

New Story News February 2022

Compiled by Cornelia Parkes at new-story@fmcquaker.org

Engaging in Climate Justice

The next meeting of the New Story Group is Monday, February 28. Come at 6:30pm for fellowship. Program starts at 7:00pm. Newcomers are especially welcome

To participate in this event [click this link](#) or call 1-646-558-8656 and provide the Meeting ID 875 6881 1869 and passcode 101225.

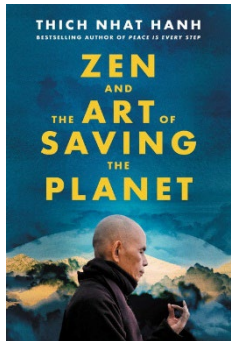
Our topic for February held over from January is the many ways we can engage in climate justice. Through [photography and videography](#) Skip Schiel will share his journey to address climate justice. Gwen Noyes and Sandy Sweetnam will share how they engage through street theater with the [Red Rebels](#). Both Skip and Gwen are active with the [Extinction Rebellion](#) (XR). How do you engage? How could you engage? Share your activities.

I hope you can come!

Are you new to the New Story? Read our one-page introduction "[Welcome to the New Story](#)". Come at 6:30pm for fellowship and to get acquainted. To be placed on the email list for New Story News and notices of future meetings contact Cornelia Parkes at new-story@fmcquaker.org.

Ideas, More Ideas, New Ideas!

A New Book Group



Zen and the Art of Saving the Planet by Thich Nhat Hanh Mondays March 21, April 4, April 18, and May 2 from 11:00-12:30 pm on Zoom. Led by Frances Bigda-Peyton, a long-time former attendee at FMC and ordained member of the [Order of Interbeing](#) in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hahn's Plum Village

Participants are asked to commit to attending at least 3 of the 4 sessions. Minimum group size: 8. If you would like financial assistance to buy a copy of the book, email Holly Lapp at fellowship@fmcquaker.org.

Co-Sponsored by the New Story Group and Fellowship & Outreach Committee.

Contacts: Cornelia Parkes at new-story@fmcquaker.org and Holly Lapp at fellowship@fmcquaker.org.

For more information and registration, as it becomes available, [click here](#).

A New Book Group?

There has been an audible murmur to form another book reading group—this one focused on J. Philip Newell's *Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul: Celtic Wisdom for Reawakening to What Our Souls Know and Healing the World*. My review of Celtic Wisdom at our January meeting only scratched the surface of the wealth of material in this book. Also, the success of our group discussion of *The Depth of Our Belonging*:

Mysticism, Physics, and Healing by Mary Coelho showed the value of discussion continued over several months in a smaller, more intimate group.

The format for the new book group would be different in that we would have different convenors for different chapters of the book. Some of the rich choices of topics include Pelagius, Brigid, John Muir, and Teilhard. For example, Mary Coelho would be interested in working on Pelagius, because the controversy and decisions about his work was a key pivotal point for Roman Christianity and Western culture in general. Mary Kay Klein might be persuaded to unearth her long ago presentation on Brigid, the Druid priest and Catholic saint. The discussion would seek to engage both spiritual and academic themes as the chapters may need to be supplemented with additional information. Remember how in his description of Celtic Christianity Newell neglected to mention that the Celts were fierce warriors?

We will consider this suggestion at our February New Story meeting.

New Topics for our Monthly New Story Meetings

- Dave Damm-Luhr is ready to lead a program at our March meeting on the Great Turning.
- Cornelia is reading Mike Wallace's *When God Was a bird: Christianity, Animism, and the Re-Enchantment of the World*.
- Charles Eisenstein has a new book *Climate: A New Story*. Has anyone read it?
- What books or videos are on your wish-to-share list?

This is my current insight. There is growing awareness that the sacredness of nature is the way forward for saving the planet and humanity in the process, but different visionaries have found different ways to motivate the change. Newell goes back to Celtic Christianity. the New Story looks to science for inspiration, and Wallace searches for sources of animism in the Bible. For those who do not have a religious perspective, it's just good sense. We need a source for indigenous American earth spirituality.

"The Depth of Our Belonging" FMC Book Group

The closing meeting of the group that has been reading *The Depth of Our Belonging: Mysticism, Physics, and Healing* (Producciones de la Hamaca, 2021) by Mary Conrow Coelho was on Thursday, February 3. Some 16 participants have attended the series of five monthly meetings. We experienced a worshipful discussion on suffering based on Chapter 4 "Becoming Fully Conscious Participants in the Unfolding Story." Mary wrote:

The situation of the person who suffers is profoundly different within our new context as compared to a dualistic world that separates our bodies and the natural world from spirit (*prana or ruah*). In the dualistic world we do not know that the spirit, the dynamic and life-giving energy of the universe, is intrinsic to our very being, always present and active. In our new world view, there is an identity not circumscribed by the loss and suffering; the ongoing sacred Presence (seamless plenum) provides a place to stand, a willingness to feel the suffering deeply with confidence in the possibility of fresh emergence, a fresh expression of the Self. [p. 56]

In closing Cornelia read excerpts from the " Epilogue" in *Rebirthing of God: Christianity's Struggle for New Beginnings* by John Philip Newell.

What is it we need to let go of to make room for the new? Specifically, in our Christian household, how is god to be reborn among us in in the many reconnections we have been considering—with the earth, the way of compassion, seeing the Light in all things, the journey with other faiths, spiritual practice, nonviolence, accessing the unconscious, and recommitting ourselves to love?

...Mary Oliver says of the way of awareness that we need to learn "to be astonished." We need to see the Light that is within all life the way a child views the brightness of a new day with open-eyed wonder. We need to see with radical amazement the almost unbelievable gift of every moment, [*When I read this I immediately thought of Mary's paintings. They are a testimony to the radical amazement with which she sees the world. The paintings that adorn the book are a constant message without words.*]

...Thomas Merton says of the way of spiritual practice that we need to be turned completely inside out. We need to discover our true meaning not from the outside but from within, so that we can be freed from the false definitions of self that are imposed upon us by cultural norms and expectations.

...Our Christianity "slumbers," says Jung. It is like a great giant who has fallen into the stupor of deep sleep.... Perhaps it is truer to say that Christianity as we have known it is not simply slumbering, it is dying and will be no more.

...In this uncertain time, there are signs of what a reawakened Christianity might look like.... We can see that there will be a reconnecting to the earth, a reclaiming of compassion, a revisioning of Light, a recommitment to the shared journey of faiths, a rediscovery of spiritual practice, a rededication to nonviolence, a reentering of the unconscious, and a reuniting with love. "You must be born anew," says Jesus. It is the coming forth again of what is deepest in us. It is the rebirthing of God.

We closed with a period of contemplation on Mary's painting "The New Tiffany Window."

The School of Earth & Soul

In 2016 John Philip Newell began a teaching initiative that is now called [The School of Earth & Soul](#) (formerly The School of Celtic Consciousness.) Its purpose is to reawaken awareness of the sacred in all things through the recovery of Celtic wisdom for today and to help translate this awareness into compassionate action and justice. The essential text for the three-year program is John Philip Newell's *Sacred Earth Sacred Soul*. And the shared prayer book of the school is *Sounds of the Eternal: A Celtic Psalter*.

Most of the offerings appear to be in-person on the West coast except for the [pilgrimages to Iona](#) and a series of [podcasts here](#).



The Great Turning Experiment

[Live on-line from Findhorn.](#)

March 16 to June 22, 2022

For 4 months, we are inviting you to join our Great Experiment, Live Online from Findhorn! We are calling all pioneers of the new paradigm to live our lives as if The Great Turning were a reality – to commit to living life the way you have imagined it to be in your most beautiful dreams for both your own benefit and for the benefit of future generations to come.

The Great Bell Chant – in Honor of Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh (1926 – 2022)



[The Great Bell Chant](#): In honor of the exceptional life example of revered teacher Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, we offer this beautiful prayer recited by Thay himself and chanted by brother Phap Niem.

*May the sound of this bell
penetrate deep into the cosmos
Even in the darkest spots
Living beings are able to hear it clearly
So that all suffering in them cease
Understanding comes to their hearts
And they transcend the path
Of sorrow and death.*