

## Quaker Social Change Ministry: What is the connection between spirit and activism?

### History, Progress, and the Future:

The Orange Grove Monthly Meeting QSCM Group began early in 2017 and chose “Defending Immigrant Rights” as our concern. Together with the OGMM and Southern California Quarterly Meeting’s Peace and Social Concerns Committees, we have presented speakers on Privatized Immigrant Detention Centers (Emily Verdugo, Tucson AFSC), the US-Mexico Border Militarization (Pedro Rios, San Diego AFSC & Center for Immigrant Rights), and Non-violent activism and Scandinavian attempts to overcome economic inequality (George Lakey, Swarthmore College). We have collectively investigated the “Matthew 25” group, NDLO, CIVIC, CHIRLA, and POP. We began presenting regular congressional representative lobbying workshops from the Friends Committee on National Legislation and subsequently lobbied at the offices of Kamela Harris and Judy Chu. Several members also joined the recent ICUJP interfaith visit to the Adelanto Detention Center, where the facility turned away 80 clergy and members of faith from LA and the Inland Valley. A hunger strike has been underway at the facility and the group was attempting to undertake visitation with the detained immigrants.

Given the emphasis on accompanying in the group model, we have been trying to discern the best accompanying organization(s). Pablo Alvarado has agreed to offer some guidance, which seems promising given his extensive work in this area. We are considering offering “Know Your Rights”

workshops for the local community, as Lake Avenue Church has. Members have expressed interest in accompanying refugees to their court hearings, and may partner with Matthew 25 for that. Some may take a border tour this fall offered by a San Diego group that addresses immigration injustices. These are just some of the possibilities: everyone in the group is helping chart its direction.

At this Spring’s AFSC Centennial, keynote speaker Erica Chenoweth explained how studies show that the most successful efforts for lasting social and political change have been accomplished through non-violence and coordinated efforts among faith-based organizations. Time and again, we have been discovering other churches and temples are attempting to address the same issues we are, but we haven’t been benefiting from collective alliance.

Furthermore, like many Quakers, our members also have diverse spiritual practices or feel another congregation is also a spiritual home for them. Two of our members have spent a lot of time in both Unitarian Universalist Churches and Quaker Meetings; another is active with both the local Synagogue and our Quaker Meeting; another is active with ICUJP and maintains both Muslim and Quaker spiritual practices. All of these non-Quaker groups are active in defending immigrant rights, but we don’t yet benefit from the synergistic effect of coordinated efforts to realize and defend them. Hence we approached Neighborhood Unitarian Universalist Church to see if we might join forces, and received an enthusiastic response. We plan to hold our



first joint meeting there on September 19th. UU's and Quakers both hold compatible inclusive spiritual values, and have a shared history of activism for social justice. We're natural partners and can benefit from each other's collective experience. However, we do have different liturgy, worship styles, and decision making processes. We're about to see how to form an intentional alliance while respecting our differences.

## What is SCM? AFSC's description is something like this:

Social Change Ministry is based on a model developed by Unitarian Universalist minister Deborah Holder in Denver. The format has been adopted and promoted by the Quaker American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) as QSCM or "Quaker Social Change Ministry." Burn-out is common in activism for social change; this group format uses the sharing of personal stories and spiritual practices to build strong spiritual community ties so that the group can support each other over the long haul.

QSCM brings together small groups of Friends to focus on an issue that connects the congregation, the local community, and AFSC. A QSCM group is a place to worship, build trust, take risks, make mistakes, learn together, and deepen the connection between social change and spiritual growth. The group becomes a home base from which Friends engage with the world and return for reflection, discussion, and renewal.

QSCM connects Friends to that which is larger than ourselves and calls us into right relationship as we walk beside our partners and endeavor to co-create the beloved community.

The center of the QSCM model is companionship, accompanying, and following those most impacted by injustice on the way to social change. As part of the program, we explore what followership and accompaniment mean.



## Join Us!

The group meets twice a month at 7pm for two hours. The first hour is spent doing silent meditation or worship, sharing spiritual practices and activism stories, and checking in with the group. The second hour focuses on planning and business; charting our direction for the future and sharing our progress and considering hurdles to overcome. We will meet at Orange Grove Meeting House on the first Tuesday evening of the month, and at Neighborhood Church on the third Tuesday. Participants are strongly encouraged to commit to attending all sessions, as intermittent attendance is detrimental to the group.

I hope you'll join us! For further questions, contact:  
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alexahop@gmail.com. Something new – you can now donate to OGM on the website – go to ogmm.org and push DONATE Community.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO ON THE OGMM WEBSITE?

- Announce your OGMM event. E-mail the information to Jane Krause, treasurer@ogmm.org. She will post it for you on the website calendar. The website calendar is now bursting with Adult Ed topics, OGMM events, and community events hosted on our campus.
- Announce your non-OGMM events. Go to www.OGMM.org and click on the Bulletin Board. The first time you post, you need to register. Click on Welcome and Get Started.
- Donate to OGMM one-time or monthly. Go to www.OGMM.org and click on Donate. You can use Paypal or a Credit Card.
- Sign up for co-hosting Fellowship (make coffee and lay out snacks). Go to www.OGMM.org and click on “Be a Fellowship Hero.”
- Find out about Quaker beliefs or history or about OGMM. You can also find OGMM Monthly Minutes, OG Records, OGMM activities, contact information for members and attenders, etc.
- Some info is password-protected. Many OGMMers know the password or ask website co-manager, Alexandra Hopkins (818) 542-9500.
- Website managers: Alexandra & Kim Hopkins, [admin@ogmm.org](mailto:admin@ogmm.org)
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**Community Announcements:** To submit an announcement, please send an email to [announce@ogmm.org](mailto:announce@ogmm.org) or leave a written version in the basket on First-Day morning.

