

FROM THE COMMUNITY OF

Quaker Monastery

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Matt 18:20

Autumn / Winter 2011



MISSION:

Our vocation as Christian monastic's is to relate the redemptive love of Christ Jesus through a life affirmed as drawn out by the Holy Spirit; to advance God's kingdom through the arts; to share the living message of the gospel with pilgrims of all faiths, in the spirit of peace and goodwill, as exemplified by Christ and lived out in the first communities of primitive Christianity.

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The harvest of Autumn always leaves us a little breathless in keeping up with the work of preserving and storing the produce of our agricultural labors. Though the days can be long, there is no equal to the satisfaction of work well done.

We are directed, through the Rule of Benedict, to live by the work of our hands. And, as we do, we rely on the literal fruits of our labors for much of the year to follow.

But there is more than just the seasonal earthly harvests of Fall to be worked at and thankful for. There is a spiritual work which is not limited by seasonal parameters, which the Friends of Quaker Monastery endeavor as a first priority throughout the entire year. Through the monastic calling to a life focused on worship, praise, and prayer, the Friends work for a spiritual harvest as Paul encourages in the book of Galatians 6:9:

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

The monastic life provides rich spiritual soil for us to cultivate and sow and we earnestly follow our Lord in the work He has given us to do.

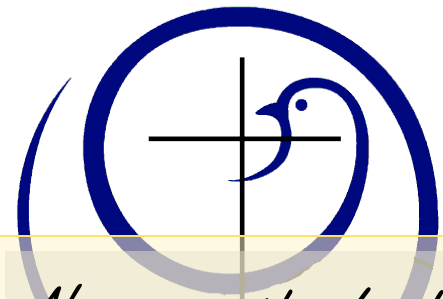
Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. - James 3:18

In all seasons, we make the work of the Lord the first priority of every day, that we may grow in our love for God and

share the Light of the love of Christ Jesus with others in our various ministries, for we know that the "...harvest is vast..." Luke 10:2.

With gratitude for ability, we work that harvest with determination inspired by the Psalmist who said:

Planted in the house of the Lord they will flourish in the courts of our God, still bearing fruit when they are old, still full of sap, still green... - Ps. 92:14 -15



*Now may the Lord
of peace himself give
you peace at all
times in every way.
The Lord be with
you all.*

2 Thessalonians 3:16

Monastery News

Quaker Monastery on the Internet

Grateful for the opportunity to use modern technology and social media for the advancement of the Kingdom of God, we have an Internet presence in several forms and invite those who use the Internet to visit or follow us at:

- Our website: www.QuakerMonastery.org
- www.Twitter.com/quakermonastery
- www.Facebook.com/QuakerMonastery

Peace Chapel

The renovations of the Peace Chapel are nearly complete. We were blessed to be able to acquire, at a very reasonable cost, the pews from a church which had upgraded to folding chairs. It is a particular blessing to



Monastery Schedule

Our week begins on 1st Day
(Sunday)

Contact us if you would like to attend any of the following:

1st Day

10am Bible Study
11am Meeting for Worship
(unprogrammed / silent)

4th Day

7 - 8 pm Open Reading
Bible Study

989-736-7627

know that the precious work of faithful people from years past will continue to be of service for the purpose which they were built long ago. We were only able to acquire a limited number, 6 total, but that is certainly enough for now. The Lord truly provides and causes way to open for what is needed and we are grateful.

Contact Information

Quaker Monastery
P.O. Box 10
Harrisville, Michigan 48740
quakermonastery@gmail.com
QuakerMonastery.org

Prayer Requests

We have an online form for the submission of prayer requests at:

www.quakermonastery.org/Peace_Chapel.html#prayer_request

Prayer requests are placed in the locked prayer box in the Peace Chapel Meeting House, next to the Peace Candle. Though we may not be able to respond to each one individually, be assured your prayers are held in our daily prayer intentions. Prayer requests are strictly confidential, and we do not share e-mail addresses with anyone or any agency.

Hermitage Update

We have experienced amazing generosity from those who support the work of the Friends of Quaker Monastery and much has been accomplished especially in the last few years. As summer neared its end this year, resources ran out and we had to resolve ourselves to a stopping point of the hermitage building project which was far short of the goal we had hoped for. Trusting the matter to God, we accepted the situation and continued to pray for way to open. How we rejoiced when it did. A kind and very generous benefactor made it possible for us to achieve our original goal for the year - and a roof has been constructed and should be finished before winter sets in. Finish work will remain - but that is a concern for next year!

