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What Canst Thou Say?

Friends • Mystical Experience • Contemplative Practice

*You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this: but what canst thou say?
Art thou a child of Light and hast thou walked in the Light, and what thou speakest,
is it inwardly from God? —George Fox*

Discernment

By Their Fruit

Marcia Z. Nelson

When I wake each morning, I ask God for help in doing the God's will that day. For many decades I was more than a little anxious about what that meant. How am I supposed to know God's will? And aren't people who claim to be doing God's will frequently involved in fanatical or destructive activities like flying planes into buildings or bombing medical clinics? Following God's will seemed neither clear nor even sane. But eventually way opened. While I was at seminary, a spiritual formation course I took—subtitled “Discernment of Call and Gifts”—opened my eyes to the process of discernment.

I learned measures and practices for feeling less puzzled and spiritually undecided.

Much to my surprise, it involved going to the Bible, specifically to the writings of Paul, who had not been high on my list of Friendly theologians. The early Quakers did the same by using what Paul refers to as “the fruit of the spirit” in *Galatians* 5:22-23: “By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” In *Spiritual Discernment*, Quaker writer Patricia Loring explains that early Quakers had tests for discernment. They used these criteria to distinguish among their leadings to tell better which were divine and which were the products of human willfulness. Early Friends particularly relied on patience, she adds, because willfulness is often associated with urgency and impatience.

I began to relax about discerning the working of the Spirit in my life. I could be loving, joyful, and peaceful instead of anxious and confused. I began to see when and if I was doing what I was called to do. I would know by the fruits. (I even began to like Paul's theology, but that's another subject.) “Doing God's will” ultimately became translated into “doing my job.” My particular task was something that I could do well, that I was equipped for,

and that I was called to do. It wasn't nearly as hard as I feared, because I had been given the gifts—the abilities—to do it. It didn't involve trying to count grains of sand on a beach or spin flax into gold or any other archetypally impossible task.

For me it involved becoming a chaplain. I work in a hospital. During training we were told that we would be meeting people on the worst day of their life, immediately after they have experienced trauma or a loved one

From the Editor:

Discernment is a practice that has simplified my spiritual life, and I was excited to suggest it as a subject for WCTS, since I wanted to hear Friends' thoughts. Rhonda Ashurst compares the still, small inner prompting to that of a cat that finds its voice; she also describes the difference between judgment and discernment as the difference between seeing through narrowed eyes versus seeing with the eyes of the soul. Barbara Bennett writes movingly of the discernment she has been engaged in since the death of her 28-year-old daughter. Sarah Hawthorne reflects on the debate over the projected costly repair of the monumental and beloved Notre Dame and discerning among values. Mike Resman reminds Friends that sometimes the way is easy, the burden light; he also suggests another perspective: wrestling with God's will is time spent in God's embrace. As weighty Friend Elizabeth Gray Vining points out, we rely more on frequent faint starlight than the rare bright light of revelation. Amen.

Marcia Z. Nelson, Guest Editor

What Canst Thou Say? (WCTS)

is an independent publication co-operatively produced by Friends with an interest in mystical experience and contemplative practice. It is published in February, May, August, and November. The editorial and production team is Muriel Dimock, Lissa Field, Mariellen Gilpin, Judy Lumb, Grayce Mesner, Mike Resman, Earl Smith, Eleanor Warnock, and Rhonda Ashurst.

Tell us your stories! **WCTS** is a worship-sharing group in print. We hope to help Friends be tender and open to the Spirit. Articles that best communicate to our readers focus on specific events and are written in the first person. We welcome submissions of articles less than 1500 words and artwork suitable for black and white reproduction.

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has died. That's an accurate description. I tell people that Quaker silence is excellent training for being with people at times when no words can make things better, when no action can fix or undo what has taken place. I have yet to hear someone tell me that I have made everything all better. But I usually hear people thank me.

