

CHICO FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

Eighth Month (August) 2024

Chico Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Clerk: Rebecca Senoglu (rsenoglu@yahoo.com)

chicofriendsmeetingquakers.com

1601 Hemlock Street, Chico, CA 95928 (530-345-3753)

Chico Friends Meeting (CFM)

Quaker Thought and Life, each First Day (Sunday), 9:00 am on Zoom;

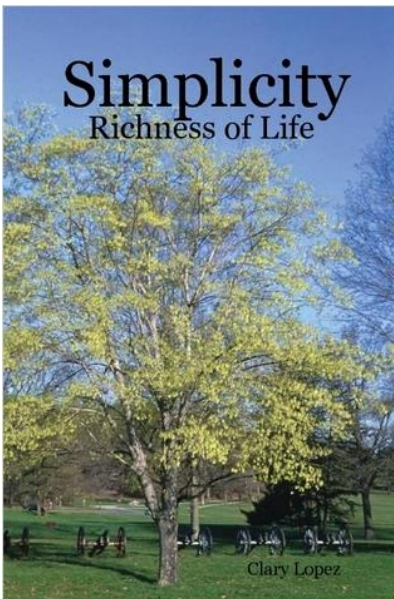
Meeting for Worship in person 11:00 am each First Day (Sunday)

Each Wednesday, Meeting for Worship 7:00 pm and Quaker Exploration 7:30 pm on Zoom

Newsletter Deadline: 15th of the month

Linnea Hanson, Editor (linneachanson@gmail.com)

Peter Milbury and Bill Carlson, Assistant Editors



ADVICES AND QUERIES ON SIMPLICITY

Life is meant to be lived from a Center, a divine Center... a life of unhurried peace and power. It is simple. It is serene. It takes no time, but it occupies all our time. (Thomas R. Kelly, *Testament of Devotion*, 1941)

A life centered in God will be directed toward keeping communication with God open and unencumbered. Simplicity is best achieved through a right ordering of priorities, maintaining humility of spirit, avoiding self-indulgence, resisting the accumulation of unnecessary possessions, and avoiding over-busy lives.

Elise Boulding writes in *My Part in the Quaker Adventure*:

“Simplicity, beauty, and happiness go together if they are a by-product of a concern for something more important than ourselves.”

- Do I center my life in an awareness of God’s presence so that all things take their rightful place?
- Do I live simply, and promote the right sharing of the world’s bounty?
- Do I keep my life uncluttered with things and activities, avoiding commitments beyond my strength and light?
- How do I maintain simplicity, moderation, and honesty in my speech, my manner of living, and my daily work?
- Do I recognize when I have enough?

- *Is the life of our Meeting so ordered that it helps us to simplify our lives?*

(From *Faith and Practice, A Guide to Quaker Discipline in the Experience of Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends*, 2001)

Chico Friends Meeting
Meeting for Business, July 14, 2024
Minutes

If it were necessary for every member to feel equally happy about the decisions reached, we should be presuming to be settling matters in an angelic colony and not among flesh and blood members of a local Quaker meeting! From the point of view of myself as a member of a meeting, the kind of unanimity that is referred to is a realization on my part that the matter has been carefully and patiently considered. I have had a chance at different stages of the process of arriving at this decision of making my point of view known to the group, of having it seriously considered and weighed. Even if the decision finally goes against what I initially proposed, I know that my contribution has helped to sift the issue, perhaps to temper it, and I may well have, as the matter has patiently taken its course, come to see it somewhat differently from the point at which I began. ... I have also come to realize that the group as a whole finds this resolution what seems best to them. When this point comes, if I am a seasoned Friend, I no longer oppose it. ... I emerge from the meeting not as a member of a bitter minority who feels he has been outflanked and rejected but rather as one who has been through the process of the decision and is willing to abide by it even though my accent would not have put it in this form.

DOUGLAS STEERE,
THE QUAKER DECISION MAKING PROCESS
(*Faith and Practice, PacYM, p. 133*)

Present: Rebecca Senoglu-clerk, Kathy Runyan-recording, Bob Runyan, Peter Milbury, Christine Rowe, Susan Rahn, Linnea Hanson, Tanya Heaston, Janet Leslie, Gayle Matson, Bill Carlson, Jim Anderson, Rick Narad, Linda Rowell

Regrets: JM Rodriguez, Peter Klement, Paul Harris

We began with a period of worship.

