



Quick Links

- ▶ [About Us](#)
- [Announcements](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- ▶ [Care](#)
- [MJ Simpson Scholarships](#)
- [Committees](#)
- [Officers and Committee Members](#)
- [Meeting Directory](#)
- [Meeting for Business](#)
- [Newsletters](#)
- [Library, Handbook](#)
- [Our Renovation](#)
- [Social Justice Fund](#)
- [Event and Wedding Rentals](#)
- [Donate to FMW](#)

 [Printer-friendly version](#)

FMW Newsletter - April 2021

Published monthly – Issue #91 – 04

April 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Schedule of Meetings for Worship at FMW](#)

[4th Month Query: PERSONAL SPIRITUAL LIFE](#)

NEWS

- [In memoriam: Pablo Sanchez](#)

- [FMW's Personal Aid Committee](#)

- [First Day School on March 14](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- [Quaker Spiritual Development Programs - Full schedule for April 2021](#)

- [Seeing the Light of God in Those You Don't Like, Sat 4/3.3pm](#)

- [Alternatives to Violence Project full basic training, April 10, 11, 14, 17, 18](#)

- [Memorial Service for Pablo Sanchez, Saturday 4/3.2 pm](#)

- [Rex Ambler's Experiments with Light, Sat 4/24, 3:00 pm](#)

OPPORTUNITIES

- [Quaker United Nations Office seeking UN Representative](#)

- [Reclaim Our Vote! Postcards to Virginia](#)

- [FMW's Committee on Peace & Social Concerns: Join us!](#)

ARTICLES

- [A Tax Tip from J.E.](#)

- [Thinking about Race, April 2021](#)

- [A message from Christ House](#)

MARCH 2021 MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES

[Clerk's Report, March 2021](#)

Major Business

- [Ministry and Worship Committee](#)

- [Committee of Clerks](#)

- [Membership Committee](#)

- [Nominating Committee](#)

- [Community Mapping](#)

ADDENDA

- [Ministry & Worship Committee's Annual Report](#)

- [Draft of the Spiritual State of the Meeting Report](#)

& [Addendum: Friends' Responses to Survey Questions](#)
- [Committee of Clerks meeting 1/31/2021](#)

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP ~ ALL ARE WELCOME

- **Sundays: 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. and 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.**
- **Tuesdays: 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.**
- **Monthly Meeting for Business: 12:15 p.m. April 11 (2nd Sunday)**

*Meetings for worship continue to be held mainly via Zoom due to the pandemic, but limited outdoor Meetings have resumed. **Registration** is required. We won't send a confirmation email, but will email you if we're over capacity or need to cancel due to weather. For more information, email co-clerk RebeccaLeeNelson99@gmail.com*

4th Month Query: **PERSONAL SPIRITUAL LIFE**

Do you make time for meditation, prayer and worship? Do you read the Bible, the writings of Friends, and other inspirational works, seeking new light? Do you regularly seek God's guidance? Are you open to guidance and support and do you give thanks for them? Do you share your spiritual insights with others and willingly receive from them in turn? (See: [Cultivation of the Life of the Spirit; Prayer and Meditation; The Scriptures](#))

Source: [BYM Faith & Practice, Part II The Queries](#)

News

In memoriam: FMW attender Pablo Sanchez passed away on February 24 from complications of Covid-19. Pablo is father of FMW members Jorge Sanchez and Lucia Sanchez Norman and former husband of Lucy Norman. A memorial service will be held via Zoom on April 24 at 2:00 pm. **Join on Zoom.** For more information, contact Jean Capps, jean_capps@hotmail.com

PERSONAL AID

FMW's Personal Aid Committee is in a position to help members and attenders who are struggling in Covid-times. If you are in need of assistance, please reach out to us. No need is too great or too small. All discussions will be kept confidential. Email Mary Melchoir at mulchness@gmail.com or call Greg Robb at (202) 257-6646

First Day School on March 14



A friend wrote: A huge thank you to Greg and the RE Clerks for this amazing trip to the Friends Wilderness Center today. As Greg said: the FWC is our place. It is vast, Looking forward to happy returns to this beautiful, wild piece of land.

Events

Quaker Spiritual Development Programs sponsored by FMW's Ministry & Worship Committee. Full schedule for April 2021. (Also on FMW's website, www.QuakersDC.org.)

Seeing the Light of God in Those You Don't Like, Saturday, April 3, 3:00-4:30 pm. **Pre-register here** for this Zoom workshop. Presenter: Karen Tibbals. Our country is divided. Even Quakers are divided. We have a hard time agreeing on anything. Is there a way to love people who are difficult? A way to see the Light of God in others we disagree with? Karen's presentation will help you acquire a deep understanding of people's values and how they inform their stance on issues. **Details here.** For more information, contact: Ann Herzog, aherzog333@yahoo.com

Alternatives to Violence Project full basic training, April 10, 11, 14, 17, 18 (afternoons)

The Alternatives to Violence Project has a long and proud Quaker-based history of promoting effective methods of conflict reduction/prevention/resolution through a series of training workshops with prisoners, community groups, schools, and others. FMW's AVP-DC Taskforce (DC's first AVP Chapter) invites you to these upcoming (free) training opportunities. **Register here!**

Learn more at avpusa.org or contact AVP-DC coordinator Zephyr Williams, email: seuilceleste@gmail.com

Memorial Service for Pablo Sanchez, Saturday, April 24 at 2:00 pm

FMW attendee Pablo Sanchez passed away on **February 24** from complications of Covid-19. Pablo is father of FMW members Jorge Sanchez and Lucia Sanchez Norman and former husband of Lucy Norman. A memorial service will be held via Zoom on April 24 at 2:00 pm. **Join on Zoom.** For more information, contact Jean Capps, jean_capps@hotmail.com

Prayer Series Part 2:

Rex Ambler's Experiments with Light, Sat, April 24, 3:00-4:30 pm.