I think of myself as planting seeds. (It is helpful that I am an experienced gardener, which has taught me patience.) They will eventually bear fruit in the lives of those I encounter. For me in such encounters, the fruit of the Spirit is peace and kindness. It is clear to me that Spirit is present, doing the work through the hands that are available, which are mine.

As I was getting ready to edit this issue on a subject dear to me, I got anxious. Maybe I don't know enough about discernment, I worried. In hitting the books, which always primes the pump of my reflection, I discovered *Discernment: Reading the Signs of Daily Life* by Henri Nouwen, who has been one of my spiritual guides in chaplaincy. Nouwen writes that discernment is the recognition of God's love:

"The purpose of discernment is to know God's will, that is, to find, accept, and affirm the unique way in which God's love is manifest in our life. To know God's will is to actively claim an intimate relationship with God, in the context of which we discover our deepest vocation and the desire to live that vocation to the fullest. ... It has everything to do with active waiting on a God who waits for us."

Haven't I heard that somewhere before? Love. Patience. Faithfulness. Discernment is doing the job in and with love, gently tilling the soul, awaiting fruit.

Marcia Z. Nelson is a chaplain, writer, and member of Downers Grove (Ill.) Friends Meeting.

Reflecting the Light Answering the Call

In any phase of the ministry we are reflecting on the light we find in others, the presence of Spirit, the light our elders have given us.

From October 6th to 9th, 2017, at the Cenacle Retreat Center in Chicago WCTS sponsored the WCTS Ministers/Elders Colloquium "Reflecting the Light: Answering the Call". The 29 participants gathered heard presentations by Paul Buckley, Jennifer Elam, Lucy Davenport, Dan Davenport, and Fernando Freire. One Friend summed up the Colloquium as a "Love Banquet" and we are all taking home left-overs.

The Proceedings of that Colloquium were published in February of 2018 online. Anyone interested can order a copy <lulu.com>. Search for *What Canst Thou Say*. Proceedings are also available for download at <whatcanstthousay.org/past-gatherings>.

The Voice Within

Rhonda Ashurst

*You were still and small,
reminding me of where I had put a misplaced object,
warning me not to do something or trust someone,
nudging me to speak, act, stay still, remain quiet.*

*I often didn't hear you,
allowing the strivings and knowings of my ego-mind
to overshadow you.*

*Now you have become outspoken and insistent.
You remind me of our black cat, Theo.
Once he was the meek, quiet one,
deferring to the other animals.
Then they passed on and Theo found his voice.*

*A friend asked me,
"How do you know this inner voice as different from the
rest?"*

*You come from the depths of the Universe,
an umbilical cord connecting me to the core of my Being.*

*You don't go on and on
with that endless blather
that happens between my ears,
leaving me anxious, confused, overwhelmed.*

*Your voice is clear,
Your messages concise:
Forgive Yourself
Love is all that matters
Yes / No
Surrender and Trust
Let go, Relax
Wait*

*When you speak, I feel
Serene
Certain
At Ease*

Rhonda Ashurst lives a quiet, contemplative life with her partner in Reno, Nevada. She writes a blog: <rhondaashurst.com>, practices yoga and serves the cat. She attends the Reno Friends Meeting.

Judgment vs. Discernment

Rhonda Ashurst

Reno Friends Meeting is currently taking a hard look at how we interact with each other. As part of this process, I've been thinking more about the importance of discernment in our Meeting life. Discernment is a process dear to Quaker hearts, and an important tool for figuring out the proper path for the Meeting and for us as individuals. But what does discernment entail, and how does it differ from judgment?

One of the Quaker queries on the topic of personal relationships is: "What barriers keep me from responding openly and lovingly to each person?" In my experience, judgment is one of those barriers.

Judgment often comes from an ego-based place and it tends to have a hard edge to it. When I'm judging, I notice tension in my jaws, tightness in my heart, narrowing of my eyes. It often comes out as criticism of another's thoughts, actions, beliefs. "I can't believe she could think that!" "How could he have done that?" "Who could hold such a belief?" It is about condemnation from a self-elevated place. In this place I have forgotten the admonition: "Judge not lest ye be judged." I want to change the other to be more like me, because in that moment, I think I've got it all figured out. There is a strong element of righteous indignation that makes me feel superior to whomever or whatever I'm judging.

