

MEMORIAL MEETING FOR WORSHIP – INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon friends and welcome. We have gathered here at this time to honor and share with each other the lives of two important Newtown Meeting members, JoAnn Johnson Woodman, and her husband, Lewis Smith Woodman. This Memorial Meeting for Worship is intended to be a celebration of their lives. It is being conducted according to the practices of the Religious Society of Friends who are Quakers. I am Martin Ogletree, and I am joined on the facing benches by members of Newtown Meeting's Worship and Ministry Committee and Care and Counsel Committee.

For those of you who may be unfamiliar with the practices of Friends, I'll offer a few words of explanation. All that we do as a congregation we do out of worship. Not just our regular worship services, but our business meetings, our committee meetings and special gatherings including weddings and memorial meetings for worship such as this. It is our sense that what proceeds from worship is God-led and is, therefore, rightly ordered.

In a Quaker meeting all who are present are considered to be ministers and are welcome to take part in the vocal ministry. Anyone wishing to share a particular memory of JoAnn or Lew should feel free to do so. We ask that before speaking you stand, and then speak loudly enough for all to hear. Try to keep your message brief, and allow a suitable time after the last speaker has finished before you speak so that we may savor what has just been said.

There is a time for grief and mourning when someone close to us has died. And it is our sense that there is a time when we celebrate that life and share how we have been changed by knowing that person; and that is why we are here now. Feel free to let your ministry be light and heartwarming. After this meeting we will all have a different and more complete picture of both JoAnn and Lew than we had before, and we will be deepened in the spirit and the Light.

I was fortunate to know JoAnn and Lew as fellow long-time Newtown Meeting members. JoAnn was among the first to welcome our family. They invited us into their home to visit and were active leaders in the Newtown Meeting community. We now know their children and grandchildren and appreciate how important this family is for our culture. Fifteen years ago JoAnn initiated having social gatherings after Meeting for Worship with finger foods provided by volunteers. That is now a well-established practice where we get to know each other and strengthen our community. Lew Woodman was a model of Quaker faith and practice with special attention to stewardship. Lew took excellent care of this meeting house as well as the Friends Home and Village. If he could not fix it himself, he knew someone who could. Over the years I came to appreciate the life-long commitments that both Lew and JoAnn made to Quaker service and advocacy.

When all who have wanted to speak have had their opportunity to do so, we will close the service with a recording of *Amazing Grace*. We will then invite the immediate family to retire to the gathering room and prepare to receive the rest of us for fellowship and refreshment. We will remain in worship until they have had enough time to get settled. I will signal the end of the service by shaking hands with those around me, and you are invited to greet those near you in a like manner. At that time you may also sign the Guest Book if you have not already done so.

Now let us center into worship and await God's leading.