

I'm Holding



YOU

in God's

CHOCOLATE

A zine about Quaker
spiritual support

In the Society of Friends, also known as Quakerism, it is common to tell someone that you are "holding them in the Light." This is an open-ended term for prayer or spiritual support at a distance—a way to let others know that you are holding them in your heart.

But what does "holding someone in the Light" really mean? The "inner Light" is one term for that of the divine in each person, but framing God as "light" and evil or despair as "darkness" has ugly implications. At Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting in fall of 2018, Ellany Kayce encouraged Friends to move away from metaphors that pit light against dark, since this has broader connotations about people with lighter skin being good and darker skin being evil. This zine invites us to think about other ways to describe divine love and clarity and the ways we care for each other.

This zine is for anyone interested in learning more about the diverse ways we support one another at a distance, whether you are a seasoned Friend or new to Quakerism, an enthusiastic prayer partner or someone curious about how to begin. It might be a way to start a conversation among f/Friends about our personal prayer practices or thinking through other ways of decolonizing our shared language whose history stretches across centuries. My hope is that by exploring the ways we nurture each other, we can find innovative, clear, and liberatory descriptions of the beauty and power of our prayer.

Much gratitude to all the Friends who shared their thoughts and practices for this collection. Quakers believe that Spirit speaks through all of us; each new voice adds to the larger Whole. Individuals are not named; all contributions were gathered from Quakers of various theological traditions in the fall of 2018.

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In 2012, I heard someone deliver a message in Meeting for Worship about her personal practice of holding someone in the Light.



She said each time she prayed for someone, she imagined them floating in God's warm, molten chocolate.

I thought for myself... what do I imagine when holding someone in prayer? I decided I'd like to imagine them in the softest, glitteriest blanket, all safe and warm in my heart.



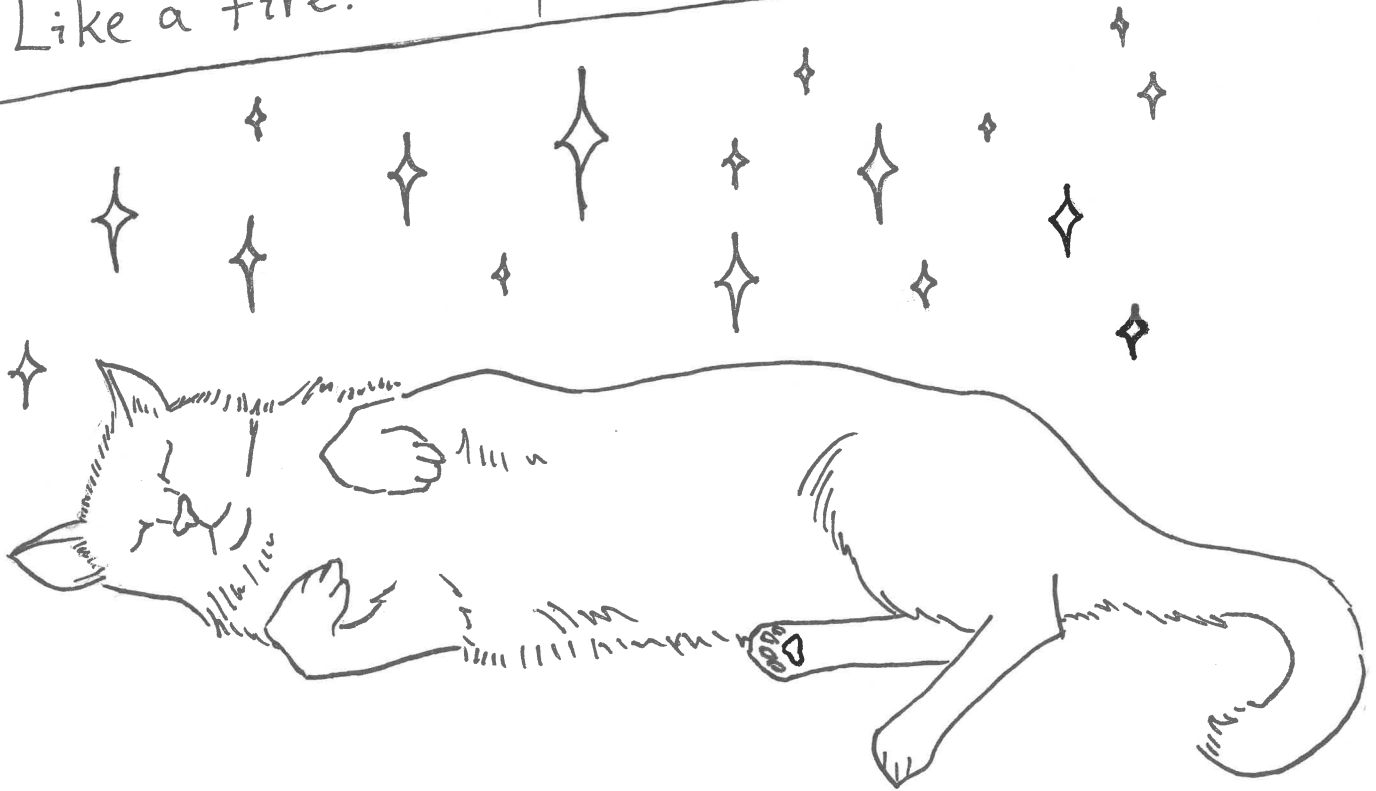
I asked a number of Friends what they do or visualize when they are holding someone in the Light. Drawn here are some of their ideas.



