

BRIDGE CITY FRIENDS MEETING



We meet at:

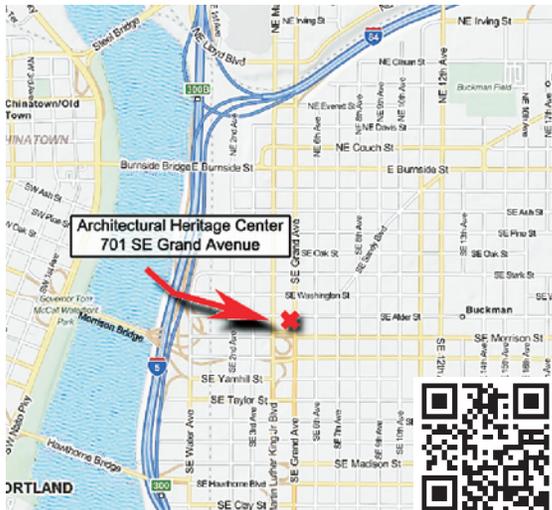
**Architectural Heritage Center
701 SE Grand Avenue
Portland, OR 97214**

Sundays, 10:00 - 11:30 AM

(the first 15 minutes is usually devoted to singing)

A Welcoming Community

**PLEASE JOIN US
FOR WORSHIP**



BRIDGE CITY FRIENDS MEETING (QUAKERS)

We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fighting with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretence whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world. The spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world... therefore we cannot learn war any more.

"A Declaration from the Harmless and Innocent People of God, called Quakers"

presented to King Charles II,

upon the 21st day of the 11th Month, 1660

[From the Journal of George Fox and others]

<http://www.bridgecitymeeting.org>



We meet for Worship each First Day (Sunday).

10:00 to 11:30 pm - Meeting for Worship

11:30 to 11:45 pm - Coffee, Tea & conversation
following Meeting in the Social Hall, Room
202.

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The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

WHO WE ARE

We call ourselves Friends, and our group the Religious Society of Friends. We have 2 meetings in the Portland area: **Bridge City Friends Meeting** [the author of this page] and **Multnomah Monthly Meeting**. Multnomah is much larger than Bridge City and has several Worship Groups, formally "under its care", and other meetings loosely affiliated with it.

Quakers today are diverse in their religious belief. The most fundamental belief of Quakerism is: There is that of God within everyone. There is an inner light within us all that will guide us if we listen to it. Other beliefs and practices of Friends follow from this belief rather than from dogma. While Quakerism comes out of the Christian tradition, and many Friends consider themselves Christian, there are Friends who have a Universalist point of view.

In our meetings for worship, which last about an hour, we meditate in expectant silence. In the stillness we may pray, give thanks, or contemplate. We may consider the events in our lives, the events in the world around us, a book we have read, or something else. If worshipers feel the spirit within themselves leads them to do so, they may speak, sharing their hopes or insights. Vocal ministry may be poetic or it may be halting, but it is the substance of what is said that is important. Vocal ministry may comfort, it may be pointed, it may be prophetic, and it may be disturbing. After a worshiper has spoken, we contemplate what has been said. The stillness of our corporate worship enables us to listen to others and to know better our fears, doubts, failings, our common humanity and divinity, humor, strength, and God. This knowledge is chiefly what has freed Friends to do the things we have done and it is the primary source of whatever integrity we have.

Like most organizations, we have business decisions to make, but our decisions are not made by a small group of people in a back room. All members and

attenders may participate in our business meetings. When we are considering what we will do, we seek unity rather than calling a vote. Seeking unity means that we try to unite on what seems right to do. We believe that the Light within us all will lead us to the right decision. To ensure we follow that light, periods of quiet worship occur during these meetings. We decide some matters quickly. Others take us months or years to come to unity on. No matter how long it takes us to reach a decision, we find that our decisions seem to have a power of their own, and are seldom reversed.

Our individual meetings are called Monthly Meetings because we have a business meeting once a month. This has, upon occasion, led to some confusion among people not familiar with Friends who think that this means we meet once a month. This is not the case. It is only the business meeting that occurs once a month. Meetings for worship generally occur every week.

Friends have a number of Testimonies, which are goals or practices that most Friends feel follow from our belief in the Light within everyone. Principal among these testimonies are those of Peace and of Simplicity.

The Peace testimony goes far beyond the simple idea that war is wrong. It is a commitment to try to solve all problems without violence and threats. Whenever a problem is 'solved' through the use of force, those against whom violence was used are left dissatisfied and the seeds of future violence are sown. Nonviolent solutions are lasting and bring harmony. We seek not only to bring about an end to violence once it has started, but also an end to the causes of violence. Many people associate Quakers with draft resisters, but do not realize that we believe we must work as hard for peace in times of peace as in times of war.

The testimony of Simplicity is a commitment not to live beyond our needs. This doesn't mean that we live spartan and monastic lives. Friends go to movies, have VCRs, and enjoy a good meal. We recognize that more than food, shelter, and clothing are needed to make a person happy. But we feel that living a life of excess and conspicuous consumption gets in the way of the true joys of life. Simplicity also applies to our speech and behavior. It means saying what we mean, being honest and fair, and acting in moderation. Friends do not believe in taking oaths because doing so sets up a double standard of truth. We feel that one should

always tell the truth, in or out of a courtroom.

Friends also have testimonies on Community, Equality, and Unity. Community means just that: providing a framework to care for those in need and a basis from which we can test, find support for, and exercise leadings of the Spirit. Unity means acting with unity in reaching and carrying out our decisions. Equality is the oldest of the Friends' testimonies and is the idea that all people are equal in God's eyes. It has led to a conscious effort to eliminate all words and behavior that arise from distinctions such as class, race, sex, or social status. Equality also means that we have no clergy. For over 300 years, Quakers have held that we are all able to know and share the Light, and throughout those years women and men have shared in the leadership of Quakerism.

Principles without action mean nothing. Accordingly, Friends have a number of ways of acting on their beliefs.

We have a national lobbying group in Washington called the **Friends Committee on National Legislation** (FCNL) which lobbies for causes supported by Friends. We have a service organization called **The American Friends Service Committee**, (AFSC) which undertakes self-help projects and social justice projects both in the United States and abroad. These two organizations employ Quaker process to seek unity in setting policy and goals.

In addition, our meetings have committees which undertake smaller projects within that meeting's means. These committees go by the imposing titles like The Peace and Social Order Committee. Do not let the name scare you. Anyone is welcome to join the meetings of the committee, and new ideas are always welcome.

If you are curious about us, visit a Friends' Meeting sometime. Before coming to Meeting, we find it helpful to avoid the radio, television, newspapers, and squabbles. There is no need to dress up. We wear to meeting the clothes we work and play in.

We will welcome you and gladly answer any questions that you may have.