Judgment is also about force: I seek to force my opinion on someone else. The other thing I notice about judging is that I'm often judging something in myself that I have projected onto another. "Remove the log in your own eye before seeking to remove the splinter in your neighbor's," Jesus said. If I'm particularly riled up about something, I can be sure it reflects something I'm doing that I don't like.

Discernment is related to judgment, but it comes from a different place. Here's a good definition I found online: "*Discernment is perceiving without judgment and with the intention of obtaining spiritual direction and understanding. It is about seeing with the eyes of the soul.*"

Discernment seeks the truth from a higher perspective, and it is softer than judgment. When I am discerning, I am not tense, my heart is soft and open. I am curious about the other's thoughts, actions, beliefs. I ask questions and listen for the answers, not to pounce on them to correct, but to better understand them. Meanwhile, I'm also checking in with myself, hopefully my Higher Self, and my heart and gut. I'm trying to understand myself better in relation to the other. I'm also seeking the log in my own eye.

A Letter to My Daughter

Barbara Bennett

A Letter to My Daughter—Killed in a Bicycle Accident Seven Years Ago

Out of this practice, I may be influenced to change my mind, or to refine or reframe my thinking. I see the other's way of seeing/being/thinking as equal to my own, not less than. I may also decide that my perspective rings truer to me and works better and that I'm sticking with it. But I don't go the extra step of judgment and try to force it on the other. Often this is a place of agreeing to disagree and moving on. It is about mutual respect and empowerment to make different choices and hold different beliefs, and still like each other. It doesn't mean we go along with something we disagree with in order to please or remain connected to another. Sometimes discernment requires us to withdraw from an activity, group or relationship.

When I feel the hard edge of judgment in my body and hear it in my words and thoughts, I am learning that I need to stop and softly bring my attention to my heart. I like to hold the image of one hand on my heart and one hand on the heart of the other. From this place of compassion, I seek to understand both of us and empower both of us to be in our truths, whatever that may be. I give myself permission to be changed/influenced by the other. I also give myself and the other permission to decide to back away or disengage if that serves Truth. If I decide to disengage, I will do it with loving kindness and not harshness.

Rhonda Ashurst lives a quiet, contemplative life with her partner in Reno, Nevada. She writes a blog: <https://rhondaashurst.com>, practices yoga and serves the cat. She attends the Reno Friends Meeting. This essay was posted on Reno Friends Blog April, 2019.

Dear Kelsey,

As I ease myself onto a weathered driftwood log at the mouth of Chimacum Creek, it begins to rain, a few drops, not much. Because of low tide, the creek is a narrow rivulet slowly making its way to the sea, but at high tide the bed is filled with an amalgam of fresh and salt water. It's a peaceful spot.

From my log, I can see the meandering stream, the small peninsula that extends down the hillside—an island at high tide—and a blanket of swirling green cedar and Douglas fir with burnished copper madrona limbs bending gracefully above the creek. Tucker, the eight-year-old rescue dog we adopted six years ago—60 pounds, sleek black coat, white belly, russet highlights—stands at the edge of the stream, glugging water flavored by seaweed and God knows what else. He raises his head and sniffs, alert for signs of a river otter. None detected, he dips again into the icy water, gulping loudly until seaweed or algae catches in his throat, and he repeatedly huffs to dislodge it.

The otters are far more cunning—and faster in the water than he—but the thrill of the chase is part of his nature. When we were walking south of East Beach last summer, an otter popped up near a large rock several

yards out in the inlet. Tucker leapt in and swam toward it, nose forward, paddling hard. The otter remained still, watching until the dog got close, whereupon it tucked its small head and, in a graceful dive, long tail flashing, disappeared. Tucker paddled in circles, waiting until the otter resurfaced, and again was allowed to come

within a few feet. The game continued, around and around the rock, until the otter disappeared for good, and Tucker reluctantly returned to the beach.