Join Zoom Meeting. By phone dial: (301) 715 8592. On prompt enter Meeting ID: 893 6559 4910# "Experiment with Light" is a Quaker practice based on early Friends' discoveries. Devised in 1996 by Quaker and theologian Rex Ambler, who discovered a process by which the Light can be accessed. This workshop will teach you this process and enhance your ability to find greater inner peace in the stillness. **Presenter: FMW member Joseph Izzo.** For more information contact Joe at: jjzzo4102@gmail.com, cell: (202) 425-0496.

Opportunities

Quaker United Nations Office seeking UN Representative. Deadline April 10

QUNO New York office is hiring for the position of Quaker UN Representative to join its representation team at the United Nations. This Representative position functions as a senior member of the QUNO team, sharing programme responsibilities while taking particular care for the operations of the office. Qualified applications will have a minimum of eight years of experience in non-profit administration and programme implementation, including financial management, grant management and staff supervision. Additionally, applicants need demonstrated programme experience in a related field of QUNO New York's work. Interested applicants can read the **job description/requirements, and apply here** by April 10, 2021.

Reclaim Our Vote!

Friend Laurie Wilner and Reclaim Our Vote DC-MD-VA has **asked for FMW's help to write disenfranchised residents of Virginia (who are unregistered and/or have been**

scrubbed from the voter list) to encourage them to register and vote in Virginia's upcoming primary (June 8) and general gubernatorial election (in November). ROV-DMV is committed to sending out **300,000** handwritten postcards in the next 6 weeks! (The voter registration deadline for the primary is May 18, so all postcards need to be out the door by mid-April.

Many key policy initiatives hang in the balance, and all of Virginia's citizens deserve a voice. Because we see this issue as very much aligned with our Meeting's social justice and anti-racist commitments, FMW's Peace & Social Concerns Committee has agreed to help--as we did last year--by reaching out to friends in the FMW community. The postcards are quick to write. We will be making packages of 30 postcards, addresses, stamps and instructions--available at FMW or we will figure out how to get them to you.

If you would like to write some postcards and/or volunteer to help in other ways, **please sign up here** or contact Barbara Briggs, Peace & Social Concerns, email BarbaraHBriggs@gmail.com

FMW's Committee on Peace & Social Concerns: Join us!

Are you led to advance work for peace and social justice in your community? If you do, then the Peace and Social Concerns Committee (PSC) may be right for you. We are a small, but mighty committee that confronts some of the most pressing issues facing our community. For example, the pandemic did not slow us down. Last year, the PSC facilitated conversations around gun violence, participated in Black Lives Matter protests, contacted over 7,000 get-out-to-vote postcards, and incubated DC's first Alternative to Violence Taskforce.

This year, we increased the pace. The PSC has already raised over \$14,000 for the Chesapeake Climate Action Network and FMW's social justice fund. The PSC is also supporting community efforts to detect hazardous methane leaks. Those findings were relayed to DC Council, and are the beginning of a city-wide call to action. In March, Peace & Social Concerns sponsored a workshop on the steps that non-Native people can take to build "right relationship" with Native peoples today based on truth, respect, and justice. And, we are ramping-up efforts to enfranchise voters in advance of the upcoming Virginia elections. PSC is just getting started, we are looking for new members and collaborators to shape our agenda and advance our Meeting's social justice efforts. We meet the first Sunday of every month at 12:15 PM. If you would like to learn more or simply observe a PSC meeting, then reach out to PSC Committee clerk, Barbara Briggs, BarbaraHBriggs@QuakersDC.org, for more information.

A Tax Tip from J.E.

Even if the "tax reform" of the last few years has put you where you no longer itemize deductions, you can still declare on line 10 of the front of the 1040 charitable contributions up to \$300. This results in a saving of \$30 to \$111 depending on your tax bracket. Please consider contributing that money to retire the Meeting's debt or to any charity of your choice.

Yours for Peace and Justice (and a fairer tax system) -JE McNeil

8	Other income from Schedule 1, line 9		8	
9	Add lines 1, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5b, 6b, 7, and 8. This is your total income		9	
10	Adjustments to income:			
a	From Schedule 1, line 22	10 a		
b	<u>Charitable contributions if you take the standard deduction</u>	10 b		
c	Add lines 10a and 10b. These are your total adjustments to income		10 c	

Thinking about Race, April 2021

Except from “me and white supremacy”

“If your understanding of racism and white supremacy does not include a historical and modern-day contextual understanding of colonization, oppression, discrimination, neglect, and marginalization at the systemic level and not just the institutional level, then you are going to struggle when it comes to conversations about race. You will assume that what is being criticized is your skin color and your individual goodness as a person rather than your complicity in a system of oppression that is designed to benefit you at the expense of BIPOC in ways that you are not even aware of. This lack of understanding leads to white fragility, either by lashing out to defend your individual sense of goodness or feeling that you as an individual are being shamed for being who you are, thus leaving the conversation. This is a dangerous impediment to antiracism.”