After welcoming us, Clerk Rebecca invited us to break into small groups to reflect on the quote above. Afterward, Rebecca reminded us that last month we decided to postpone doing some discernment about forming an ad hoc committee to consider committee restructuring options that will best serve the life of the Meeting. Our meeting today has a full agenda so Rebecca will put this on next month's agenda. Rebecca reminded us all to clerk ourselves- listen attentively, speak concisely, and try not to repeat what has already been said.

Reports

- **Nominating Committee Report:** Rebecca Senoglu, ex officio member, reported on behalf of the committee. She read the minute that we approved last month stating that we agreed to ask everyone to extend their terms by one year. Most have agreed to extend but some are still in discernment. New developments for us to consider- Paul Harris has reconsidered and volunteered to hold a second one-year term on the Nominating Committee ending in June 2025. Also, Susan Rahn has shared that she doesn't find Nominating Committee to be a good fit at this time but would like to be considered for the role of Meetinghouse Steward. We will season these nominations for one month and consider them for approval next month. Since the Committee does not have a clerk, Rebecca will serve as the interim contact person for the Nominating Committee.
- **Treasurer's Report:** Christine Rowe, Treasurer, shared the 2nd Quarter financial report. She shared the budget status. The assessments and insurance were paid so they look out of balance but they cover the

rest of the year. Otherwise, we are at or under budget. The Balance Sheet details what we have and what we owe and how it balances out. The fund balances are not cash rather they are reserve “buckets” of amounts that are in our accounts.

- Finance Committee Report: Rick Narad, Clerk, shared that they removed a capital line item from the budget with the plan to create a capital improvements budget. He shared a draft of their capital budgeting process, which details a timeline for proposing capital improvements and how those proposals would inform the capital improvements budget. We will season this for a month. In the meantime, Rebecca invited people to talk with Finance Committee members. Rick then shared that they are reconsidering the structure of all of our funds and how to keep them funded. They are also looking at the amount sitting in the Reserve Fund and what expenditures might be required for building maintenance in the near future. They are looking at changing the Meetinghouse Renovation Fund to a Capital Expenditures Fund and perhaps folding the other smaller Funds into the Reserve Fund. Finally, they are working on creating a standard email address for the Treasurer to use with outside institutions rather than using each Treasurer’s personal email address.
- Buildings and Grounds Committee Report: Tanya Heaston, Co-clerk, offered their recommendation for going forward on what to do with the non-functional Fellowship Hall door. The committee has been gathering input for several months and after considering all the input, they recommend going forward with the single large window to replace both the door and the current window. The funds would come from the Meetinghouse Renovation Fund. A long period of heartfelt sharing followed. Friends spoke in support of this decision to let more light and air into the Fellowship Hall. One friend shared a distinction between two types of decision-making processes. The first kind has to do with our preferences and the other has more to do with who we are as Friends. It raises a question of how we use our resources. As Woolman said, “How shall we use our treasures, the furniture of our houses...?” What is God’s Will for us as a Meeting? A new Friend felt called to speak to the need for a pause. She also shared that she is more interested in how our faith is put into practice. Another Friend rose to say she feels a lack of unity about the decision-making process. One friend expressed concerns about accusations, divisiveness, factionalism and gossip in our meeting. She went back to our files and found the matrix for care of the building that we used to use. She believes this format helps us talk about these decisions more respectfully. For some, the window decision falls into a necessary, practical improvement, for others it is an aesthetic improvement. We continued to listen to each other, with many expressing that the decision about the window was less important than our process and the love we have for each other. In the end, no one felt led to stand in the way of the window project going forward as proposed by the Buildings and Grounds committee. We minuted the decision to approve the proposal. We included in the minute our understanding that we need to address divisiveness in our community, discern our priorities, and deepen our understanding of how we make decisions before we engage in any further projects.

Minute 1.7.2024: Chico Friends Meeting approves the recommendation of the Buildings and Grounds Committee to install one large window in the Fellowship Hall to replace the non-functional door and the current window and make necessary electrical improvements. We understand that before moving forward on any other large projects, we will labor together to discern as a Meeting what our priorities are, based on who we are as Quakers, and how we will best work together in love and unity.

- Ministry and Oversight Committee Report: Jim Anderson, Clerk, was asked by Clerk Rebecca to abbreviate his report by only sharing the recommendation being brought to us. Jim shared the committee’s recommendation that Peter Milbury be accepted into membership in Chico Friends Meeting.