Once he swam after an otter at Fort Flagler and was caught in a rip tide. I was frantic, but he calmly stayed with the current until able to break free. I try to prevent these otter chases. I have one advantage over Tucker: he has only one eye—the other was shot and destroyed by a BB pellet long before he came to us. Sometimes I can see an otter sunning on the beach or swimming in the sea before Tucker can see or smell it, giving me just enough time to snap on a leash.

I'm hopeful that the pair of bald eagles who nested in a tree above the creek last summer will do so again. Often when I see an eagle flying or perched high on the limb of a tree, I sing a song from the memorial service held for you at Boston College: "And God will raise you up on eagle's

wings, bear you on the breath of dawn, make you rise like the sun, and hold you in the palm of Her hand." I love thinking of you raised on the wings of an eagle, borne on the breath of dawn.

I don't see an eagle today, but I do see a great blue heron, his body stretched out like a pencil, heading to his favorite perch above the creek—an old snag from which he looks for breakfast. There are only two herons in the area now, but last fall there were twelve who waited at the mouth of the creek for fingerling chum to make their way downstream. I've tried to imitate the herons' bending and arching, catching and swallowing, but there is absolutely no way I can move as gracefully as they.

I walk around the outcropping of rocks and creek tidelands to the dark, sandy beach of Port Townsend Bay where a colony of multi-hued seagulls sits and dips just offshore. Tucker races toward them, causing them to squawk, flutter their wings and reassemble a few yards away. After that, he lets them be, apparently feeling that one display of power is enough.

A couple of months ago, on and around the island at the mouth of the creek, there were hundreds of brownish gray American wigeons, but they have moved on. The beach faces Indian Island, which was once home to the S'Klallam chief, Chezemoka. Since the middle of last century it has been a Naval Magazine. I have a clear view of the northwest end of the island and the tall, slender, grayish-green crane that loads deadly arsenal into battleships. A steel gray ship sits directly below the crane, waiting for missiles to be hoisted into its bowels.

Much of the beach is covered by a dusting of finely ground white shells, the remains of a midden—a refuse pile for the Chimacum people whose

Great moments we shall have, with their blinding light of revelation, but they will be comparatively rare. There will be more stretches of dimness and dusk when we plod along in faith and determination. Minor ecstasies will light these gray stretches like faint but unmistakable stars if we but look for them.

—Elizabeth Gray Vining

side-by-side planked houses were built on the bluff above. The entire village was wiped out in a horrendous massacre in the late nineteenth century, leaving the white coating on the beach as the only reminder of their presence. When I first started visiting the beach, pulled by a force I didn't understand, I googled "Chimacum" and found reports of the massacre with conflicting takes on who attacked, whose idea it was, and why. Some versions stressed the war-like nature of the tribe, stating that neighboring tribes united to wipe out a dreaded foe.

Last year I met a woman of Chimacum heritage who told another narrative: because the Chimacum differed in language and culture from their Salish neighbors, suspicion and resentment of their otherness led to frequent attacks, human nature being what it was then—and still is. I recently learned that indigenous people have lived in this area for close to 14,000 years, which made me realize that for thousands of years before the massacre, people had worked, raised families, and eaten a lot of shellfish on this beach.

Lately I have been singing you a new song, one with many variations but always including the words, "closer than my breath, nearer than my heart". The truth is, you are both transcendent and immanent, on the breath of dawn and nearer than my heart. I often feel your strong spirit during our weekly drumming circle.

For the past two years, your dad and I, along with Linda and Mark, have followed a drumming practice, meeting in each other's living rooms, lighting a candle to acknowledge the sacred nature of the practice, drumming together for 45 minutes to an hour.