Note: If the acronym BIPOC is new to you, it means Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. From *me and white supremacy – Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*, by Layla F. Saad (2020), pp. 41-42.

A message from Christ House, with gratitude...

One year ago, with the beginning of the pandemic, Christ House was sadly forced to inform all of the groups that routinely served and provided meals, including the wonderful volunteers from Friends Meeting, that we could no longer welcome them to serve in our kitchen and dining room. Since we welcomed our first patient on Christmas Eve 1985, Christ House has always relied on the generosity and volunteer commitment of local congregations and their members to implement our mission of providing healing and hope to persons experiencing homelessness in Washington, D.C. We look forward to welcoming volunteers back as soon as it is safe. In the meantime, we hope you will enjoy learning a bit more about Christ House and the story of one of our patients, Vincent.

Christ House is a 33-bed medical respite facility in the Adams Morgan neighborhood. We provide medical care, 3 meals a day, and wrap-around services designed to interrupt the cycle of homelessness to our patients, all of whom have acute medical needs and are experiencing homelessness. One patient who arrived at Christ House just before the cold settled in faced many barriers since he was young but inspired us with his commitment to his own healing day after day. Since he was a child, Vincent recalls being in a state of transition. His mother suffered from a substance use disorder and his father struggled to make ends meet, leaving Vincent often bouncing from home to home, even spending a month living on his own at the age of seven. Vincent was introduced to drugs at a young age and found himself in and out of juvenile detention centers and group homes. He began working at the age of 19 and held jobs in construction, mechanics, as a truck driver, and even at the post office. When the pandemic hit, Vincent was unable to stay safely employed and his alcohol dependency worsened.

When Vincent severely injured his foot, his sister encouraged him to go to Christ House to receive medical care. Prior to his admission, Vincent had been homeless for over a year and says that he “had something totally different in my mind” when he first heard of Christ House. He shared, “I didn’t think this place would be so peaceful. It’s been great here. I’m more open to things and I’ve stopped putting up a brick wall.” While his foot gradually healed, Vincent could often be found drawing or etching intricate pieces of art in our courtyard.

For many of our patients, Christ House is not the final stop in their recovery process, but rather the first step in their journey. We hope that you will consider supporting our mission by visiting our website at <https://christhouse.org/donate/donatehomepage/>. Your gift helps to provide

patients like Vincent with a place to rest, recover, and reflect—a place to find hope and begin again. We thank you for your generosity and look forward to welcoming volunteers from Friends Meeting back soon!



Minutes

Friends Meeting of Washington

Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business March 14, 2021

Query for Worship Sharing: What is growing for you spiritually this spring?

Clerk's Report, March 2021

In Memoriam

- Pablo Sanchez, former attender and father of Lucia and Jorge Sanchez, died in February of Covid-19. A memorial service is planned for late April.

Upcoming Events

- **MJ Simpson Scholarship Mini-Fundraiser, March 21 at Rise of Meeting (12-12:30)**
Conditions aren't right quite yet for an in-person luncheon, but please **join** the MJ Simpson Taskforce for a special MJS update/fundraiser/celebration at Rise of Meeting!
- **Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples, March 21, 12:30-2:30 pm**
[Register here](#) for this important workshop about building relationships among Native and non-Native communities based on truth, respect, justice and our shared humanity.
Facilitators: Jerilyn DeCoteau (Turtle Mountain Chippewa, founder and co-coordinator of Right Relationship Boulder) and Andy Grant, a Massachusetts Quaker, active on issues of right relationship with Indigenous people. Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples is a program of Friends Peace Teams. For more information contact Steve Chase, SteveChase338@gmail.com

- **FCNL Spring Lobby Weekend, March 20-22 - Registration is open now!** Quakers, and young adults will gather to learn and lobby. This year, we'll be calling on Congress to demilitarize the police and end police violence. There will be scheduled programming on Saturday, March 20 and Sunday, March 21, followed by a day of action on March 22. [Learn more and register here!](#)
- **Quaker Spiritual Development Programs sponsored by FMW's Ministry & Worship Committee. This Full Month's Schedule is also on www.QuakersDC.org.**

FMW Community Highlights & Kudos

- **Thanks to Steve Cha and Neil Froemming** for their very informative presentation on COVID at Rise of Meeting, March 7
- **FMW's Polar Bear Plunge team** raised a total of **\$14,320** --half to support the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, CCAN's important regional climate work. Half (**\$7,160**) will fund our Meeting's social justice activities--including FMW's annual dues to Washington Interfaith Network (\$3,000). Those who attend Meeting for Business will see proof of the Quaking Quakers commitments fulfilled (& buckets emptied).
- **Reclaim our Vote (ROV-DMW)** has asked FMW folks to help send hand-written **postcards** to support voter registration and voting. This time it is for disenfranchised residents in Virginia, for the upcoming gubernatorial primary. Peace & Social Concerns has committed "us" to send 1000 postcards (to start) between now and mid-April. Mailing deadline April 19. **To volunteer** contact PSC clerk Barbara Briggs at BarbaraHBriggs@gmail.com or cell: 412-417-9384