Minute 2.7.2024: Chico Friends Meeting welcomes Peter Milbury back into membership.

- Witness and Service Committee Report: Janet Leslie, Clerk, was asked to distribute the hard copies of her report packets rather than read her report. The packets include an update about Plastic Free July, 2007 minutes from PacYM and CFM on climate change, and the CFM Long-term Project Matrix that was created after we purchased our meetinghouse.

Given the length and intensity of our meeting, we agreed that it was not necessary to approve the narrative minutes since both action minutes have already been approved.

We closed with a brief period of worship.

CFM AUGUST EVENT CALENDAR

**All events on Zoom Except Meeting for Worship, Meeting for Business,
Singing Circle, Care Day and Peace Vigil.**

Please visit our online calendar for recent updates: <http://www.chicofriendsmeetingquakers.com/>

7/29	Mon.	(3:00 pm)	Meeting for Worship with Diana Fogel. Contact Loree Monroe
7/31	Weds.	(6:30 pm)	Midweek Worship on Zoom . Contact Bob Runyan
		(7:00 pm)	Quaker Exploration on Zoom . Contact Bob Runyan
8/1	Thurs.	(7:00 pm)	<u>Rise Up Singing Circle in person Contact Leslie Howard</u>
8/4	First Day	(9:00 am)	Quaker Thought and Life (QTL): Advices and Queries, Read-Discuss on Zoom . Contact Bob Runyan
	(Sunday)	(10:10 am)	Singing in the Fellowship Hall in person . Contact Rebecca Senoglu
		(11:00 am)	Meeting for Worship in person . Contact M&O Committee
		(1:00 pm)	Plastic Free July evaluation and sharing. FH. Contact Gayle Matson
		(3:00 pm)	Make dinner and serve at the Torres Shelter. Contact Ashley Milbury
8/7	Weds.	(6:30 pm)	Midweek Worship on Zoom . Contact Bob Runyan
		(7:00 pm)	Quaker Exploration on Zoom . Contact Bob Runyan
8/10	Sat.	(9:00 am)	<u>Meetinghouse Care Day. Contact Tanya Heaston</u>
8/11	First Day	(9:00 am)	QTL: Discuss on Zoom
	(Sunday)	(11:00 am)	Meeting for Worship in person
		(1:00 pm)	Meeting for Business in person . Contact Rebecca Senoglu
8/12	Mon.	(3:00 pm)	Meeting for Worship with Diana Fogel. Contact Loree Monroe
8/14	Weds.	(6:30 pm)	Midweek Worship on Zoom
		(7:00 pm)	Quaker Exploration on Zoom
8/17	Sat.	(5:00 pm)	<u>Simple Supper at Bob and Kathy Runyan's</u>
8/18	First Day	(9:00 am)	QTL: Discuss on Zoom
	(Sunday)	(10:10 am)	Singing in the Fellowship Hall in person .
		(11:00 am)	Meeting for Worship in person
		(evening)	Plastic Free July dinner with Congregational Beth Israel
8/21	Weds.	(6:30 pm)	Midweek Worship on Zoom
		(7:00 pm)	Quaker Exploration on Zoom
8/24	Sat.	(10:00 am)	Chico Peace Alliance. Contact Jim Anderson
		(12:30 pm)	<u>Chico Peace Vigil. Contact Janet Leslie</u>
8/25	First Day	(9:00 am)	QTL: Discussion on Bible Study on Zoom . Contact Janet Leslie
	(Sunday)	(11:00 am)	Meeting for Worship in person
		(12:30 pm)	Potluck in person in Fellowship Hall
8/26	Mon.	(3:00 pm)	Meeting for Worship with Diana Fogel. Contact Loree Monroe
8/28	Weds.	(6:30 pm)	Midweek Worship on Zoom
		(7:00 pm)	Quaker Exploration on Zoom

CHICO FRIENDS MEETING EVENTS & NEWS

On Standing Aside by Jim Anderson

In worship the day after our July meeting for business, I came to understand “standing aside” in a new way. I had shared my reservations about the proposed new window installation and a searching time of discernment

followed. Eventually the clerk read unity in the meeting and when she looked to me specifically for approval, I said "I approve." I felt suddenly a block inside and I carried that into the remainder of the day. In my own experience of clerking, I generally felt troubled by people standing aside from approval of a minute. I felt that even if they disagreed, it was better to join in approval as a sign of support for the meeting's unity and its moving forward. My own approval was an effort to do that, but it had the opposite effect. I felt more isolated, sensing that I had not been honest with the meeting and myself, since it was not true that I could in conscience approve the action itself [much as I could affirm that the meeting, having found unity, should move ahead.] I should have stood aside, and then worked to maintain unity with my meeting as it took action. Standing aside would have put me in a better, more honest, relationship with the meeting. I share this because I think this personal experience may give others in such a situation a way of meeting it.

