Talking with them before they enter Meeting and explaining that we will be sitting in worship quietly will help them understand our expectations. If they are uncomfortable being silent, they are welcome to wait in the nursery until Meeting rises [ends].

ARE THERE FORMAL OR INFORMAL RULES REGARDING CHILDREN?

Children are encouraged to be kind and inclusive and are helped to play and resolve conflicts in peaceful ways. For example, the children had a Meeting for Business to determine where running is and is not allowed during the social time. For safety reasons, we ask that children do not come into the kitchen. Because Quakers traditionally do not emphasize the use of formal titles, adults and children call each other by their first names.

WHAT IF MY CHILD BREAKS A RULE OR UPSETS SOMEONE?

Generally, people will ask you to address this with your child, though friendly reminders about clearly-agreed-upon rules can come from any adult.

WHAT IF MY CHILD NEEDS AN ACCOMMODATION, OR I HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT FIRST DAY CLASSES?

Feel free to talk to the teacher or to members of the Religious Education Committee. They will introduce you to the people teaching your child's class so you can talk together. The Religious Education Committee can also help plan a way to share information with the Meeting as a whole if your child needs collective support or understanding. If it is just first time jitters, you could go to class at first with your child to meet the teacher and other children. Feel free to get to know the teachers so you can support each other.

WHO TEACHES FIRST DAY CLASSES?

Adults in the Meeting volunteer to teach the older First Day classes each September through May. The teachers work together with the Religious Education Committee to plan instruction. During June through August all the older children do activities together while adults worship. These activities are led by volunteers from the Meeting. The Meeting pays high school or college students to provide consistent year-round care for infants in the nursery during silent worship.

WHAT DO THEY TEACH?

We try to offer age appropriate instruction about Quaker history, Quaker testimonies, and Bible stories, as well as information about other spiritual paths, such as Native American traditions, Judaism, and Islam.

HOW CAN I GET TO KNOW OTHER PARENTS?

Feel free to introduce yourself to other parents. A great way to begin is to join someone at a table during social time. In the summer, you can sign up to assist another person with the children's activities, which happen while adults worship. The Hospitality Committee sometimes organizes park gatherings for parents and children, and these gatherings are announced at Meeting and in the newsletter.

In addition to Worship

ARE THERE ADULT-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES? AND WHAT DO I DO WITH MY CHILDREN WHILE I'M THERE?

The Adult Religious Education Committee sponsors adult activities like the Quakerism 101 series or discussion of a particular pamphlet or book. The meeting also has occasional retreats.

We are committed to providing childcare for all activities, and it is usually provided as a matter of course. But it is best to check with the organizers of any given event to ensure that childcare is available.

WHAT ARE FRIENDLY 8S?

The Hospitality Committee has in the past sponsored this activity, in which Friends are organized into groups of 8 who gather to have dinner and socialize informally. Each group determines its schedule and meeting places. Groups are likely to be organized in the fall of the year; if you're interested, watch for announcements in the newsletter and at rise of meeting.

WHAT IS MEETING FOR BUSINESS?

Once each month, Friends gather at the Meetinghouse for Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. We gather at 12:15 and include worship-sharing and queries related to Friends' faith and practice. Meeting for Business includes reports from the Clerk and committees. If there are decisions to be made as a

body, we make them during Meeting for Business. We try to finish by about 2:30. Childcare is provided.

ARE THERE OTHER REGULAR MEETINGS?

Meeting for Worship for Healing (Meeting for Healing) meets at the home of Richard Lee on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 pm. The purpose of this gathering is to hold people in the Light who are requesting healing. You can attend without making a request or you can pass on a request to Richard if you cannot attend. Childcare can be arranged if you speak to Richard.

Other meetings are announced in the newsletter and after worship.

DO I NEED TO BE INVITED OR ASK SOMEONE IF I CAN GO?

You may want to tell the host or hostess that you are coming, but it's not necessary. These meetings are open to everyone. Don't be afraid to come--you will be welcomed.

HOW DO I FIND OUT WHERE A MEETING IS?

Speak to the person hosting the meeting for directions to their home. If you need help finding that person, ask anybody.

