

# Sunday March 29: Gadfly goes to meeting

The Bethlehem Gadfly coronavirus March 29, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the coronavirus* 

Followers know that the essence of the Gadfly project is community.

“Good conversation builds community,” he says.

In truth, we are members of many communities from global to national to state to city to work to neighborhood to family — and all the cluster points in-between.

For many of us our religion, our “church,” is an important one of our communities — maybe even the most important.

Gadfly was raised Catholic but over the years drifted away.

A letter to the editor in this morning’s *Call* reads “Bishop’s streamed Mass is uplifting” and encourages “all who want to feel God’s love during this unprecedented time” to visit [www.ad-today.com](http://www.ad-today.com) daily at 8am and Sundays at 10am.

Gadfly was raised Catholic, even studied to be a priest, over the years drifted away, but never lost his need for a religious community.

A year or so ago he started attending the Quaker Sunday meeting (**Lehigh Valley Friends Meeting**). Why the Quakers, the Society of Friends? He studied them in detail as part of his professional training in 17th century American history and knew from his teaching in 18th and 19th century American history as well as his own lived experience in 20th and 21st century American life that Quakers were/are in the forefront of every social justice movement we’ve ever had. My kind of people.

Well, after a few months Gadfly drifted away from the Quaker community as well — but mostly because of in-house morning commitments.

But this crisis reawakened his need for that religious community, ironically at the very time “meetings” were discouraged.

Circle back to the opportunity for Catholics to “go” to mass in these times through streaming video. Gadfly could understand the value in that. Forgive what will seem a crude analogy purely for the purpose of demonstration that no doubt some followers will vigorously object to — but the Mass happens “on stage,” has “actors,” is a “performance,” and therefore can be “attended,” can be “witnessed.”

But the Quakers do it quite differently.

Quakers believe in the “Light Within.” Quakers “gather in expectant silence with other seekers, open to the movement of the Spirit in ourselves individually and in our worshiping community.” One might think this “living stillness,” this “silent waiting,” this “expectant stillness” would not be affected by restrictions on gathering. One might think that a worship “centered in stillness” would not be affected by but even enhanced by admonitions to stay at home. But no. “Friends find it necessary to be present with others in worship.” (All quotes from the Quaker *Faith and Practice*.)

So such a liturgy, if you will, can not be replicated by television.

What would the Quakers do, Gadfly wondered?

How have that communal presence, that “congregating,” in which nothing visibly externally happens perhaps for long periods of time — in which there are no “actors,” in which there is no “show,” no “stage,” no “performance” as there is in a Catholic Mass?

Enter Zoom.

Zoom, the conferencing platform.

