

LISTENING CIRCLES FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIP AND TRANSFORMING CONFLICT

HEATHER COOK & KAREN REIXACH

JANUARY 25-27, 2019



*Program cost of \$225
includes program, meals
and accommodation.*

*Sliding scale and
scholarships available.*

**WOOLMAN HILL
Quaker Retreat Center**

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When conflict reveals itself, it often feels like both an institutional and a personal crisis. Quaker meetings, like any other organism, can become paralyzed by fear and distrust when conflict occurs, whether openly or in the background. We may respond with worry, hyper-vigilance, hand-wringing, and confusion. Frequently, we try to ignore or smooth over the ruffled feelings, only to find the conflict resurfacing in unexpected ways.

Caught up in our reactions, we often forget that conflict is a normal and integral part of all dynamic organizations and relationships. It can be an indication of people feeling safe to be authentic and to take risks. Addressed creatively and confidently, it can be transforming. The practice of skillfully addressing conflict is grounded in the experience of the divine: that we are meant to love and be loved in our entirety, to see and be seen with compassion, complete with the parts that ache for healing. The practice expresses the truth of the transforming power of God in our lives.

This workshop is for people who are ready to help their meetings – and themselves – grow less fear-driven and more whole. One approach that has been helpful in a wide range of settings, including Quaker meetings, is the circle process. Circle processes have ancient roots in human history. They are used for many reasons—to celebrate, to grieve, to tell stories, to acknowledge harm, to address conflicts, and more. Circle processes are in harmony with Quaker faith and practice. Circles provide a structured way to follow our practices of deep listening and of seeking connection through that of God in ourselves and others.

Heather Cook and Karen Reixach are members of the New York Yearly Meeting Conflict Transformation Committee and have been trained in circle process by Kay Pranis, a leading trainer in this restorative justice practice. They have done a number of conflict transformation trainings, including at Woolman Hill, All Friends Maine conference, and the FGC Gathering. They see the work of a facilitator as creating a vessel where Friends feel comfortable, empowered, and inspired to participate fully; drawing out the wisdom of the group; being equipped with more than simply good intentions; and helping participants connect dots, build bridges, and rise up changed. Heather is a member of Central Finger Lakes Meeting, NYYM, and Karen is a member of Ithaca Meeting, NYYM.

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COST & REGISTRATION

The standard rate for this retreat is \$225 with a sliding scale of \$165-330. The fee includes program, lodging and food from Friday dinner through Sunday lunch. Commuter rate is \$165. Please pay what fits in your personal budget, encourage your faith community to support your participation if that is appropriate, and please ask if you need additional scholarship funds. A non-refundable deposit of \$50 is required to hold a space for the program. If you need to cancel, the deposit can be applied to a future workshop.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Plan to arrive after 4:30pm Friday evening, in time for dinner at 6:30. The workshop will end by 2pm on Sunday. We are centrally located in western Massachusetts, close to both I-91 and Route 2. For those arriving by car, we will send directions after you register. Please let us know if you'd be interested in car-pooling. The nearest Amtrak train station is in Greenfield (MA). Vermont Transit and Peter Pan bus lines also stop in Greenfield. Please contact us in advance to see if we can arrange a ride from these stations.

ROOM & BOARD

Our 19th-century farmhouse has hand-hewn beams and wide pine floors, with simple dorm-style lodging. The meetinghouse and the first floor of the main building are wheelchair accessible. Our cabins have electricity, woodstoves and outhouses. We serve nourishing, primarily vegetarian, home-cooked meals and always offer a vegetarian option. Please let us know if you have any dietary restrictions. Part of the community building at each retreat includes the joyful sharing of meal chores and final clean-up.

WHAT TO BRING

Please bring your own toiletries, towels, and bedding (sleeping bag or sheets and blankets or comforter). Pillows are provided. Be sure to bring seasonally appropriate clothes and comfortable indoor and outdoor footwear. You might also like to bring a flashlight, journal, musical instrument... Please do NOT bring pets or candles. We have limited internet access and cell phone reception. We encourage guests to consider how cell phone or computer use may detract from their experience of being fully present, here and now.

TO REGISTER ON-LINE for this program, or for more details, please visit our website (www.woolmanhill.org) OR fill out the information below and send it to the address above with a \$50 deposit made payable to Woolman Hill. The balance is due at the beginning of the workshop.

Listening Circles, January 25-27, 2019		
NAME:		MONTHLY MEETING (if applicable):
E-MAIL:	PHONE:	Circle: home / work / mobile
STREET ADDRESS: CITY, STATE, ZIP:		
Check if you wish: <input type="checkbox"/> NOT to share your contact info with other participants. <input type="checkbox"/> NOT to be on our mailing list.		
ENCLOSED is \$ _____. We plan to pay a TOTAL of \$ _____ on the sliding scale. (See "Cost & Registration" above for fees.)		
DIETARY NEEDS Please check any that apply: <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian <input type="checkbox"/> Vegan <input type="checkbox"/> Gluten-free <input type="checkbox"/> No-dairy Other:	HOUSING Please check any that apply: <input type="checkbox"/> Commuting <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer main building <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer cabin <input type="checkbox"/> Light sleeper <input type="checkbox"/> Trouble with stairs <input type="checkbox"/> I snore <input type="checkbox"/> Need to be near bathroom Other:	TRANSPORT Please check any that apply: <input type="checkbox"/> Willing to offer ride(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Need ride <input type="checkbox"/> Willing to drive or ride <input type="checkbox"/> Willing to have my contact info shared <input type="checkbox"/> Would like public transport info Other: