***Meeting for Learning: Where?***

The 2023 Retreat will be held at the Sevenhill Centre of Ignatian Spirituality, in the Clare Valley of South Australia, approximately 130 km north of Adelaide.

***Accommodation and Cost***

Each participant will have a private bedroom for the 6 nights. All accommodation, meals and a resource book are included in the price, which will be $850. You may apply for financial assistance through your Regional Meeting. Talk with your Clerk or Ministry Convener if you are considering registering for the course and applying for support.

***When?***

Sunday, 3rd September – Saturday, 9th September, 2023.

***How to apply – for this or a future year***

The Retreat is open to Members, Attenders and others in sympathy with the Quaker way.

If you think this retreat might be for you, please take these steps:

1. Talk to a previous participant in your local Meeting, or your Regional Meeting clerk, to ask about their experience.
2. Write to Fiona Gardner [fionagardneraway@icloud.com](mailto:fionagardneraway@icloud.com) expressing your interest in participating. If possible this should be by the end of April 2023.

The SA Contact Person is David Barry: [David.Barry.TLUD@gmail.com](mailto:David.Barry.TLUD@gmail.com)

0425 29 2288.

**Meeting for Learning**

**A time for living in a Quaker Community**

An intensive exploration of Quaker life experiences.

Spiritual nurture in community guided by three or four facilitators.

Friends reflecting on what it is to study, worship and be transformed

by the Spirit.

Quaker processes practiced faithfully in everyday life.

The year-long program begins and ends with two six-night

residential retreats.

Forming a listening group for support in living with intention through

the year between

Facilitators continue their nurture through the year with contact as needed.

**Retreat Week at Sevenhill Centre of Ignatian Sprituality, SA**

**3rd – 9th September 2023.**

Meeting for Learning is an Australia Yearly Meeting program,

hosted in 2022/3 by South Australia Regional Meeting

under the care of Quaker Learning Australia.



Quaker Meeting for Learning is a **year-long program** book-ended by week-long **residential retreats**. It is an extended time to explore the Spirit and learn about Quaker ways, together with members and attenders from around Australia. Sometimes others from different faith communities join Meeting for Learning. For most of the year-long program, you remain part of your regular community. Residential retreats give the opportunity for you to commence and complete this journey by sharing experiences with others.

Themes for the retreats alternate. The 2022 Retreat focus will be on the **individual spiritual journey in our faith community**; the 2023 focus is on the **faith community and our journey in it.**

Listening to ourselves and each other is a practice which often leads to deep insights, transformation and discernment. Much time is devoted to deepening **listening skills** among other practices that are based on Friends’ long history of spiritual nurture and faith in action.

A feature of each retreat is a mid-week **silent day and night**. Some participants feel nervous about this beforehand, and then find that extended silence in community is an enriching experience. A facilitator is always available during the Silent Day for reflection or conversation.

Between retreats your learning processes go on with a **Support Group** that you choose from your local Meeting and/or from friends and family. You will select members for your group who will listen, empathise and encourage while you give attention to specific areas of your life where you can feel the spirit moving. Local members of support groups regularly report how gratifying it is to share with the participant. Sharing this journey is then a rich part of the next Retreat.

The size of the group at each retreat is up to 12 participants, who are guided by three or four volunteer facilitators during the retreat. The facilitators provide **reading materials, sessions, exercises and** **pastoral** **guidance** to assist each participant’s spiritual journey. The resources provided allow retreatants to develop their knowledge of Quaker writings and beliefs, and to reflect on their own journey. Each day allows time for **discussion, exploration, rest and reflection**. During the retreat, some activities are carried out as a **whole group**, some are conducted in **small groups** and some exercises are undertaken as a **personal** activity. Structured and unstructured time is included in the retreat.

*Some quotes from previous participants*

*The first retreat was the safest, most nurturing, most healing group of that size that I had experienced – thanks to the skilled and loving facilitators, Fiona Gardner, Sue Wilson, Jenny Spinks and Catherine Heyward, and the openness and courage of the participants. In addition to stimulating, and sometimes challenging, individual and collective spiritual exercises and explorations, I received emotional/spiritual support from daily Meetings for Worship, and facilitators and participants alike. Practicing compassionate listening in a spiritual context in small groups, and being listened to in the same way, was a privilege. I felt a sense of belonging that has been rare in my life, and I left the retreat encouraged, inspired and on a high.*

*As a result of the year-long process I began the second retreat more nurtured, relaxed and open than I had on the first. I felt even more affirmed and, yes, loved. I left, not on a high this time, but with a fullness of mind, heart and soul that continues to sustain me.*

*Meeting for Learning was a turning point in my Quaker life, not only the retreats, also working with my support team for the year and these people still play an important role in my spiritual growth.*