ARE THE ACTIVITIES ANNOUNCED AFTER MEETING OPEN TO EVERYONE?

Yes.

**I THINK I RECOGNIZED RCF FRIENDS
HOLDING SIGNS BY THE ROAD! WAS THAT
AN RCF ACTIVITY?**

Yes, you might see us holding signs by the road. Sometimes the activity might be sponsored by RCF, but it could be another group. Quakers are very active community wide.

**ARE THERE OTHER QUAKER ACTIVITIES IN
MI?**

Yes. Please visit the web site (redcedarfriends.org) for complete information. If you are not online, see other suggestions at the end of the pamphlet.

**CAN NEWCOMERS GO TO QUARTERLY OR
YEARLY MEETING?**

Yes. It is a great way to get to know Quakers from all over Michigan and the Midwest, and to better understand Quaker practices

WHAT ARE THESE EVENTS LIKE?

They combine worship, Meeting for Business and social and educational activities. They usually have a theme or topic, which is published beforehand. Quarterly Meeting offers a children's program at the spring and fall meetings, both on Saturdays. Youth programs, during a long summer weekend at Yearly Meeting, are wonderful. Children form friendships at Yearly Meeting that carry over from year to year.

WILL I SEE ANYONE FROM RCF?

There are always at least a few people from Red Cedar going to Lake Erie Yearly Meeting; carpooling is not unheard of. Our Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting representative attends all the GPQM business sessions, along with a few other Red Cedar Friends. The opportunity to meet Friends from other Michigan or Great Lakes communities is a good reason to attend Quarterly Meeting or Yearly Meeting.

Potluck

IF I COME TO POTLUCK, WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE?

At the rise [end] of 10:30 Meeting for Worship we go to the social hall for snacks and once a month for potluck. The Hospitality Committee and volunteers get out dishes and help people set up their food. We join hands in a circle and have a period of grace. Feel free to join any table once you have your food. The Hospitality Committee supervises clean up, but everyone helps informally. Help is needed and appreciated.

IS THERE ANY FOOD I SHOULD OR SHOULDN'T BRING?

People bring whatever they like. The group represents a diversity of diets, and everyone chooses the foods that suit them. It helps if hidden ingredients are indicated on a label or card. We have recently discovered that we have some children with peanut

and wheat allergies, so we ask that these ingredients be identified.

WHERE DO I PUT THE FOOD DURING MEETING?

You can put it in the kitchen. There is refrigerator space for foods that need to be kept cold, and microwave ovens for warming things up.

WHAT IF I COME AND DISCOVER IT'S POTLUCK BUT I BROUGHT NO FOOD?

Not to worry! We hope you'll stay for potluck anyway. We all forget sometimes and there always seems to be plenty of food.

Committees and Officers

WHAT ARE THE COMMITTEES?

The committees of our meeting include: Adult Religious Education, Building, Building and Grounds, Finance, Hospitality, Membership and Outreach, Nominating, Peace and Social Justice, Religious Education, and Worship and Pastoral Care.

WHAT DO THE COMMITTEES DO?

They serve the needs of Meeting in various ways; for example, they oversee the disbursement of funds, care for children, arrange chairs for worship, and provide spiritual and practical support for members and attenders. Most committees meet once a month, and

terms of service are generally two years. Terms begin in June.

HOW ARE COMMITTEES FORMED?

Once a year the Clerk appoints a Nominating Committee, which is responsible for nominating the officers of Meeting and filling vacancies on Committees. The Nominating Committee brings a roster of recommendations to the Business Meeting, which considers and approves it.

WHO IS ON EACH COMMITTEE?

The membership of the committees is published in the newsletter in the spring after the Meeting for Business has approved their choices. This usually happens in March or April. You can also find this information as an attachment to the Directory, which is available from the newsletter editor.

HOW DO I CONNECT WITH A COMMITTEE?

If you are interested in a committee's work, you can talk with someone on the committee or its convener. There might be ways you could be involved in their work informally until you can more formally join them in the spring. The committees are often involved in leading or supporting activities, and are glad to have volunteers and participants.