*From a heart overflowing
with gratitude,
we will want to honour
and glorify God
by gratefully offering back to Him
the many good gifts He has
bestowed on us.*

- Anonymous

Living by the Rule of Benedict

Benedict of Nursia (c. 480-547) drew up a rule of life for monastic's - those who felt led to live a dedicated life in a particular way, and in a particular place, with others so called apart for the Lord's service. But some may ask, "Why live by a Rule?"

The Rule was intended to provide instruction for how a community might be organized, and how those there-in were to best spend their time. The concept is no less understandable today than that of a well conducted Christian household in which all family members function, in their order, with respect for the family unit and each other, with even children under the direction of, and in obedience to, their loving, Christ-directed parents.

In writing his Rule, Benedict referred to it as "a school of the Lord's service, in which we hope to order nothing harsh or rigorous." The Rule gives instructions for the organization of a monastic community so that through the best use of daily time, the community could serve the Lord with efficiency, focus, and individual understanding for the human condition of all. His time tested Rule has guided monastic communities for over 1,500 years.

Benedict wrote his Rule for laymen for the purpose of organizing domestic life; the Rule being a guide for those who wanted to live a full Gospel life in community, with others of a like mind. "So intimately connected with domestic life is the whole framework and teaching of the Rule that a Benedictine may be more truly said to enter or join a particular household than to join an order.... The Rule is meant for every class of mind and every degree of learning."

"My words", says Benedict, "are addressed to thee, whoever thou art, that, renouncing thine own will, dost put on the strong and bright armour of obedience in order to fight for the Lord Christ, our true King." (Prol. to Rule.)

Benedict's purpose was only to provide a Rule by which anyone might follow the Gospel counsels, and live, and work, and pray, in Christian community order. The Rule of Benedict organizes and directs a complete life. "We have written this Rule", writes Benedict, "that by observing it in monasteries, we may shew ourselves to have some degree of goodness in life and a beginning of holiness."

But, do Quakers generally follow community rules? The answer is simply, yes. Quakers have what are known as Advices and Queries, these being a recorded reminder of the "insights of the Society." (Britain Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice, § 1.01) Friends are encouraged therein to regard the insights and disciplines of the Advices and Queries as Spirit filled: "that all with the measure of light which is pure and holy may be guided, and so in the light walking and abiding these may be fulfilled in the Spirit." (Britain Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice, § 1.01)

"We have written this Rule that by observing it in monasteries, we may shew ourselves to have some degree of goodness in life and a beginning of holiness."

- Benedict of Nursia

The consideration of the Advices and Queries has had significant devotional and disciplinary importance to Quakers and remains "a profile of the Quaker way of life and a reminder of the ideals Friends seek to attain" and a "quickenig influence in shaping our daily lives." (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice, pp. 187, and 198.)

Is it possible to harmoniously bring together both the Rule of Benedict and Quaker Advices and Queries? Upon closer examination, one actually finds great similarities between Benedictines and Christian Quakers. One only has to study both the Rule of Benedict and some of the older Advices and Queries of the Religious Society of Friends to realize how many there are.

Both Quaker Advices and Queries and Benedict's Rule provide important guidance for corporate worship and life lived in community.

Similarities between the two should not be surprising when one takes into account that followers of the Lord, those who turn their lives over with faith to His active leadership, will always realize some measure of kinship with other Christian faith expressions. There is fundamental unity (though not necessarily all-encompassing uniformity) among all Christians who profess salvation through Christ Jesus and submit to His leadership.

Way has progressively opened in this dedicated place, and community members at Quaker Monastery learn, with daily diligence, to reform their lives by using the Rule of Benedict as a guide to daily community order. Together they work to live for the love of God in the servanthood of Christ Jesus in all aspects of life, even through the most ordinary of tasks.

Through the Eyes of a Child

Thoughts for Advent 2011

Then he (Jesus) said, "I tell you with certainty, unless you change and become like little children, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18:3



The lyrics of a well known song express a tender sentiment, and the first line of that song is familiar to many people: "If I could see the world through the eyes of a child, what a wonderful world it would be."⁽¹⁾ The Friends of Quaker Monastery were blessed this year by the gift of seeing through the eyes of a child in such a particularly thoughtful way on the day before Advent.

For many Christians the first day of Advent marks the beginning of the observance of the Christmas season. At Quaker Monastery, the season of Advent is quietly commemorated with the simple symbolism of the gentle nativity. Advent is a particularly beloved season to the Friends as may be noted by the spiritual name of the community - "Bethlehem Cloister".