Major Business

Ministry and Worship Committee (Joe D'Antonio)

- The M&W Co-Clerk introduced **M&W's Annual Committee Report**. As with most committees, COVID-19 has taken the lion's share of the committee's work this year and has presented its difficulties. The committee has set up Zoom techs and done other things to transition to virtual worship, meetings, and general operations. The Committee has been focused on finding ways that Quakers can borrow and learn from other spiritual and religious traditions and practices (Ignatian prayer as one example). It is also planning to set up an Inquirer's class, due to demand from the Meeting. The theme of the report and the committee is deepening spiritual practice.

One Friend noted that the meeting for worship was done at Black Lives Matter Plaza for three months (12 meetings) and close to a month at the Supreme Court. That was a considerable effort put on by M&W, led by Betsy Bramon and Tom Yonker, with the support of Michael Beer.

Friends accepted the M&W report.

- Spiritual State of the Meeting, first draft

The M&W Clerk reported that the fundamentals of the spiritual state of the meeting are strong. COVID has made things more difficult and in many ways defined the year.

The Committee drafted this report not just to define the state of the meeting for ourselves and for this Meeting, but for Quakers and others around the world both now or in the future. This is a draft, very much open to edits and input from the Meeting. At this stage, the Report is not up for approval. The Committee is asking for advice and edits from the Meeting for Business now, to make things go more smoothly later when the Report is up for approval during the April the Meeting for Business.

One Friend clarified that BYM asked that these reports be sent by April 1. This report, therefore, will need to be approved by the April Meeting for Business at the latest. Please contact Joe Izzo or go directly to the M&W committee e-mail address to suggest edits. If you have any edits, please input them soon--ideally this coming week.

The Committee arrived at the draft after sending a survey out to the Meeting's members and attenders and conducting listening sessions after the 10:30 Meeting for Worship and at other times during the week. This draft report reflects what was discussed and learned through those surveys and listening sessions.

One Friend noted that FMW is an odd Meeting. George Fox was very focused on the idea that the physical building is not important. FMW however has an expensive piece of property and expansive property operations and maintenance. That has an effect on our Meeting's Committees and time of volunteers. There is a focus at this Meeting on practical considerations of property and finances. The Meeting should bear that struggle in mind.

The Clerk responded that this is an insightful comment that could be included in the report. Edits to the report can be e-mailed to Joe D'Antonio at jdantoniodc@gmail.com. Edits should be specific and to the degree possible, targeted. The M&W Committee is happy to add in new paragraphs or sentences as appropriate.

Committee of Clerks Minutes (Debby Churchman)

-The Clerk presented the minutes from the committee of clerks meeting. She noted that we as a Meeting are generating too much e-mail. She requested that if you would like to post anything to a listserv, send it out in a way that responses are not sent on a reply-all basis. And if you respond to someone else's e-mail, please do not reply all.

One Friend noted that YAF's have been frustrated with reply-all's on the main FMW Meeting listserv. Joe noted that the YAF listserv is separate and that he believes it should remain separate from the FMW Meeting's listserv, out of a concern for too much e-mail traffic.

The Clerk reminded meeting members to send announcements to Barbara Briggs to be included in the weekly e-mail, rather than sent out separately. Also, she reminded members and attenders to check Barbara's weekly e-mail because it is a great source of information.

One Friend said that there should be another way to communicate through the entire meeting informally. The Friend would like some way to say hello informally and in a less bureaucratic way. This Friend is afraid that the Meeting is being run too much like a business. The Friend stated that she is concerned when she heard that some groups may not want to hear from the rest of the community.

One Friend clarified that YAFs are not attempting to separate themselves from the Meeting. YAFs are on Committees and committed to the Meeting. Joe clarified that YAFs are simply sensitive to having their inboxes flooded. That concern does not reflect the YAFs broader commitment to the meeting. People (and perhaps young people in particular) have a tendency to unsubscribe from any listserv when too many e-mails are sent. The Friend fielded that specific concern from specific YAFs about receiving too many e-mails and wants to be responsive to that concern.

One Friend said that there is an FMW forum to post informally. FMW forum is open to everyone.

One Friend noted that there are more than 300 names on the FMW Quaker list and more than 300 names on the FMW YAF list, but there are only about 50 e-mails that overlap. FMW YAF really is a separate communication medium. There is an FMW families list as well. There is no one list that the Meeting can use to communicate to every member and attender; no list exists to

contact everyone at once. This Friend also noted that the FMW Forum list is essentially inoperative.

Another Friend noted that e-mail settings can be changed so that recipients only receive one e-mail a day from the listserv. *Friends accepted the Committee of Clerks minutes.*

Membership Committee (Beth Cogswell)

- Transfer of Katie Breslin to West Richmond Friends Meeting in Richmond, Indiana

Katie's transfer to the West Falls Meeting has been formalized. A Friend noted that there is no particular process to follow in the FMW handbook for initiating a transfer, so we simply sent them a letter, as recommended by former Clerks.