Dinners at the Torres Shelter in July and August, Continuity and Change by Janet Leslie

Sunday July 7 was, as usual, full of the energy and fun of working together, and also of more practice (for me) of responding to unanticipated changes with calmness and humor--I don't like disorder, but I'm learning, and glad of it. This time, these changes included:

(1) some new entry arrangements that left some of us waiting outside; (2) new kitchen staff, the quite wonderful Gabriel, who entered into everything with such friendliness and energy and was a real asset, though how he does this working two jobs and getting far too little sleep, I don't know; (3) my having forgotten the CFM T-shirts and aprons, though no-one else seemed to notice; (4) a new request that we sign *seven (!)* pages of a volunteer agreement, which everyone took in stride and we even wore the recently introduced hair nets; (5) the discovery that the donated canned pinto beans we had been expecting to use for our usual Bean-Cheese Enchilada Casserole were *dry* beans (who ever heard of *canned* dry beans?) requiring a trip to Food Maxx for *cooked* canned beans, which were unexpectedly hard to find there; (6) a huge amount of donated food (which is great but makes for a bit of chaos) and Gabriel suggested that we make a fruit salad rather than our planned fresh veggie one to use up some of the strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, oranges, and grapes; we had very efficient fruit slicers among us, and the salad was delicious and very special, and went well with Leslie Howard's brownies and Christine Rowe's mango-fig fruit bars.

As usual, staff and guests at the Shelter were friendly and appreciative, and working with others from Chico Friends Meeting was full of light-heartedness and ease. Jim Anderson team led and Janet Leslie assisted; Karen Burdette, Ashley Milbury, and Judith Stone came for prep along with Christine Rowe who stayed on to serve, joined by Bob Runyan and Kathy Runyan. Gabriel joined the serving team too, which was helpful, since there are new arrangements for serving, with desserts and beverages served from the kitchen rather than at tables in the dining room. Somehow, with all the changes, the atmosphere at the Shelter is calm and friendly, and it feels orderly. I like being there. People are amazing.

A revelation was included in my experience of this July Torres Shelter dinner: *How did we not notice until now* how many of the purchases for the dinner menu Jim and I habitually turn to are encased in plastic??? Of course, before now, it wasn't Plastic Free July! So now that we see this, we need to take up a new menu. We're thinking chili with beans and textured vegetable protein and cornbread baked at the Shelter, and always going to the Farmer's Market for the veggies. I wonder what other changed behaviors will result from this July experience, for us and for others?

Sunday August 4 is our next dinner prep and serving at the Shelter.

Please contact Ashley Milbury, our team leader for August, to sign up to help prepare (3-5:30 pm) and/or serve (5:30-7:00 pm) whatever delicious meal he puts together with our help. It's always a learning experience, and fun to work together there. Contact Ashley at (unabashedly@icloud.com).

Rise Up Singing by Leslie Howard

"Summertime and the singin' is easy." Celebrate the arrival of our warmer weather by joining us for the Rise Up Singing Circle in person at the Chico Friends Meeting Fellowship Hall, Thursday, August 1, 7-9 PM. As always, feel free to bring friends, musical instruments, and snacks to share. We have copies to share of Rise Up Singing and Rise Again, the compilations by Peter Blood and Annie Patterson of words and chords to almost 2400 great songs. There is sure to be a song there that will please you.

We are now meeting in the Fellowship Hall, where kitchen and restrooms are close at hand. This is a cozy space and we are sitting a bit more closely to each other, so feel free to wear a mask if you feel you should, and please stay home if you feel you have any symptoms of illness, COVID or other.

We have enjoyed having an increased number of singers lately and hope that many of you will be inspired by the joy of singing, warmer weather, and good fellowship to join us. Contact Leslie Howard for more information at leslie.t.howard@gmail.com.