As I begin to drum, I'm acutely aware of how the drumstick feels in my hand, which arm muscles are straining, and where on the drum I'm striking, but slowly my awareness shifts until I find myself enveloped by love, guided by the words I hear, warmed by a sense of acceptance and caring. The impact of our weekly drumming is a growing awareness of the Spirit that is part of everything as well as a lessening of human-centrism: an openness to the wisdom of the cedar and fir, heron and eagle, salmon and otter. It has helped me understand—with a deep, visceral kind of knowing—that when the owls comforted me soon after your death, you were there. When the maple leaf waved to me each grief-filled morning, helping me put one foot in front of another, you were there. And now, whenever I am uplifted by a tree, am filled with elation by a rocky cliff, or hear the music in bees, you are with me.

I love you with all my heart,

Mom

Barbara Bennett is a member of Port Townsend (Wash.) Friends Meeting.

Notre Dame Falling, Yellow Vests Rising

Sarah Hawthorne

The shocking television video on April 16, 2019, of Notre Dame burning, its famous steeple toppling into the roaring flames below, captured my full attention as the news flashed around the world. Hard to know why a particular image catches on the fabric of your daily routine and doesn't let go.

Flashback: I've been only once to the Cathedral of Notre Dame of Paris, for about 30 minutes, when I casually joined a large horde of other tourists – listening only intermittently to the tour guide's recitation of dates and statistics, looking up at the Gothic columns and rose-colored stained glass windows, running my fingers along the backs of the wooden pews as we strolled toward the interior where the echoes are deepest.

As brief as my connection was in real time to Notre Dame, twenty years after that visit I found myself sobbing as I watched the image of the steeple collapse.

Within minutes of viewing the engulfed steeple plunging into flames below, pledges poured in from billionaires to restore the cathedral, quickly followed by political backlash from the yellow vests, members of the social protest movement who for months have been challenging the French government's claim that there is no money for social programs.

Once again, against the backdrop of unspeakable human poverty, there are those who rise to make extraordinary investments in aesthetics, ranging from monuments (e.g., cathedrals, museums, and statues) to more transitory expressions of

sensuous beauty (e.g., music, dance, perfumes).

Throughout human history the schism runs deep between the Compassionate, urging us to alleviate suffering, and the Passionate, hungering to leave an eternal legacy (or at least to touch the collective soul for the moment). The gospels capture this conflict well.

Led by Judas Iscariot, treasurer of the disciples' purse, Jesus' closest followers are indignant at Jesus for allowing a woman to anoint him by

When a question of values prompts irreconcilable differences, perhaps it is because we are not asking the right question. More accurately, perhaps the answers are irreconcilable because both sides assume there is only one right answer.

pouring on his head "an alabaster jar of costly perfumed oil." Judas chastises Jesus, "Why this waste? It could have been sold for much, and the money given to the poor." Jesus' rejoinder is:

"Why do you make trouble for the woman? She has done a good thing for me. The poor you will always have with you; but you will not always have me. In pouring this perfumed oil upon my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. Amen, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done

will be spoken of, in memory of her [Matthew 26: 6-13].

Intriguingly, Judas' criticism of Jesus' monetary ethics is followed a few sentences later by the story of Judas "selling out" Jesus to the chief of priests for mere coins [Matthew 26: 14-16]. Upon seeing that Jesus has been condemned, Judas "deeply regretted what he had done." Unsuccessfully attempting to return the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, he breaks down, saying, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." When the authorities refuse to accept the coins, Judas flings the money into the temple and departs to hang himself [Matthew 27: 3-5].

What are we to make of this sequence in which the same one who is righteously indignant at the "waste" of costly perfumed oil shortly thereafter exchanges the life of his Lord and Master for a mere pittance?

Clearly more than money is at issue in both scenarios (note: some scholars have speculated that Judas as treasurer was stealing from the purse and therefore wanted the maximum funds available in the purse). Arguments over money are usually code for a deeper schism over values that the parties are unable to address openly and directly.