- Bobby Trice, second request

The Meeting approved Bobby's request for membership. Bobby shared that he first attended three years ago, and expressed his joy in joining.

Nominating Committee (Virgina Avanesyan; Gene Throwe standing in)

- Susan Bien - Hospitality

This nomination will take effect when the Meeting House is re-opened. Friends approved this nomination.

- Susan Griffin, FMW Representative to FCNL

Friends approved this nomination.

Other Business

Community Mapping - in prep for getting back together (Rebecca Nelson)

The Clerk introduced the community mapping exercise as a way to make everyone in our extended community feel welcome in returning to the meeting, now that we are preparing to resume in-person activities. We as a community could create a document (Excel or otherwise) where members and attenders make a list of everyone who has previously been involved in our extended community. The idea would be to do outreach (e-mail or text, or something else) to let everyone on that list know we are returning in person and that they are welcome.

This Friend noted that there will still be a Zoom/virtual element to weekly meetings. The primary purpose of the community mapping, however, would be to prepare for a return to an in-person component to the meeting.

Another Friend noted that the ask for this project specifically is for the names of who you miss seeing at Meeting and an offer to contact them. She proposed the question of whether all Meetings for Worship should have a Zoom component.

A Friend noted that connecting the Meeting Room with the Zoom Meeting would be feasible. Having other Zoom connections in other rooms may be difficult, though the Meeting is very open to experimentation and other options. A friend agreed that at least for outdoor meetings, a Zoom presence would be more difficult.

A Friend noted that the outdoor Zoom meetings suffer from poor Internet connection. If we are intending to have outdoor Zoom Meetings, we will likely need a better signal.

A Friend responded that there will be better bandwidth in the Meeting's outdoor areas moving forward (starting this week).

One Friend noted that currently finding enough Zoom tech support is difficult. We as a Meeting should bear in mind that every virtual system will need a support person to operate, which takes that person away from participating in the Meeting for Worship.

Another Friend said that he believed that Zoom techs should be compensated moving forward. They are necessary to create an inclusive environment and Meeting.

Another Friend noted that this Mapping Exercise is a good opportunity to take stock in the Meeting and view it through the lens of the Meeting's racial justice work. The Friend suggested that we should stretch ourselves to contact those outside of our closest networks. The Clerk agreed that this is a powerful moment to define our community and to affirm that it is an inclusive Meeting.

One Friend asked the Meeting what to do about vaccinations. Requiring vaccinations is, by its nature, exclusionary. Even though science teaches that the vaccines are necessary for public health, a Co-Clerk is concerned that requiring vaccines is at odds with the Quaker value of inclusivity. She seeks input from the Meeting on this issue.

Another Friend noted that requiring vaccinations could end up segregating YAFs or people of color. The Friend noted that it will physically divide the Meeting, which is certainly a downside of a phased-in approach that we should be aware of moving forward.

Another Friend noted that this is a phased process. On that basis, this Friend believes that in-person Meetings for Worship should resume as soon as it is safe. This Friend believes that allowing the vaccinated to meet in person follows CDC Guidelines and should not be viewed as exclusionary.

A Friend asked that the Meeting trust the Clerks of Meeting to keep us all safe. This is a difficult time.

The Clerk summed up a number of parallel discussions that just took place. The first conversation concerned technology moving forward, and which of the Meeting's activities will have a Zoom or virtual component to them (Ken Orvis, Neil Froemming, and Barbara Briggs). The second conversation is about community outreach generally and the mapping exercise specifically. (Rebecca is the point person for that). The third concerns vaccinations and the potential that phased vaccinations could divide the Meeting (Debby and Rebecca). The fourth conversation concerns treating the Zoom tech support role as paid work (Personnel committee).

ADDENDA: ATTACHED COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ministry & Worship Committee's Annual Report to Meeting for Business for the Year 2020

The Ministry & Worship Committee responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by organizing Zoom Meetings for Worship and recruiting Heads of Meeting and Zoom technical advisors ("techs") to help Friends participate in the meetings. Several times during the year, the Committee revised the guidelines for sitting Head of Meeting in order to make the Zoom meetings more worshipful.

The Committee arranged a new Sixth Day 12pm Meeting for Worship for Sufferings to help Friends coping with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. That meeting became a solace for Friends at the end of the work week and attracted Friends from outside FMW. That meeting was laid down in early 2021 when attendance dropped off.

The Committee also convened Meetings for Worship outside in the world, in order to respond to major social movements. Meetings for Worship were held in the newly created Black Lives Matter Plaza and in front of the U.S. Supreme Court after the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg. These meetings for worship attracted Quakers from other Meetings in the D.C. area and witnessed to non-Quakers the power of the Quaker tradition.

At the end of the year, the Committee arranged for a Blue Christmas Meeting for Worship for those who had suffered a loss and a Christmas Day Meeting for Worship.

The Committee arranged for Friends Amy Schmaljohn and Alan Evans to offer a spiritual formation mini-retreat at FMW in February 2020; Friend Marcelle Martin to give a workshop on Faithfulness Groups in May 2020; and Friends Martha Baer and Nancy Jo Steetle of Annapolis Friends Meeting to offer a workshop on Investing Our Gifts in August 2020. Both workshops were offered by Zoom and were open to Friends in Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

The Committee collected a listing of spiritual development opportunities for adults at FMW and provided monthly updates to the FMW Administrative Secretary, so that Friends in the Meeting could conveniently find each month all the activities available to them for spiritual growth.

