

# Friends of Ramallah Friends Meeting (Quakers)

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH RAMALLAH FRIENDS MEETING



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### Jean Zaru

Middle East Yearly Meeting  
Clerk, Ramallah Friends Meeting

### Arlene Kelly

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting  
Clerk, Steering Committee

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### Derek Brett

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### Jan Caspers

German Yearly Meeting

### Patricia Cockrell

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### Deborah First

New York Yearly Meeting

### Marla Schrader

Central Atlantic Conference  
United Church of Christ  
(on leave)

### Saleem Zaru

Middle East Yearly Meeting

November 2016

Dear Friend,

We write to encourage your continuing support of the dynamic ministries of Ramallah Friends Meeting. Even as the human and political situation continues to deteriorate through an ever tightening grip on the West Bank and Gaza, Sunday mornings at Ramallah Friends Meeting remain energetic and vital. They embody a deep-flowing, peace-filled Power that silently sends the message, **"We will not give up our faith in a God that will guide us to a better day and we will not yield to violence."**

A Meeting for Worship in October was particularly rich with nearly 50 worshippers. In addition to those who are a regular part of the Worshipping Community, visitors from Switzerland, Sweden, England, Scotland, Bolivia and the USA deeply enriched our time together. At the group's request, Jean spoke about the theology of nonviolence following Meeting.

The 10-15 people who are the core of the Worshipping Community include internationals serving at Ramallah Friends School, volunteers with peace groups in the area and others who are resident to Ramallah and its environs.

We focus, in this letter, on Worship and the words of a few of those active in the Worshipping Community, as they share what it is in their experience that makes the Meeting and its ministries so precious to them.

Carin, who attends with her daughter Isa, reflects with these words:

***"There is something about this quiet, humble building sitting in the midst of the noise and activity and chaos of the city, in the midst of the complexity and suffering and grace of this occupied land that moves me, that grounds me in love and in courage. Worshiping here with the Meeting community brings me back to the center of things, when the world around us seems to be falling apart. I am grateful for this place, these people, this being together in the presence of God."***



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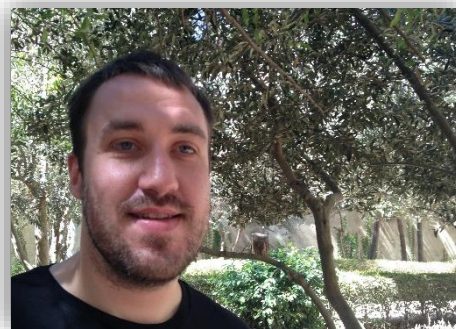


Jan, a videographer, educator and German Friend who works most of the year in Palestine, expresses how the meeting is a grounding force in his life.

***“The Ramallah Meeting provides me with a reliable, wholesome and stable spiritual diet. I am grateful for the Meeting; it is home. Over the years, I have come to rely on it...I find respite and quite often inspiration... I work a lot and often on Sundays I am in other parts of the West Bank. Yet, even when I am away, I find myself pausing at 10:30 in the morning to remember that Friends in Ramallah have begun to gather, and I am comforted.”***

Dylan is from New England Yearly Meeting and in his first year of teaching at Ramallah Friends School – challenging work as one moves across cultures and resides in a land and time of complexity.

***“For me personally, the meeting provides a sanctuary where I can sit and reflect on what I have experienced throughout the previous week... It is such a rare and treasured experience to bear witness to the situation in Palestine and then to sit in silence and work with that for at least an hour every week. Of course I believe essential and profound inner-work is happening in Quaker meetings all over the world, but my soul is in resonance with Ramallah and what can happen if one takes time to bear witness to the inner landscape that is awakened through being here in Palestine.”***



Elizabeth, from North West Yearly Meeting, has served as the Coordinator of her Yearly Meeting’s program that brings volunteers to work in support roles at the Friends School and also seek other service opportunities in the Ramallah community. She shares with us that:



***“Friends sojourning in Ramallah find a place of peace and hospitality. For three years I have seen this: gracious welcome to everyone; the invitation to shared ministry; a common search for giving and receiving the Light of Christ. People of the meeting develop community as we share our stories, consider the needs of others, and meet together mid-week...we host travelers who are often overwhelmed by what they’ve seen and heard about the situation of the Palestinians in this land. At the Ramallah Friends Meeting, they find a place of historic peace and strength. Jean Zaru embodies the “Sumoud”; or steadfastness, of Palestinians and Friends and her testimony inspires us to also “stand fast, therefore”.***

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And then, of course, there is **the love among members of the Worshiping Community.**



Recently, Nabeel, an older life-long member of the Meeting who describes **Meeting for Worship as the best part of each week**, had been absent due to illness for an extended time. When he came into worship, a regular attender stood and spoke of the joy he felt at seeing Nabeel and invited those present to welcome Nabeel back by singing his favorite hymn.

*This is my song, O God of all the nations,  
A song of peace for lands afar and mine.  
This is my home, the country where my heart is,  
Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine.  
But other hearts in other lands are beating,  
With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.*

Thomas Kelly, in his Essay on the Eternal Now, writes, “In the immediate experience of the Presence, the (Eternal) Now is no mere nodal point between the past and the future. It is the seat and region of the Divine Presence itself”.

We believe that Ramallah Friends Meeting lives faithfully in the ‘now’ of their reality, knowing that the now is the moment of creation. **To continue to be a steadfast Quaker presence in Palestine, day after day and year after year, living in the Present is an act of courage and resistance.**

**Please join with others who are supporting Ramallah Friends Meeting by offering a generous contribution.** Your gift enables the continuation of this Quaker witness of worship and peacemaking, enabling the Meeting to continue to stand in solidarity with communities nearby and around the world whose banner is “hope” over the long haul.

In Peace,

Jean Zaru, Presiding Clerk  
Ramallah Friends Meeting

Arlene Kelly, Clerk  
Friends of Ramallah Friends Meeting - Quakers

p.s. We also invite you to visit our new Web Site **[www.rfmq.org](http://www.rfmq.org)** and like our Facebook page **RamallahFriendsMeeting** where all the latest news may be found, including our Fall Newsletter. It is a terrific way to learn how your contribution enables the other important ministries of Ramallah Friends Meeting to stand fast, therefore! **There is a lively ministry in Ramallah that bridges across the globe and it would not be possible without your gifts.**