When a question of values prompts irreconcilable differences, perhaps it is because we are not asking the right question. More accurately, perhaps the answers are irreconcilable because both sides assume there is only one right answer. Experience shows most

either/or dichotomies are actually both/and. To those attempting to set out hard and fast rules about what Christians are permitted to do, St. Paul observes that following the Spirit entails complexities: “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful” [I Corinthians 6:12].

In the end, a focus on finding the right answer is often an attempt to bypass the effort of a soul-searching spiritual discernment process. The authentic question is not which cause or purpose is the right one for everyone, but rather, with respect to me personally at this time and place, to what is Spirit calling me? This takes deep listening, patience, an opening to being surprised, and a willingness to be obedient to the unexpected.

Sarah Hawthorne has been a Quaker for twenty years at Strawberry Creek Friends Meeting (Berkeley), having retired two years ago from her position as Assistant Provost and Associate Campus Counsel for the University of California, Berkeley.



Discernment

Michael Resman

I find that I can't offer definite answers to questions about how to act in keeping with God's will. It's rare a day goes by that I don't ask myself the question at the center of my spirituality: "What does God want?"

The most thorough rubric I know to help answer that is the Fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

For some time, I pondered the wording "the fruit of the Spirit is". Why wasn't it "the fruits of the Spirit are"? Then it was pointed out to me that the fruit of the Spirit isn't a shopping list we can pick and choose from, but a package deal. Moreover, I understand that the fruit represents who I could be, if I live fully in the embrace of God.

For decades, I've worked to imbue more of the fruit of the Spirit – all of it. I will never be finished. They do offer me a comfortable place I can use to measure answers as I go through my day.

For bigger questions, though, I search for God's will. Here, too, I can't offer anything definitive. I have used several methods:

Don't move ahead unless God says yes.

Don't move ahead if God says no.

Look for repeated patterns of leadings.

I choose between the systems of 'wait for yes' or 'wait for no' on an individual basis, according to what feels right. It would be a mistake for me to apply either one rigidly to every situation. "Waiting for yes" gives me

an excuse for not doing. "Waiting for no" allows me to charge ahead. I take the question into prayer, in effect seeking an answer to a question about a question.

I've come to trust what I would term my heart's comfort in deciding how to decide.

Stranger—and more wonderful—are instances of repeated gentle leadings. The clearest example from my life was the thought that I would like to go down South and work on an African-American church that had been burned. The thought came to me periodically for over two years. Not with any urgency, but as a gentle, warm, joyous wish.

In the middle of one winter, I was moved to act. I wrote to a Quaker work organization and was given the name of a contact. Following up, I was able to schedule a week-long trip over spring break because at that time I worked for a school.

During the week I was there, seemingly by chance, the pastor and I worked alone one afternoon. It turned out that his call to ministry included hearing the voice of God. Mystical experiences weren't a comfortable part of his denomination's expectations, so he'd had no one to talk with about what had happened.

As we worked, we shared joys, concerns and questions that arise from intense spiritual experiences. I came to understand that God had gently prodded me for years and guided my plans in order for me to be available to that minister, that afternoon.

I had no awareness that God was literally moving me across the country by repeatedly warming my heart. Now I watch for similar repeated heart responses to thoughts of "wouldn't it be nice if I...".

Writing this, I was starting to feel embarrassed about not providing any clarity, but stopped and had to smile. Wrestling with God's will in our lives can be frustrating. It is also one of our major undertakings. If I think about it as time I get to spend in God's embrace, the work becomes a joy.

God Bless,

Mike Resman

Mike Resman is a member of the Rochester, Minnesota, Meeting, an author and an editor of WCTS. Except for "Path", the other poems are published in his book, *Poems from the Myst*.

