



ILYM Meetinghouse, McNabb, Illinois

## *Illinois Yearly Meeting* *of the Religious Society of Friends*

Consisting of 24 Quaker Meetings and Worship Groups  
in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, and Wisconsin

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### **2018 Illinois Yearly Meeting Epistle**

To Friends Around the World,

We send you Friendly greetings from the muddy yet vibrant campus of our McNabb, Illinois meetinghouse. The abundant rainfall we have received these four days mirrors the blessings showered upon our meeting as we reflect on the theme of this year's annual sessions, "Witness and Renewal." The workshops, a performance honoring the tireless work of Mother Jones (an influential American labor and child rights advocate of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century) and the near completion of our *Faith and Practice* all speak to the yearly meeting's dedication to honor the foundational witness of activists in the past as well as cultivate the seeds of action to address contemporary concerns.

Our workshops and evening discussions consisted of recreational and rejuvenating activities such as bicycle riding and blues singing as well as informational sessions on the work of Friends in the Friends World Committee for Consultation, the history of Friends' participation in the Poor People's Campaign, antitorture activism, solar energy, and social justice concerns. After 27 years, our *Faith and Practice* is nearing completion. This has been a spiritual labor of love and many sections within our *Faith and Practice* speak to contemporary concerns such as harassment and substance abuse while also educating about Quaker history in Illinois. It has been 91 years since we have had our own *Faith and Practice*!

As fruitful as our time together has been, we have also honored the grief that many of us are tenderly holding. There were many tears shed as we read memorial minutes for the much-beloved Friends who had died since our last gathering. We also grieved over the sad state of affairs taking place within the United States and impacting international affairs. There is much that we can no longer take for granted. Nevertheless, we take the words of Civil Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr to heart as we invest in continued work of our meeting and remain vigilant in the face of distressing social changes. We leave you with his words.

One of the great liabilities of history is that all too many people fail to remain awake through the great periods of social change...[T]oday our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, "Where do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?")

Illinois Yearly Meeting, McNabb, Illinois, Sixth Month, 24, 2018