WHAT IS A CLEARNESS COMMITTEE?

A clearness committee is a group of about five people that can be convened at the request of an individual to

address spiritual concerns or personal issues and to assist individuals in finding a way forward. They meet at least once, but meet more often as needed. Also, Clearness Committees are formed to clear a person or couple for recording membership or marriage. Clearness Committees for membership are arranged by the Membership and Outreach Committee; other clearness committees are arranged by Worship and Pastoral Care. If you are interested in having a Clearness Committee, contact the clerk of these committees.

WHO ARE THE OFFICERS OF RED CEDAR FRIENDS?

Officers and others who serve the meeting are Clerk, Recording Clerk, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, and Librarians.

WHERE CAN I OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT COMMITTEES AND OFFICERS?

More information about responsibilities of committees and officers can be found on the Red Cedar Friends webpage, redcedarfriends.org under RCF downloads.

A list of current committee clerks and officers is posted on the bulletin board in the social hall.

HOW DO QUAKERS MAKE DECISIONS IN COMMITTEE AND BUSINESS MEETINGS?

Quaker decisions are made when the clerk discerns “unity” among those present. No vote is taken. Instead, the clerk tests his/her “sense of the meeting” by

framing it in words. Out of worship, Friends present may: affirm the clerk's sense of unity, offer a clarifying change, "stand aside" despite misgivings, in faith that further Light will be given as we move forward or ask to have their objections minuted, though committee or Business Meeting may move forward with the decision.

I also wonder...

WHAT IF I FEEL A NEED TO TALK IN DEPTH WITH OTHER QUAKERS ABOUT SOMETHING I'M EXPERIENCING?

We hope you would seek out an individual you feel comfortable with and explore your concern. You may also approach Worship and Pastoral Care; helping Friends with such needs is one of that committee's responsibilities.

WHAT IS THAT HOSPITALITY SIGN UP THING BEING PASSED AROUND? IF I SIGN UP, WHAT WOULD I BE EXPECTED TO DO?

That is a clipboard with a month of Sundays on it. You can sign up to help set up the room for worship, to bring a snack for the social time, or to clean up after the social time. Helpful hands are all around, so don't let being unsure of how things work stop you from pitching in. Hospitality Committee members are always present and ready to help you figure out what needs to be done or where the leftover juice goes.

WHAT IF I WANT TO MAKE A DONATION?

We have a round box on a small table in the meeting room. If you don't see the donation box, ask the Clerk to direct you to the Treasurer. You can also mail donations to:

Treasurer,
Red Cedar Friends Meeting
1400 Turner Street
Lansing, Michigan 48906

ARE THERE OTHER WAYS TO DONATE OR HELP?

There are many ways to serve the Meeting. If you wish to join a committee, or discuss other possibilities, see the Clerk or a member of Worship and Pastoral Care Committee, or listen to announcements to learn about activities and hear requests for help.

I HEAR RCF HAS A LIBRARY. CAN I CHECK OUT OR DONATE BOOKS?

There is a library cart at the meetinghouse filled with books to check out. Other books are stored at Sally Lloyd's home until library shelving is completed at the meetinghouse. Our librarians can make recommendations and you are welcome to visit the off site library by making an appointment with Sally. You can read notes about recent acquisitions and other library business in our monthly newsletter. Donations of books are welcome.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT RCF AND QUAKERISM?

1. Keep coming to worship.
2. Stay for potluck.
3. Talk to others in Quaker Meeting.
4. Check out our website at redcedarfriends.org, including the “Quaker Links” section.
5. Talk to the Clerk.
6. Attend Adult Religious Education offerings.
7. Get involved in activities that are announced.
8. Read the Newsletter.
9. Read the brochures and pamphlets on the welcome table.
10. Attend Meeting for Business.
11. Check out books from our Library.
12. Ask the librarians or other Friends for reading suggestions.
13. Attend Friends General Conference summer gatherings.
14. visit the FGC bookstore at quakerbooks.org/
15. Attend Retreats, Quarterly or Yearly Meetings, Michigan Friends Center activities, Pendle Hill workshops.