On the day before Advent this year, we were visited by a friend of Quaker Monastery who has been part of our extended spiritual family for many years. This particular day, said friend brought along, as she often does, her young daughter to visit as well. While her mother assists the Friends with various tasks, the little girl usually enjoys playing with the cats and kittens that live in the barn with the sheep and the goats. It is quite common to see this little girl walking around with at least 2 cats dangling in the firm, breathless embrace of her warm, cuddly hugs, in route to more hospitable surroundings and perhaps even a special treat dish prepared just for them. The little girl simply loves cats and visiting the kitties at Quaker Monastery is extra special because the severe allergy sensi-

tivities of a family member not only prevent her from having a kitty of her own at home, but requires her to also carefully change and contain her kitty-visiting clothes in a plastic bag until they can be safely washed. So, she enjoys every moment here to the full, playing with her purring friends, and upon departure always assures kitties all, not to worry, that she will be back to visit them again soon.

When they arrived for their visit, Sister Anne was unpacking one of the nativity displays to be set-up and placed in the visitor's area of the monastery. When the little girl came in, she took an especially awed interest in the project and touched the packaged figures with wonder.

A single whispered word slowly escaped her; "Wow...".

It spoke volumes to Sister Anne who first thought to invite her to just help set up the display. But, looking into the wide, wonder-filled eyes of the little girl, Sister Anne couldn't help but ask her:

"Would thee, dear child, like to set up this nativity display all by thyself?"

"Oh, yes please!" Replied the little girl with surprise, and she turned quickly with great expectation to ask her mother; "Mom, may I please?"

Her mother gladly answered; "Yes, of course", and then went about her tasks with a smile.

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Sister Anne found a basket and then directed the little girl to go out to the barn and fill that basket with some nice clean dry straw to place in the stable area of the nativity display. The little girl went off with a great sense of purpose, feeling the importance of a serious task.

She returned shortly with an ample amount of straw which had been collected from just the right place; “Right where the kitties were”, she reported as though that location was clear evidence of undisputable quality. The innocent seriousness of her intention caused Sister Anne to turn away for a moment to conceal a smile.

The little girl then began her task by thoughtfully placing bits of straw in and around the little stable in an arrangement completed by patting it all snugly and fittingly into corners and outskirts. She sat back every few moments to settle the view in her mind and rearrange as needed, without hurry. Finally satisfied, she unpacked the figures and considerately selected the first one for placement.

In creating her nativity scene, this little girl who lived in a 2011 world decided to place the figure of the baby Jesus first, before all the other figures which would be placed into the stable area, so that He would not get “lost”, as she told Sister Anne. At only 7 years old the figure of the newborn was, in this little girl’s mind, the central point of the event and the commemorative figure was tenderly and carefully regarded in her memorial reenactment of a scene which took place over 2,000 years ago.

She thoughtfully went on to place the rest of the figures around the infant until at last, all of the figures recreated the essence of the moment from her point of view. Those viewing the display would find the figures seemingly riveted on, and attentive to, something not easily seen. Within a circle of adoration, tucked into the loving awe of human revelation, lay the tiny baby in a manger filled with straw so completely surrounded that he was obscured from outside view. The figures themselves were not

placed “on display” but instead, their placement displayed the figurative focus of hearts and minds in a thoughtful, timeless way.

The little girl made the Christ child the focus of parental nurturing, star-guided adoring royalty, and a simple shepherd’s trepiditous amazement within a barnyard court of animals attending. We cannot see their faces; looking at the backs of most of the figures we can only metaphorically imagine their thoughts as a modern child reenacts for us the simplicity of a moment in time through which the world would be changed forever. The King of Kings, the Prince of Peace, born in a stable in Bethlehem.

What is the direction of our attention during the Christmas season? Where do we look with assured expectation during Advent? Bright commercial lights can never outshine the Light of Christ Jesus, and we should not be dissuaded by the persuasive tinsel of holiday commercialism and sales slogans. May we ever see the birth of Christ through the same innocent eyes and confident focus of such a modern day child as the little girl who placed the figurative person of the newborn Christ, in commemoration, at the center of an event in a stable so very far away over 2000 years ago. As it was the center of her attention, may it also be ours, always.



(1) *If I Could See The World Through The Eyes Of A Child*
written by Richard Pope, Sammy Masters, Tex Satterwhite



A Collie puppy safely explores and learns what "people" are in his own way and in his own time.

