## The BEN LOMOND QUAKER CENTER invites you to an ONLINE PROGRAM



# THE GATHERED MEETING

## with
## STANFORD SEARL

### FEBRUARY 26 – 28, 2021

*". . . (W)hat I experience in a gathered meeting is a form of communion of hearts and minds and spirits in the room – and a communion, not just with each other, but also with the Divine"*
(reflection from an Upstate New York Friend in the gathered meeting study).



### ABOUT THE PROGRAM LEADER:
During the spring, 2020, Stanford Searl worked as the Carroll Research Scholar at Pendle Hill, completing fifty-five interviews (mostly virtual because of the pandemic) with both Pastoral and non-Pastoral Friends, asking them about the meanings of the Quaker gathered meeting.

In 2019, the Poetry Box published his poetry chapbook, *Mary Dyer's Hymn and other Quaker Poems*. Also, in 2019, a small press published *Songs for Diana*, a poetry chapbook about the life, death and meaning of their severely handicapped child, Diana Margaret. In 2005, He completed two books about research into the meanings of silence in Quaker worship, *Voices from the Silence* and *The Meanings of Silence in Quaker Worship*.

He lives in Culver City, California with his wife, Rebecca and is a member of the Santa Monica Monthly Meeting.

This workshop explores various themes and challenges about the paradox of preparation for the Quaker gathered meeting. Together, using a Quaker contemplative inquiry approach, we will reflect upon four main themes connected to spiritual preparation that emerged from a research project about the gathered meeting experience.

- The letting go of the ego.
- Various forms of prayer as preparatory practices.
- Practicing worship together.
- Deeper vocal ministry.

We will explore these themes (drawn from the study's fifty-five Friends, both Pastoral and non-Pastoral) from the conversations about the Quaker gathered meeting and employ a contemplative, devotional approach together.