Meeting for Worship and Singing with Diana Fogel by Loree Monroe

Please join us for Meeting for Worship and Singing on Monday July 29, Monday Aug 12, Monday Aug 26 (every other Mondays) at 3 pm in Diana Fogel's room at Arbor Post Acute, 1200 Springfield Dr., Chico. Contact Loree Monroe at loree.monroe@gmail.com for details.

Ministry and Oversight items by Jim Anderson, M&O clerk

Time did not allow us to present the M&O report at the July business meeting, so I'm noting a few announcements that would have been given then, here below:

- 1- After some months of consideration of this possibility, we have decided to lay down the Sunday on-line worship session. In past months it has been almost always empty. We invite comments from all and retain the possibility of opening it again if there are those who desire to attend.
- 2- We are eliminating the signup practice for snacks. We will maintain a supply of simple and healthy snacks to draw on for our fellowship time, and welcome those who desire to bring additional snacks to do so.
- 3- We have invited members of PYM eldering subcommittee to bring us a workshop session in the fall, the specific date to be settled soon.

Care Day by Tanya Heaston

Care Day, will be on Saturday, Aug. 10th, 9:00am – 12:00pm. Join us for a half hour or more and help get our buildings us ready for *Meeting for Worship and Fellowship!*

The weather has been beautiful and so has our garden! Now it's time to spruce it up a bit, and clean out the extra weeds. Our Care Day is when we do the most of our house-cleaning chores. CFM doesn't hire a cleaner, so it's all up to us to keep the buildings clean and ready for guests; with vacuuming, dusting, mopping and more to spruce up the Meeting House and Fellowship Hall.

“Many hands make light work.” We hope to *see you on Saturday at our Care Day!*

Simple Supper August 17 by Kathy Runyan

Kathy and Bob Runyan will host the simple supper/potluck at their new home at 4 Yale Way on Saturday, August 17th from 5:00-8:00 PM. The main dish will be provided. Those who wish to bring side dishes or desserts or just themselves are all welcome.

Turning Up: Some thoughts from Witness and Service Committee by Janet Leslie

What do we have the time for? How do we make choices about where and how to participate in all that our community offers? I miss the presence of others from Chico Friends Meeting at the Saturday Peace Vigil in downtown Chico, as only two of us are there regularly. Is this no longer an effort in which our Meeting is led to participate? Summer heat, I know, is a factor, but CFM has been mostly absent for some time now, as is also the case with Chico Peace Alliance. Are there other ways in which we might work together for peace and justice?

Witness and Service Committee worked with Chico Islamic Center (CIC) and Chico Area Interfaith Council to bring other faith communities to CIC's Eid al-Adha celebration in June. Eight to ten Chico Friends Meeting members and attenders turned up, some coming to a mosque for the first time, and the conversations at dinner around tables outside were vibrant and illuminating.

Three of us turned up for Chico Peace Alliance group at the CARD July 4th Parade, the theme of which was children and play, and it was a joyful time, dancing along with our hands, umbrellas, kid cutouts and other displays. Here are 2 photos:



I was so happy that so many from our Meeting (Ten, plus four to five from the wider Chico community) turned up at our Plastic Free July (PFJ) movie night July 14. The movie, "The Story of Plastic", was eye-opening and the presence of different perspectives was energizing. Our partnership on PFJ with Congregation Beth Israel's Tikkun Olam/Social Action Committee is building an ongoing relationship between our faith communities, and we're making connections with other local faith communities around this shared concern.

Some PFJ follow-up events will happen in August, including a time after Meeting on August 4 for sharing our experience, what we learned, challenges we faced and changes we've made. Plans are underway for a hummus-making workshop with Congregation Beth Israel (CBI) in July and dinner or picnic with folks CBI on August 18.

WIDER QUAKER COMMUNITY

News from Ben Lomond Quaker Center:

Join us for worship daily from 7:30 – 8 a.m. Pacific time through our online Meeting for Worship from anywhere in the world.

Wednesday Morning Worship Sharing Continues on Zoom at 10 a.m. (PT) every week.

Upcoming Programs at Quaker Center in Ben Lomond by Paul Harris, Quaker Center Liaison.

Find detailed information at <www.quakercenter.org>

July 30-August 4: Family Work Camp (in person). A cherished summer tradition. A week of Quaker Center work projects, fun and fellowship. Spend time with old friends and make some new ones. All are welcome.