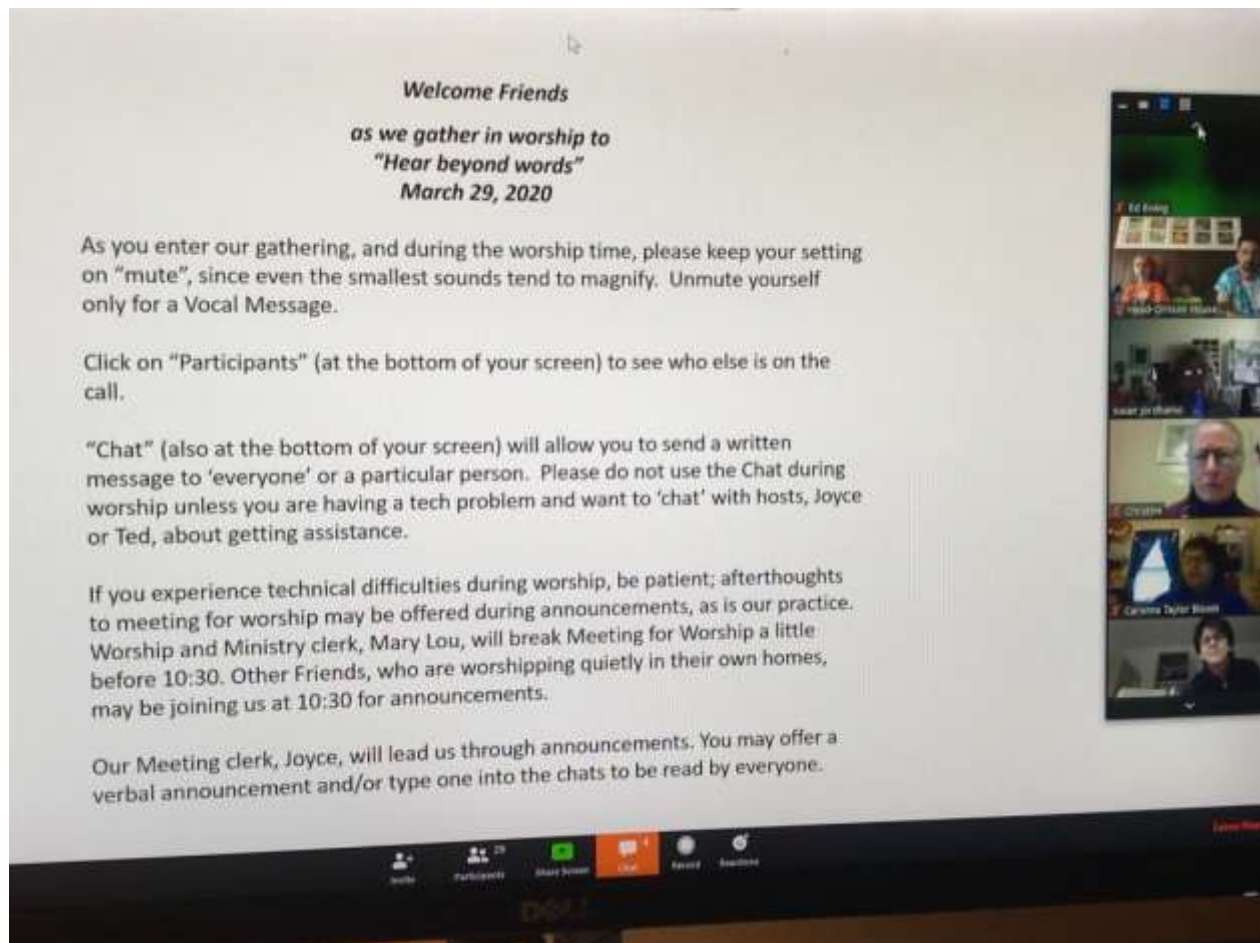
The same Zoom Gadfly kidded not knowing about a couple posts back.

40+ members of the Lehigh Valley Friends Meeting gathered successfully and effectively this morning through Zoom.

And were for the most part silent.

With Zoom, Gadfly was able to feel part of a religious community again.

Thank you . . . *Friends*



**Welcome Friends**  
**as we gather in worship to**  
**"Hear beyond words"**  
**March 29, 2020**

As you enter our gathering, and during the worship time, please keep your setting on "mute", since even the smallest sounds tend to magnify. Unmute yourself only for a Vocal Message.

Click on "Participants" (at the bottom of your screen) to see who else is on the call.

"Chat" (also at the bottom of your screen) will allow you to send a written message to 'everyone' or a particular person. Please do not use the Chat during worship unless you are having a tech problem and want to 'chat' with hosts, Joyce or Ted, about getting assistance.

If you experience technical difficulties during worship, be patient; afterthoughts to meeting for worship may be offered during announcements, as is our practice. Worship and Ministry clerk, Mary Lou, will break Meeting for Worship a little before 10:30. Other Friends, who are worshipping quietly in their own homes, may be joining us at 10:30 for announcements.

Our Meeting clerk, Joyce, will lead us through announcements. You may offer a verbal announcement and/or type one into the chats to be read by everyone.

The slide is part of a Zoom meeting interface. On the right side, there is a vertical stack of video thumbnails for participants. At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with icons for Mute, Participants, Share Screen, Chat, Record, and Reaction. The Zoom logo is visible at the bottom center.

Do followers have any Sunday stories to tell?