

Monteverde Friends Meeting

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Greetings to Friends Everywhere,

“Perhaps our greatest service is simply to find ways to strengthen and live closer to our goodness. This is far from easy. It requires an everyday attention, an awareness of all that diminishes us, distracts us, and causes us to forget who we are. But every act of service bears witness to the possibility of freedom for us all. And every time anyone becomes more transparent to the light in them, they will restore the light in the world.” From Rachel Naomi Remen, MD, My Grandfather’s Blessings

Our long experience of worshiping and working together has created a sense of spiritual belonging. Although we find ourselves in the midst of amazing upheaval due to the Corona virus, we continue a feeling of connectedness as we worship together in the spirit at our regular times but in family groups, in pairs, or individually in the forest. The social balance has been upturned; we are vulnerable and feelings are volatile. Both kindnesses and gifts are magnified, as are tensions and conflicts. How can we address and use these conflicts and gifts as a path to greater spiritual depth and connection? Over time, there are deeper lessons to be learned, but for now we are still finding our way.

As we search for guidance in this journey, we reflect on the wisdom of Sue Trostle, who died in November, and the many lessons she taught us: her ability to find that of God in everyone, her focus on love, kindness and joy, her spirit of adventure and risk-taking, the importance of being open to and accepting what comes our way and of appreciating all the blessings that surround us.

For 69 years Friends have been talking and writing about the journey of Monteverde Quakers. The new documentary film Sweet Home Monteverde traces that journey grounded in peace and environmental stewardship and gives us yet another source of inspiration.

So many of these lessons, from our history, from our many elders, are reflected in the work of Monteverde Friends School, our major ministry as a Meeting. Last fall students organized a climate march in which 500 people took part. In the midst of a successful school year, everything was disrupted by the close of the physical school, and yet students continue learning through diverse tools and the dedication of our phenomenal teachers and staff.

We also use these lessons to help us be truly aware of our many gifts, especially the unexpected gifts of this time of upheaval: deeper reflection on what is truly important, more unpressured time to observe and appreciate small things, reminders of the joys—and perhaps challenges—of friends and family, a greater sense of belonging, awareness of our responsibility for caring for others, more kindness in how we treat one another.

“...and with our hearts we chart the waters never sailed before.”

From Somos el Barco, by Lorre Wyatt, from Worship in Song: A Friends Hymnal

In Peace,

The Epistle Committee: Helena Guindon, Kenna Manos, Harriet Joslin

Carol Evans, Clerk

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