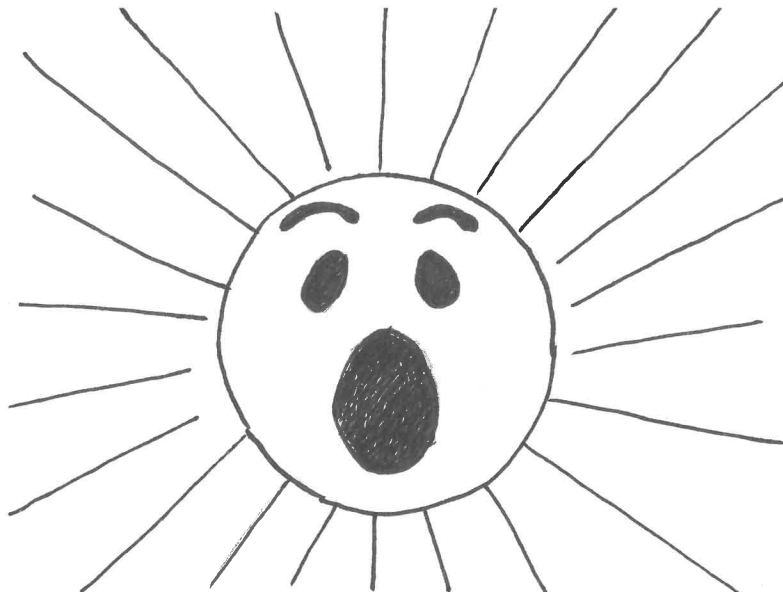
I wrap them up in energy.
Like a fire.



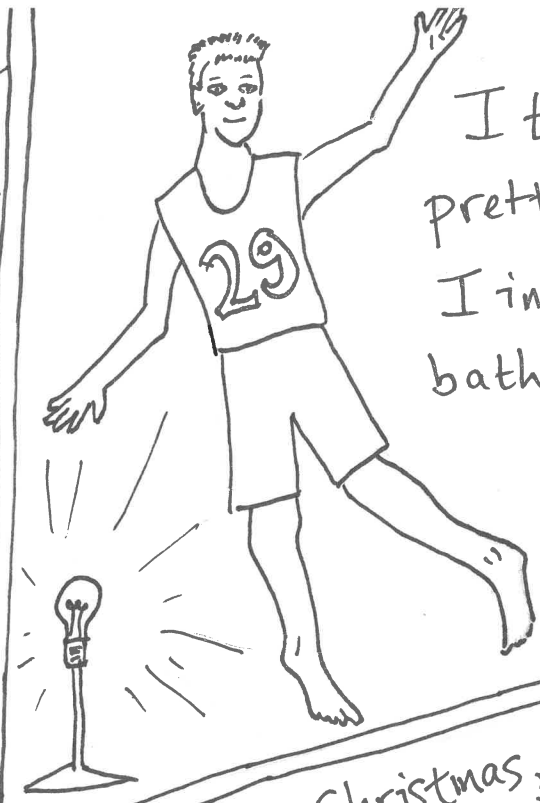
I sit and hold my hands in my lap
and just try to be open. I send them love.



I have a lot of cats, and I imagine my friend basking
in the sun like a cat.
Sometimes there are sparkles showering down on them.



Light can be gentle & healing, or it can be fierce, like a bolt of lightning. Sometimes you're sunbathing & sometimes you get burned. It's kind of like the Wow emoji on facebook - you never know what kind of clarity you're going to get.



I tend to be pretty literal. I imagine them bathed in light.

One time, at Christmas, a person at my Meeting said she imagined us each wrapped up in a big red bow!



When I'm making something, like a hand-sewn trivet or a loaf of bread, I imagine the person I am praying for with each stitch or each time I knead my dough. If they're nearby, I'll share what I made with them - a prayer made manifest as a gift.



I do a prayer doodle - I will write the person's name on paper and settle into a prayerful silence. Whatever comes to me I doodle around their name - colors, designs, and patterns all representing the energy I am sending to them in that moment.

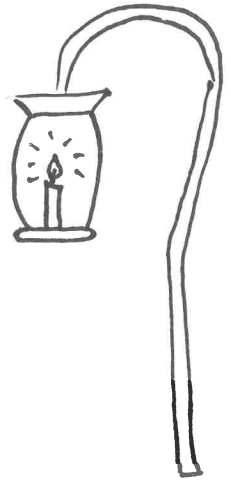


Most of the time, just telling someone that I will hold them in my prayers is the extent of my work. I think it is enough for them to know they are in my thoughts and my heart.

From a message in Meeting for Worship at
Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting, fall 2018:

I've heard a quote that says:

"Give me a light that I may
tread safely into the unknown."



And he replied:

'Go out into the darkness and put your
hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light
and safer than a known way.'"



—Minnie Louise Haskins,
"The Gate of the Year"
1939

So maybe, instead, we should say "I will
dwell beside you in the divine darkness."

That would be more truthful and more
powerful, as we never have clarity on what
comes next.