One Friend joined our Committee in order to revive Adult Quaker Religious Education, starting with the Inquirers Class, which has been moribund for a few years. In the meantime, the Committee procured a sampling of pamphlets about Quakerism to provide to newcomers and visitors to the Meetinghouse.

The Committee developed a proposal for an Advancement & Outreach Committee to welcome newcomers into the Meeting and to make FMW better known in the community. The Committee is seasoning the proposal before bringing it to Meeting for Business.

As is our Meeting's custom, the Committee prepared the Spiritual State of the Meeting Report for 2019 that was delivered to Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

Ministry & Worship:

Draft of the Spiritual State of the Meeting Report for the Year 2020 (3/5/21)

Introduction

Friends Meeting of Washington (FMW) has evolved in 2020 to meet the challenges of the pandemic and provide spiritual comfort and access to our members and attenders. After all the work and expense of renovating our Meeting House in 2018 and 2019, we were only able to enjoy the renovated building for a short time before the pandemic. This report addresses the spiritual health of our Meeting.

Meetings for Worship

FMW is a very diverse religious community with five Meetings for Worship held throughout the week. At the start of the year, FMW had four First Day Meetings for Worship (one at 9:00 a.m., two Meetings at 10:30 a.m., and one at 6:00 p.m.) and a Third Day Meeting for Worship at 6:00 p.m. Since COVID-19 precautions began last spring, FMW has had two First Day Online Meetings for Worship (at 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.); a Third Day Online Meeting for Worship at 6:00 p.m.; and a new Sixth Day Online Meeting for Worship at 12:00 p.m. Two of the First Day Meetings for Worship (one of the 10:30 a.m. Meetings and the 6:00 p.m. Meeting) did not convert to an online platform, with the one 10:30 a.m. Meeting being discontinued and the 6:00 p.m. Meeting being conducted in person with limited attendance. Online meetings are conducted on ZOOM, with volunteers facilitating the technical tasks as "ZOOM technicians." FMW's Administrative Secretary was able to quickly set up ZOOM accounts for Meetings for Worship, and the ZOOM links are published on FMW's website to welcome attenders.

FMW has also held First Day Meetings for Worship in its garden; at Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, D.C.; and at the U.S. Supreme Court, weather permitting, with participants remaining at least six feet apart. When permitted by FMW's Presiding Co-Clerks, FMW has had a First Day Meeting for Worship at 6:00 p.m. in the Meeting House, with participants remaining at least six feet apart.

First Day School

First Day school has persisted online, with occasional outdoor family outings.

Reviving Quaker Adult Religious Education Program

Although FMW has hosted many different presentations and book discussion groups for adults, a formal Quaker Adult Religious Education Program has not been offered for many years. Several Friends have identified a need for a common understanding among Friends of Quaker history, beliefs, traditions and practices. FMW has placed Adult Religious Education under the care of its Ministry and Worship Committee.

The last Quaker Inquirer's class for newcomers and attenders was held over three years ago and was poorly attended. The Meeting has purchased pamphlets from Friends General Conference and other sources that can be sent to newcomers and others by mail. FMW's website is undergoing significant revision to a new host platform. Once the transition has been made, Adult Religious education materials will be uploaded to a new Adult Religious Education page. The Inquirer's class will be revived, but whether it will be presented in person or on ZOOM is still to be determined. Curriculum and materials for the new Inquirer's Class will be distributed to attendees and also uploaded onto the new Adult Religious Education webpage.

Quaker Spiritual Development Programs

In July, a review of FMW's spiritual development programs was conducted. The report concluded that FMW had a variety of programs to offer; however, there was limited communication about the programs or easy access to the offerings and timing. As a result, the Ministry & Worship Committee is developing the Quaker Spiritual Development Programs that incorporate the recurring programs at FMW, as well as developing new programs as needed.

In order to make the programs more accessible to Friends, a monthly calendar was started in November for the Quaker Spiritual Development Programs and is included on the website and the weekly announcements. New programs will continue to be developed in 2021, as needed, and the new website will be a welcomed improvement by providing more visibility and better access to information.

Report

This report was written using feedback from a survey that was sent out to Friends and a ZOOM meeting held with Friends to get input on the following questions:

- How does Spirit prosper at FMW? How has FMW protected Spirit this year?
- *What are Friends in our Meeting doing to support one another? How has our Meeting addressed the conflicts that have arisen this year?*
- *What does spirituality mean to you and to our Meeting? How does our Meeting reflect that? Has it been different or the same during 2020, with the coronavirus pandemic and concern over racial equality, climate change, and the presidential election?*
- Would you like to add anything else?
- Which Meeting for Worship do you principally attend?

1. How does Spirit prosper at FMW? How has FMW protected Spirit this year?

Friends feel Spirit moving through online fellowship. Friends appreciate online meetings for worship; online breakout rooms following the First Day 10:30 a.m. Meeting for Worship; online committee meetings; online spiritual enrichment opportunities; online weekly announcements; and the online monthly newsletter as ways to foster community. Friends note that online activities allow our community to expand outside our geographic area. And Friends see Spirit moving us into witness and service in the Washington, D.C. community, even as we follow physical distancing protocols.

