

Seeking Simplicity

“Simplicity is a matter of spiritual intent, or an aim of the heart. It consists of aligning our lives with what we hear when we listen to our Guide. If we listen quietly to the cool, calm Center within, there is an invitation to a simpler and more meaningful life awaiting each of us.”

OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Over the past thirty years author Catherine Whitmire has served the Quaker community in many leadership roles, including supervising community empowerment projects in New England for the American Friends Service Committee. She is an Alternatives to Violence trainer and has nonviolent communication and mediation training.



Whitmire received her Master's of Divinity in 1987 from Harvard Divinity School. Since then, she has served as a Protestant Chaplain and pastoral counselor on a psychiatric unit of an inner-city hospital in Boston. She attended the Shalem Institute's program in spiritual direction in 1997 and is currently writing, providing spiritual direction, and leading peace and nonviolence workshops and retreats.

The author of *Plain Living: A Quaker Path to Simplicity*, a compilation of Quaker Wisdom for achieving simplicity, and *Practicing Peace: a devotional walk through Quaker tradition*, Whitmire lives with her husband, Tom Ewell, in a home overlooking the Puget Sound in Washington.

FINDING A FAMILY CENTER with Scot Miller and Jennifer Seif

Many of us as parents find our role in tension with the “spirit of the times.” Instead of conforming to cultural models of consumption and self-centeredness, we want to foster simplicity of heart, mind, and body in the lives of our children. Scot and Jennifer, Quaker parents, will explore intentional practices that help them remain alert to spiritual leadings in parenting.

SIMPLICITY AS SUFFICIENCY with Roland Kreager

All too often Friends order their lives from the perspective of scarcity. Simplicity may become, “the less the better.” Roland, General Secretary for Right Sharing of World Resources, will explore a perspective based on God as provider and grounded in a vision of sufficiency. Participants will consider how an alternative witness may change our approach to the testimony of simplicity.

FINDING SIMPLICITY IN CLAY with Jiae Paik

In this workshop, ceramic artist, Jiae, will facilitate the use of clay as a way to clear the mind and heart of restless thoughts and tangled emotions. Participants will have opportunity to sit with the clay as a contemplative tool for cleansing unnecessary thoughts and emotions. After the hands-on experience, participants will be invited to share their reflections.

JOYFIELD FARM: A CASE STUDY with Anna Lisa and Rachel Gross

Can utopian communes work? Anna Lisa, a Bethany student, grew up in a small, intentional community. She and her mother, Rachel, will share the values that have enabled this one to thrive for 25 years! Joyfield Farm is rooted in radical Christianity and actively concerned about environmental sustainability. Participants will learn of a focus on homemade food, clothes, energy, entertainment, housing, and much more.

SIMPLICITY IN PRAYER with Suzanne LeVesconte

How might we open our souls to the workings of the Spirit through simple, but powerful prayer practices? Suzanne, an Episcopalian spiritual director, will guide participants in imagery prayer and prayer with the simple repetition of a prayer phrase or mantra. We will be invited to hold others in the healing light of Christ and to experience the flow of the Spirit praying through us.

TEACHING SIMPLICITY IN GUATEMALA with David Johns

The testimony of simplicity has helped generations of Quakers live through a maze of distractions and focus on what is truly important. But how can we talk about this important affirmation in contexts of need and poverty? In this workshop, David will consider the Quaker idea of simplicity as testimony and share from recent experiences teaching this concept in Central America.

SCRIPTIO DIVINA with Sarah Emmer

With the advent of the printing press, the prayerful practice of simply copying precious words and sacred documents by hand has been all but lost. Sarah, ESR student and Friend from Pacific Yearly Meeting, will guide participants in methods for immersing oneself in a single passage, meditating on meaning, form, and considering the nuances of a repetitive process of copying, which soaks the words into the mind and muscles.

FINDING OUR STORY OF SIMPLICITY with Marie Vandenburg

As we consider the meaning of simplicity as a Quaker and/or Christian, what are obstacles and opportunities for simpler living in our individual situations? Marie, adjunct professor at Bethany Theological Seminary, will sketch out an understanding of simplicity and reflect on her research of Amish/Quaker perspectives around simplicity.

Then, considering our own stories, Marie will invite participants to create a narrative of their own journey around this key testimony.

