

WORD TO THE PEOPLE
Community, Witness, Africinity
The Ujima Friends Meeting First Annual Gathering,
June 23-25, 2023 -- Oakland, California

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the word was God”

John 1:1

As June wound down in 2023
adults and children gathered, twenty strong
from points north and south; east and west,
yearning to touch and be touched,
to see and be seen
by the sweet reality of each other’s presence.
To become flesh through sharing,
and singing, and praying, and eating and dancing and just being
together, at last.
In a one room storefront
with powerful murals of protest dancing in bright colors on the walls
we revisited the Word that affirmed our collective being
and declared our commitment.

It began with a dinner of tofu and oxtails and Jamaican peas and rice,
our senses immersed in the aromas of ancestral cuisine
family style, our style, filled, overflowing,
we readied to explore community, witness, and Africinity.

♪ *Wade in the water, wade in the water children, wade in the water,*
God’s gonna trouble the waters. ♪

Community: come unity.
an invitation to bring space for all.
Connection without boundaries,

imbued with particularity,
Black and Quaker and African and Black,

In our virtual community,
frustrations and joy often sit side by side
Virtual holding gives way to physical holding
with joy and with love
Community exudes through waves of light and sound
even through the little boxes--
Spirit Transcends

*♪ I need you, you need me - we'll all a part of God's body.
You are important to me I need you to survive. ♪*

Doing business in a Quaker church
we witnessed by committing, and recommitting,
committee-ing and more committee-ing:
(Which ones, how? Let's be faithful, let's be patient, let's be ready)
ready to move in Divine time among the people,
"Juneteeth-ing" by the universal call to justice

♪ What a fellowship, what a joy Divine leaning on the everlasting arms...♪

Africa born in us,
born in us triumphant.
We shared how we overcame the distortions
of color struck families,
and the demonization of our mother Africa, her wisdom and beliefs.
Celebrating our African names and retentive jewelry, quilts, and dress,
bearing witness to the transformation
from pain to promise,

observing the expansion of family,
we emerge with a non-western
sense of divinity and personhood,
an “un-individuality”
revealing us to ourselves.

Ubuntu connectedness: “I am because we are. We are because I am.”

A Saturday dinner of Ethiopian delights fed our bodies,
the Word made poetic fed our souls
declaring the beauty and power of love and family.
We were and are a strong people.

♪ Joy bells, joy bells ringing in my soul♪

Sunday Reflections: Spirit is not finished with us.
She gave us the courage to show up,
the Word hiding in our hearts.
She is faithful to our faithfulness.

♪ *Lord my life to you I bring. May each song I have to sing.*
Be to you a lovely thing, IN YOUR TIME. ♪

God is indeed doing a new thing.....Ujima Friends Meeting...Ase, Ase Aseo