Friends note, though, that, at this time, FMW spiritually nourishes only those who can accommodate to ZOOM. Friends also note that the online platform for meetings for worship and First Day School keeps children and teens separated from the adult worshipping community on First Day. Young Adult Friends have requested ZOOM eldering for the First Day 10:30 a.m. Online Meeting for Worship.

FMW's First Day 9:00 a.m. Online Meeting for Worship attracts Friends who are nourished by silence. In that Meeting, messages are infrequent. Sharing about personal lives occurs after meeting for worship. Political issues are "left outside." Friends who attend that Meeting have formed strong bonds of community.

2. What are Friends in our Meeting doing to support one another? How has our Meeting addressed the conflicts that have arisen this year?

Friends repeatedly expressed that Meeting for Worship continues to nurture the Spirit, providing a profound experience transcending ZOOM. Friends hold the space for what is present in each other and offer support by holding others in the Light when difficulties are shared. The overall experience was that Meeting for Worship provides a beautiful, nurturing and loving time and experience and shows the strong mutual caring and support present at FMW.

Friends in the FMW community provide help and support to fellow Friends who have experienced illness and losses during the isolation. Bringing back a space for sharing joys and sorrows has been extremely helpful in strengthening the bonds of Friends and providing comfort and connection to those suffering an illness or loss.

There is appreciation for the proactive approach the Co-Clerks used early on in the pandemic to address the needs of Friends by providing virtual support allowing continual engagement with FMW. Friends have found support in a wide range of workshops, gatherings via ZOOM which have enabled Friends to come together to coordinate good works in the world. One Friend expressed appreciation for the programming provided by the Peace and Social Concerns Committee that addresses interests of concern, including the Polar Bear Plunge for the Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN). The Zinners (*i.e.*, dinners by ZOOM) and breakout rooms after the First Day 10:30 Meeting for Worship were mentioned frequently as functions that provide enjoyment and an opportunity to meet in small groups. Sharing after the First Day 9:00 a.m. Meeting was expressed as a time of community and support.

Friends have found support through FMW committee participation. Participation in Meeting for Business has resulted in check-in e-mails and calls from Friends who have reached out to support others who are going through difficult times. Young Adult Friends meet weekly, which also provides an opportunity for staying connected.

We have been addressing the issue of racism through workshops and we continue to learn from each other. As a result of Black Lives Matter protests this year, FMW has been working at becoming an anti-racist faith community. We use these queries in Meeting for Business and all of our decision processes in order to become aware of the racism that is built into our culture and our Meeting and work to heal it:

How will we provide opportunities for those most likely to be directly affected by the choices we are contemplating to influence the decision making process?

How could the choices we are contemplating affect those who have been harmed by systemic, institutional, interpersonal and/or internal racism?

To what degree have privilege, class, stereotypes, assumptions, and our ability to include other perspectives affected this decision making process?

How will the choices we are contemplating promote equity, diversity, and inclusiveness? Will they enable us to be more friendly and whole, engaging across racial divisions?

How do the choices we are contemplating support the declaration of our Yearly Meeting that we aspire to be an anti-racist faith community?

3. What does spirituality mean to you and to our Meeting? How does our Meeting reflect that? Has it been different or the same during 2020, with the coronavirus pandemic and concern over racial equality, climate change, and the presidential election?

Friends describe their spirituality with beauty and depth:

- Spirituality is a strong bond that connects me to others who want to explore and share in the mystery of an energy/God force that binds us together.
- Spirituality is bringing the Divine into each moment of Human Life.
- Seeking, being among other seekers who are not bound by dogma but by a belief in continuing revelation. We are tolerant of many ways of experiencing the Divine, which is an expression of the welcome we seek to provide to others.
- Spirituality is a way to transcend the difficult moments and find some peace and maybe even joy with connecting to reality at a deeper level.
- Spirituality means connection to each other and within myself. Staying faithful to community and being present for others is how I reflect that.
- Spirituality is the search for and reflection on the true values that lead our moral and ethical lives and inform our responses to the highs and lows of life.
- Daily practice has never been more important, to me -- love hearing from members about where they are drawing strength, be it podcasts, or watching nests or new growth or rain etc....it means being watered by all these things and more and trusting that in "wintering," that growth is happening, whether we can see it or not. It is this rich and varied landscape of FMW that keeps me and holds me, as rigidity and chaos abound; it is a renewal of knowing that there is this expanse within us, together, that is alive and well.
- A Friend appreciates the intense focus provided by the Thursday Spiritual Formation group and other spiritually-focused retreats provided by the Meeting.
- A Friend is still exploring the source of Spirituality, whether it resides in our brains rather than being drawn to us through a mystical process.

For many Friends, spirituality manifests through action for social justice:

- participating in silent vigils to support racial justice, in union with other faith communities along 16th Street, N.W.
- participating in "Choose Democracy" trainings and planning actions in the event of an attempted political coup.

- the Meeting has stepped up with staying faithful to being of this world and in this world by continuing to witness in safe but an outward manner on issues of justice and equality. It's in being adaptable that the Spirit moves us.
- there is momentum from our community to stand up to systemic racism, connect to organizations that worked to ensure full participation in the election and raised money for and awareness of issues surrounding the deterioration of our environment.

