

Dear Continuing Committee,

We are writing to inform you of a calling that we have jointly undertaken since meeting together at IMYM in June, 2005. During IMYM, a small group of us began discussing a yearly-meeting-wide Spiritual Formation Program. We have members from each of the states included in IMYM and we each have different amounts of experience with Spiritual Formation programs. Since last year's gathering we have met several more times by telephone and shared ideas by email.

Spiritual Formation Programs usually include personal spiritual practices, readings and small groups -- all occurring over a period of nine months. Based on our knowledge and experience of other yearly meeting Spiritual Formation Programs, we have worked towards one envisioned for IMYM. We believe this program, anchored by a core of basic readings and deep, Spirit-lead sharing, could greatly enhance our yearly meeting. In addition to being a means to personal spiritual growth, we envision this program as a way to create deeper connection between local meetings in our yearly meeting.

The spiritual life of the entire yearly meeting can be expected to deepen. We particularly see this program as a way to serve the smaller monthly meetings and worship groups in IMYM. It can provide them with resources and more connection to the rest of the yearly meeting. The inter-visitation that is part of it will create community.

What We Can Offer: The core of Spiritual Formation Programs is typically an Introductory Session and an Opening Retreat. We have prepared a draft schedule of the year-long program, and developed an agenda for the Introductory Meetings and Opening Retreats. We each feel clear that we can co-facilitate, in teams of two, the Opening Retreats. This would allow us to provide a facilitation team of two for up to four Opening Retreats throughout IMYM region.

Proposed Schedule: In our deliberations we have developed the following proposed schedule:

- IMYM will receive training for additional facilitators at IMYM 2006 sessions, new people will likely be drawn to the annual sessions to attend this training, and additional local training will follow. In February, 2006, if approved by Continuing Committee, an invitation will be sent to each monthly meeting and worship group. Describing the program in more depth, it will also request that interested meetings identify 1-3 leaders who will commit to participation in a training session during the early days of IMYM, 2006.
- Subsequently the trained leaders will introduce the concepts of the Spiritual Formation Program to their own local or regional meeting using an Introductory Session with a format we have developed.
- Participants in the program will come from among those who attend the Introductory Session. They, plus others who are interested, will make a commitment to participate in the nine-month Spiritual Formation/Nurturance Program. They will attend a local or regional, day-and-a-half long, Opening Retreat in September 2006, and continue their participation throughout the school year. A Closing Retreat would be during the early days at IMYM '07.

What support will be needed from IMYM: We anticipate that at least \$1,000 would be needed to help defray the travel costs of facilitators to Opening Retreats around the yearly meeting. Additional funds needed for travel and print resources would be provided by the meetings and individuals involved. Such a small budget will be possible because facilitators from among the planning group will not charge honoraria and will cover some of their own expenses. Quaker facilitators regularly charge \$1,000 just for their facilitation time. Funds from IMYM will not be needed until September 2006.

We look forward to your direction.

Kitty Ufford Chase, Wyn Lewis, Bruce Thron-Weber, Charlene Weir and Andy Bardwell