Calling

Michael Resman

*There is a great
great river of pain*

*I will not turn my back
nor stand on the bank,
comforting myself
with vicarious glance.*

*I must not stay dry—
moaning with pity.*

*I am called to wade in,
immerse myself.
Joining my drop of compassion to
dilute the flow.*

Motives

Michael Resman

*Dearest God
my motives are never pure*

*I want so badly to serve
Contribute*

Yet I'm so limited

*I see my efforts
ignored*

*Indifferent surroundings
unchanged*

*Direct me
Teach me*

*Comfort me
as I look at myself*

*So I can
keep going*

*Imperfectly
Impurely*

*Your
old fool*

Path

Michael Resman

*Oh, what a path lies before us
known, yet ignored*

*Too difficult
impossible
unrealistic*

Reality flies in the face of all this

*Come, join us
simply step up
the way is easy
the burden light*

*Love
that is all*

*Love
always
everything*

*Instead of this
crabbed, limited
grieving hulk
your animal self calls you to*

*Be transformed
fly
on currents of joy*

*Cares
the news
fears
melt away*

*When you become
who you truly are
who you were meant to be*

*A beloved child of God
dancing with your brothers and
sisters
in the palm of God's hand*

Editors Appeal for Submissions

For the second issue in a row, we are struggling with content for this issue of *What Canst Thou Say?* This is quite a drop in submissions because there have been so many wonderful submissions that we also published an online edition. There is no drop in subscriptions, either for print or email distribution, so we are not considering making any changes in our publication schedule or process. Possible changes include having fewer issues a year, but we find the quarterly schedule works well for our team. In the future we might consider discontinuing the print version and having only online versions, but we think we are not there yet. The ultimate change would be to lay *What Canst Thou Say?* down, but we are all committed to continuing the quarterly publication for the foreseeable future. We will need to recruit some additional team members, especially someone with layout skills. If anyone is interested in joining the WCTS team, just let us know.

For now we are appealing to our community to consider writing for *What Canst Thou Say?* We have a few faithful Friends who make rather regular submissions but suspect that many who could submit on a particular topic don't have the time or take the time to write. The editors feel that too much of the space has been of our own writing, so we are encouraging our community to consider writing for future issues.

The next (November 2019) issue is on the theme of "Young Adult Spirituality" with Greg Woods, who is recruiting articles for that issue. If you know young adult Friends, please encourage them to share of their spirituality. The deadline is August 15, 2019.

The February 2020 issue is on the theme of "Healing". The queries are on the back page and on the WCTS website <whatcanstthousay.org>. Planned future themes include: "Gratitude", "Empowerment", "Jesus Love in Action", "Journey to Overcome".

Do any of these themes inspire you to write? Please share of your experience! Do you have any themes to suggest? Would you like to guest edit an issue, or join the WCTS team?

—WCTS Editorial Team: Mariellen Gilpin, Judy Lumb, Mike Resman, Earl Smith, and Rhonda Ashurst

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November 2019

Young Adult Friends' Spirituality

Guest Editor: **Greg Woods**

What role has your faith/spirituality played as you traverse young adulthood? What has most surprised you about your journey? What are you seeking in a spiritual community? What have been the challenges in your search? Have you found what you seek? What gifts do you bring to a spiritual community? Who or what has inspired you spiritually as a young adult? How has that inspiration affected your spiritual journey?

Deadline: August 15, 2019

February 2020

Healing

Guest Editor: **Susan Greenler**

To Heal means "to make sound or whole." Healing comes in all forms: emotional, physical, spiritual, and most often these are intertwined. Each day we live brings opportunities for healing, growth, wholeness: this is life. We invite stories and poems about an experience or transformation that is foundational to who you have become. How have you healed? What led to an experience of increased wholeness? What have you learned along the way? How has God/Christ been present in your healing journey? What does the concept of "healing" mean to you?

Deadline: November 15, 2019

May 2020

Gratitude

Guest Editor: **Marcia Nelson**

The German mystic Meister Eckhart said: *"If the only prayer you say in your life is 'thank you,' that would be enough."*

What are you thankful for? Has gratitude made a difference in your experience? Are there times when gratitude is a challenge for you? Have you experienced any situations that have been transformed by gratitude? Do you have any spiritual practices involving gratitude?

Deadline: February 15, 2020

What Canst Thou Say?

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Address Service Requested



Discernment