Puppy Formula Recipe

for supplement feeding only

- 1 cup raw, whole goat milk
- 1 egg yolk
- 1/8 cup plain yoghurt
- 1/8 cup buttermilk

Mix until smooth, and then warm. Feed in very small amounts once a day beginning at week 4. Increase to 2 times daily at week 5.

NOTE: To avoid causing undue anxiety, be sure "Mom" has been put outside first. Don't worry if the pups become messy when you supplement feed them, Mom will be happy to clean them up!

Green-Field

A Shepherd's Poem

by a Friend of Quaker Monastery

Watching truly thrills me,
perhaps it always will,
Collies herding green-field sheep,
Across a grassy hill.

They herd because they love it,
They herd because I ask,
They herd with keen ancestral wisdom
from a distant past.

And, when the task is over,
Sheep safely all contained,
The Collies walk in green-field peace,
Companions mine again.

The Importance of Early Puppy Socialization

by a Friend of Quaker Monastery

Puppy socialization involves introducing a pup to different experiences during the early formative time of its physiological development. It is a form of gentle conditioning through which a puppy can learn more about humans in a meaningful way which will become a part of foundational learning and tolerance development for new experiences later on in their lives.



Socializing Collie pups begins within the first few weeks of life at Quaker Monastery.

This exposure should include experiences of a wide sensory scope within the comprehension ability of the pups age-related stages of development.

The Friends of Quaker Monastery provide enriching early experiences for their Collie puppies, in the form of imprinting exercises, which begin within the first weeks of a pup's life. These exercises are designed for the specific developmental period of a pup's life, and include brief periods of safe, secure daily handling in the first weeks after birth, along with light body massage and human breath exposure. In consideration of the feelings of their Dam, this imprinting is done when "Mom" has been put outside to relieve herself.

By 4 weeks, puppies have been introduced to small amounts of daily supplementary hand feeding of an easy to digest puppy formula which encourages the pups to look forward to regular contact with people, as well as their mother, as early as possible. Hand feeding young pups in this way, even briefly as the Friends do, provides an opportunity to participate in the tender nurturing which puppies thrive on. This is not intended in any way to intrude upon or interrupt the primary role of their Mother, but it does facilitate a very positive early impression upon puppies which along with the other non-intrusive exercises, come together as part of the early imprinting which is the foundation upon which the Friends build their relationship with their dogs, in teaching them to be progressive and enthusiastic learners at a very early age.

By the time our Collie puppies are 8 weeks old, they have been socialized with children, they are familiar with, and daily play with, other animals including adult dogs, cats, and a variety of farm animals. Puppies have also been crate trained, taught simple manners, introduced to leash and collar, taught to climb stairs (modified in size), and have even learned how to swim. These are some of the pre-school lessons which we feel are important for puppies to learn.

While they may not be 100% proficient at some of these tasks by 8 weeks, pups have learned to be wide-minded "good learners" and these are some of the goals which we feel can be achieved through early socialization.

Receive Ye Welcome at Quaker Monastery

Dear friend, you are showing your faith in whatever you do for other believers, especially when they're your guests.
3 John 1:5

Let the guest sojourning here know that at this place our life is simple. What we cannot afford we do not offer, but what good cheer we can share....we share gladly.

We make no strife for appearance sake.

Know also, friend, that we live a life of labour and prayer, therefore, if at times we separate ourselves from thee, do ye occupy thyself accordingly to the guidelines of this place, which exist for the love and glorification of God.

We will not defer to thee in

opinion or ask thee to defer to us. What thou thinketh ye shall say, if ye wish, without giving offense. What we think, we also say, believing that truth hath many aspects, and that love is large enough to encompass them all.

So, while ye tarry here with us we would have thee enjoy the blessing of Christian encouragement, health, love and freedom, and we pray that thee mayst find the final blessing of life in the Light of Christ Jesus.

**Interfaith Peace
Gathering
at
Quaker Monastery**
12-18 -11 6 - 7:00 p.m.
Prayer and round table discussion - sharing ways to promote peace within the family, with friends, communities and the world. It starts one step at a time, one person at a time; it begins with self.
Come join this reflection group.
Our next Peace Gathering will be in summer 2012.

PEACE

Adapted from "Welcome Ye to a Quaker Home", author unknown.

Quaker Monastery
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Harrisville, MI 48740



www.QuakerMonastery.org