

## A GUIDE FOR THOSE SITTING HEAD OF MEETING FOR 10:30 WORSHIP IN THE MEETING ROOM

Revised January 2013

### **Getting Started**

The Ministry and Worship Committee deeply appreciates your Committee or Task Force serving as Head of Meeting at Meeting for Worship. We want to do everything possible to make you feel comfortable in this service and to make the experience enjoyable.

If you and have any questions or concerns you may contact the Clerk of Ministry and Worship: Kevin Camp; or, if you prefer, you may contact any other Committee member: Ray Allard, Virginia Avanesyan, Gray Handley, Anne Harper, or Tracy Hart.

### **Welcoming and Seating**

As people gather for worship (from about 10:15 – 10:35 a.m.), and if you have enough members of your Committee present, please have Committee Members welcome arriving members and attenders at the door to the Meeting Room and the front door of the Meeting House. Just inside the front door there is a podium equipped with blank nametags and introductory leaflets. Please encourage the use of nametags and if you identify someone new to The Society of Friends, please offer a handout, which explains Meeting for Worship.

The member greeting at the door to the Meeting Room, at the top of the stairs, should offer a handshake and welcoming words as individuals enter the room. This person Also should close the door around 10:30, whenever people have finished entering the room.

Members of the committee who are inside the Meeting Room should sit on the facing benches at the center of the room and, if comfortable, wear nametags. Guided by materials placed in advance on one of the facing benches (look for them), one member should serve as Head of Meeting by: 1. making a welcoming comment as meeting gathers; 2. initiating handshakes that signal meeting has ended; and, 3. making any close-of-meeting announcements included in the pre-placed materials.

### **Starting Meeting for Worship**

To help acquaint attenders with Quaker worship practice, brief explanations are placed beside the doors and on the benches. When Meeting for Worship has settled, shortly after 10:35 a.m., the person serving as Head of Meeting is encouraged to rise and make their own version of the following statement:

"The Friends Meeting of Washington welcomes everyone to our Meeting for Worship. Spirit-led listening is the most important task of everyone attending this Meeting. We ask that you join us in listening deeply, both in the silence and when someone is speaking."

## **Attending to Meeting for Worship**

*Inappropriate messages* -- Very occasionally, some person who is obviously troubled may seek to make use of the openness of Meeting for Worship as a platform for political, religious or other statements strongly out of character with contemplative, Spirit-led worship. If an out of place message becomes excessive or intrusive, you may (as the Spirit moves you) gently ask for a period of silence so that Friends may be refreshed with silent worship. If the message is hateful, Friends tradition holds that you and others may feel moved to rise and stand in silent protest.

*Personal distress* -- A worshiper may show evidence in speech or deed of being in severe spiritual or emotional pain. Let the Spirit move you to show concern, while ensuring continuity of worship. You might ask someone nearby to help attend to that person's needs.

*Children Entering* -- At approximately 11:15 a.m., First Day School students will enter the Meeting Room to join in worship until the rise of Meeting. They may choose to sit near their teachers or with their parents. Late arrivers who have been worshipping in the Parlor also may enter to join Meeting Room worship at the same time.

*Ending Meeting* -- The length of Meeting for Worship is not governed by the clock, but by your sense of the Meeting reaching its natural conclusion. If a centered presence lingers among Friends, you may be moved to wait for a while past 11:30 a.m., the time at which Meeting for Worship usually ends.

## **Rise of Meeting**

When meeting for worship is at its end, the Head of Meeting should shake hands with persons sitting nearby and wait a few moments for other worshipers to greet one another. Then the Head of Meeting should rise and introduce him or herself and the other committee members present - in a loud, clear voice so that your Friends in the room can embrace you with silent support. This is your opportunity to explain what your Committee does for the Meeting and to invite others to join you. Following that there are several actions:

*Announcements* -- Please refer everyone to the printed announcements beside each door and, if you wish to, highlight a few of the announcements included on the printed page. Be sure to invite a member of Young Adult Friends Group to announce their special welcome for young people.

*First Day School* -- Please ask, with encouragement, if someone from First Day School (usually one of the children) would like to share with Meeting what happened at First Day School.

*Contributions* -- Please make certain to read the announcement drawing attention to the contribution boxes (by one of the doors) and envelopes (on the benches). Visitors may be surprised that collection baskets are not passed around and may wonder how help support the work of the Meeting. Therefore, it is important that this information is provided so they know that all contributions are welcomed and very much needed.

*Welcome and Introductions* – In keeping with Quaker practice, it is important to make all visitors feel welcomed and cared for. Head of Meeting needs to lead the way in this important and enjoyable ministry to visitors.

Toward the end of the announcement period, the Head of Meeting should **invite visitors to sign the guest book** (on table near the door) and **to introduce themselves**. All visitors who feel comfortable in doing so should be asked to rise, introduce themselves one at a time, and tell us where they are from. In response FMW Members and Attenders will want to give caring attention to our visitors and thank them for coming.

If comfortable, the Head of Meeting is encouraged to repeat each visitors name in welcoming them. And, if a visitor speaks very softly, to gently ask them to repeat what they have said a little louder. Welcoming visitors can be a joyful and embracing part of each meeting and the goal is to help each visitor know that we are glad they have joined us. You might also suggest, for example, that people sitting near newcomers introduce themselves and ask if our guests have any questions, offering to escort them to the Assembly Room for refreshments.

As announcements and introductions are completed, the Head of Meeting should invite all to join for fellowship and refreshments in the Assembly Room downstairs.

**Note: As you leave the Meeting Room, please bring the contribution box to the office.**

Thank you, and expect to enjoy sitting Head of Meeting.