August 30-September 2: Quaker Center at 75 (in person). Let's mark this milestone. Please join us on this diamond date to reflect on Quaker Center's extraordinary history, and look ahead together to the next glorious 75 years. We'll hold an extended weekend of celebration, events and activities, and recommit to the BLQC's core mission of nurturing the spiritual growth and faithfulness of our community and beyond.

September 27-29: Being Moved: An Exploration of Embodied Spiritual Presence, with Jane Blount and Kindred Gottlieb (in person). Quakers speak about being 'moved by the spirit.' This weekend, we invite you to be moved beyond sitting on the Meetinghouse bench, and to explore embodied presence, movement and sound. Open to all, including those with physical limitations.

WIDER CHICO AREA COMMUNITY

How Good to Center Down submitted by Christine Rowe

Mystic and theologian Howard Thurman (1899–1981) writes of the contemplative practice of making time to “center down”.

How good it is to center down!
To sit quietly and see one’s self pass by!
The streets of our minds seethe with endless traffic;
Our spirits resound with clashings, with noisy silences,
While something deep within hungers and thirsts for the still
moment and the resting lull....
The questions persist: what are we doing with our lives?—
what are the motives that order our days?
What is the end of our doings? Where are we trying to go?...
Over and over the questions beat in upon the waiting moment.
As we listen, floating up through all the jangling echoes
of our turbulence, there is a sound of another kind—
A deeper note which only the stillness of the heart
makes clear.
It moves directly to the core of our being. Our questions are
answered,
Our spirits refreshed, and we move back into the traffic of
our daily round
With the peace of the Eternal in our step.
How good it is to center down! [1]

Reference

[1] Howard Thurman, “How Good to Center Down!,” in *Meditations of the Heart* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1953, 1981, 2022), 12–13.



Peace Vigil every Saturday in downtown Chico by Janet Leslie for Witness and Service Committee

For 60+ years, local peace-loving folks have been turning up on the corners of 3rd and Main Streets to stand for peace and justice. Members and attenders of Chico Friends Meeting have been there since 1979, I think, when our Meeting started as a small worship group. Rain or shine, in war and so-called peace. Some of us come for the whole hour (12:30-1:30 pm), others for part of that time.

There is such camaraderie, good conversations with each other and passersby. I always come away with my spirits lifted, hope renewed. Bring your own sign or select one from those provided. Our Meeting has asked Friends to make a special effort to be there on fourth Saturdays, but the Vigil is there every Saturday. Join in! Your presence makes a difference.



CHICO FRIENDS MEETING—8th MONTH—AUGUST, 2024

(All events by Zoom except Meetings for Worship and Business, Care Day, Singing Circle, Simple Supper and Peace Vigil)

First Day (Sunday)	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	29 3:00 pm Meeting for Worship with Diana Fogel	30	31 6:30 pm Worship 7:00 pm Quaker Exploration	1 7:00 pm Singing Circle	2	3
4 9:00 am Zoom Quaker Thought 10:10 am Singing, in person 11:00 am In-person Worship 1:00 pm Evaluation & Sharing +Afternoon: Torres Dinner	5	6	7 6:30 pm Worship 7:00 pm Quaker Exploration	8	9	10 9:00 am Meetinghouse Care Day
11 Regular Schedule: +1:00 pm Meeting for Business, in person	12 3:00 pm Meeting for Worship	13	14 6:30 pm Worship 7:00 pm Quaker Exploration	15	16	17 5 pm Simple Supper at Bob and Kathy Runyan's

	with Diana Fogel					
18 Regular Schedule: +10:10 am Singing , in person Evening, Dinner with Congregational Beth Israel	19	20	21 6:30 pm Worship 7:00 pm Quaker Exploration	22	23	24 10:00 am Chico Peace Alliance 12:30 pm CFM at Chico Peace Vigil
25 Regular Schedule +9:00 am QTL Bible Study on Zoom 12:30 pm Potluck in FH	26 3:00 pm Meeting for Worship with Diana Fogel	27	28 6:30 pm Worship 7:00 pm Quaker Exploration	29	30	31

Please visit our online calendar for recent updates. <http://www.chicofriendsmeetingquakers.com>

<p>Chico Friends Meeting 1601 Hemlock Street Chico, CA 95928</p>