BURDENS OF AFFLUENCE/ BLESSINGS OF SIMPLICITY with Jackie Speicher

Early Friends took to heart biblical teaching on simple living. Such a lifestyle seems unattainable today; rather, many suffer the ironic burdens that develop from affluence. Jackie, a Field Representative for Right Sharing of World Resources and pastor of Xenia Friends Meeting, will discuss the experience of “affluenza” and will consider biblical and Quaker wisdom in healing this disease.

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING with Matthew Hisrich

Many trace the origins of Socially Responsible Investing, or SRI, to Quaker divestment from the slave trade in the 18th century. For those seeking to remain true to Quaker principles, is it possible to simplify investments in an era of mutual funds, corporations, and complex global markets? Matthew, an ESR student and author, will share some of the basic economics of SRI and invite discussion about ways to live out this core Quaker testimony in our own financial decisions.

CENTERING ON CONFLICT with Aaron Nell

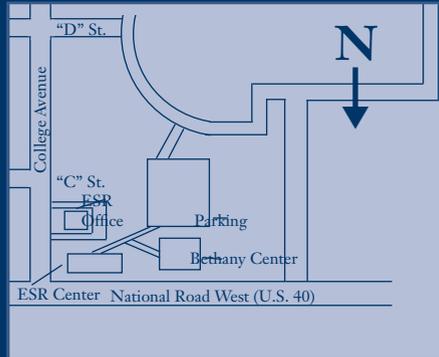
Though it seems counter-intuitive, by engaging the sources of conflict directly, we may move closer to possibilities for reconciliation. This workshop will focus on a particular discipline of conflict resolution, allowing participants to walk through and practice the discipline. Aaron, who directs programs for the Conflict Resolution Center in Richmond, will guide this discovery process and explore with participants the great potential that resides in the occasion of conflict.

Listening to the Spirit

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone (____) _____
 E-mail _____

The registration fee covers the day-long event, which includes a continental breakfast, lunch, refreshments, and two workshops.

Send registration to: *Listening to the Spirit*, Rita Cummins, Earlham School of Religion, 228 College Avenue, Richmond, IN 47374. Please make checks payable to Earlham School of Religion. 1-765-983-1423 or 1-800-432-1377 • E-mail: cummiri@earlham.edu



TO REACH EARLHAM SCHOOL OF RELIGION:

Approach Richmond via Interstate 70; exit at Williamsburg Pike south, merging after about a mile into Northwest 5th Street. Follow Northwest 5th Street to U.S. 40 (National Road West). Turn right and prepare to turn left one block later, at College Avenue. Turn left (south) on College Avenue. The ESR Center (stone building) sits on the southwest corner. To reach the parking lot, continue south on College Avenue to the first stop sign, turn right. Turn right again at the next stop sign and take the next right into the large parking lot.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 8:00 am Registration & Continental Breakfast
- 8:30 am Worship
- 9:00 am Opening Presentation: Catherine Whitmire, Keynote Speaker
- 10:30 am Break
- 10:45 am Workshop I
- 12:15 pm Lunch
- 1:45 pm Workshop II
- 3:15 pm Break
- 3:30 pm Closing remarks: Catherine Whitmire, Keynote Speaker

Gathering prior to February 20, 2008: \$35

Gathering after February 20, 2008: \$40

In keeping with our theme, a simple lunch of rice and beans, assorted breads, and fruit will be provided. Please feel free to bring additional food to support your dietary needs. Breaks will provide coffee, tea, juice, and fruit.

Workshop One preference (first & second choice)

- Finding a Family Center—*Scott Miller & Jennifer Seif*
- Simplicity as Sufficiency—*Roland Kraeger*
- Finding Simplicity in Clay—*Jiae Paik*
- Joyfield Farm: A Case Study—*Anna Lisa & Rachel Gross*
- Simplicity in Prayer—*Suzanne Le Vesconte*
- Centering On Conflict—*Aaron Nell*

Workshop Two preference (first & second choice)

- Teaching Simplicity in Guatemala—*David Johns*
- Scripto Divina—*Sarah Emmer*
- Finding Our Story of Simplicity—*Marie Vandenberg*
- Burdens and Blessings—*Jackie Speiber*
- Socially Responsible Investing—*Matt Hisrich*

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AN ESR SPIRITUALITY GATHERING

MARCH 1, 2008
 RICHMOND, INDIANA

Keynote Speaker:
 Catherine Whitmire