Community Support

- Friends held each other in the Light as the pandemic affected & infected members and by doing personal aid by shopping for infected members under quarantine. We lovingly supported those who experienced deaths in their families. The virtual community gave us a sense of stability and cohesion during the truly chaotic political atmosphere leading up to and beyond the November national elections.
- The multiple challenges we are facing makes FMW more important as a spiritual home where I can share with like minded Friends. Even though there has been less physical contact because of the pandemic, I think the spiritual link is stronger and feel that I can rely on the Meeting for emotional and spiritual support if needed.
- I feel a deeper connection to the community, and thus the spirit, since the events of 2020.
- I believe that our Meeting strove harder to maintain connection in our community once the coronavirus was upon us.
- I am no longer in DC and meeting virtually makes me feel like part of the whole.
- Like everyone, I miss our coming together for in-person worship and the ease for connection during fellowship afterward. I think that especially for new people, people not in a committee, and people less comfortable with sharing online, it must be much harder to feel connected and in community.
- I think that it is important that we keep working at that.
- It's been a mixed bag for 2020. Dealing with isolation and depression since March has been hard. I miss being together in person.
- My spirituality has not changed during [the] coronavirus pandemic or the election. I have found that Meeting has been also unchanged fundamentally: there is a continued concern for equality, stewardship of the earth, the peace testimony and a yearning for and striving towards simplicity. The form of our worship has changed, but I don't think we have changed who we are.
- Our virtual experience obviously has made our religious experience different this year, but we've done a good job of "keeping the faith" at the same time that we've experienced the many stressors and challenges referenced in the question. And we are grateful for our FMW community.
- When the pandemic hit, we were concerned that the depth of personal connection and sharing would decline when the meeting became virtual. If anything, just the opposite has happened. Interpersonal sharing and a feeling of group cohesion seem to have deepened.
- In spite of the success of the transition to ZOOM, Ministry & Worship Committee acknowledges the unavoidable loss of our in-person gatherings and we feel sorrowful about not meeting the need for in-person worship.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic, political upheavals, the constraints put upon our lives, and the losses Friends experienced, affected every aspect of our life in the Meeting. Friends affirmed that neither

the pandemic nor the sociopolitical stresses nor the move to online worship shook our core spirituality. We look forward with hope that, given the trajectory of the disease and the availability of vaccines, we may soon get back to a more normal community experience. Friends realize that the Meeting is not the building, but it is, in fact, the community of people, where the Spirit is alive.

Addendum: Friends' Responses to Survey Questions

Committee of Clerks meeting, 1/31/2021

Present: Rebecca Nelson (Co-Clerk), Debby Churchman (Co-Clerk), Gene Throwe (Library and Records), Todd Harvey (Co-clerk, Property), Rob Farr (Membership), Sabrina McCarthy (Co-clerk, Ministry & Worship), Virginia Avanesyan (Nominating), Ken Forsberg (Co-clerk, Property), Barbara Briggs (Peace & Social Concerns), Bill Strein (Personnel), Dan Dozier (Finance & Stewardship, Trustees), Mary Melchior (Personal Aid)

Meeting began at 9:00 am with a moment of silence.

There is a New Clerks package which will be sent to all clerks, whether new or not, that includes a number of resources to help you with your work.

Library Records & Handbook – the committee will be combing through the Handbook and recommending a number of changes to Meeting for Business, probably this summer. Also, we really need monthly committee minutes to be submitted to the Administrative Secretary each month so we will have a record of our history. Each committee has its own Google drive—the Administrative Secretary can you let you know how to access this.

A Friend asks for guidance on taking minutes. Clerk says there is a style manual from BYM. In general, we don't use personal names. There is also information on our website.

How is Meeting Community Doing during Pandemic? Are we keeping in contact with each other? Are we meeting people's spiritual and community needs? How do we strengthen our meetings?

Friends discussed this at length, coming to a number of conclusions:

- The smaller groups are doing very well, and have bonded during this time. A Friend has some concern about the larger meeting for worship, which draws a consistent 50 people each week--impressive, but about half of what we used to draw when meeting in person. Breakout rooms do well, but are chiefly populated by long-time attenders. Zimmers, workshops, etc. are attended by a few, who enjoy them.
- Zoom just doesn't work for some people, and others get too much of it during the week and don't care to load up again on Sunday.
- It would be good for each of us to regularly reach out to folks who we don't see routinely in Meeting for Worship.
- This is a short-term problem. As we come back together in a physical space, we will need to reach out more to those who may have drifted away.
- At the end of all Meetings for Worship, we should put the email address of the office in chat, and encourage newcomers to contact us to be included in the listserv.

Committee Email addresses IT committee has set up a kind of mini-listserv for each committee using Google Groups. This information is available in the office. Several advantages to using this address:

- Anyone can write to a committee, but only the committee members can reply

- The group is repopulated each year, but all of the correspondence remains in one place for the new committee members to read.
- This becomes our historical record

Are committees comfortable with having a version of their email address listed on the committee list on our website? Yes to M&W, Personnel, Nominating. Personal Aid needs to consider this as a committee.

Email hygiene Friends discussed the perceived problem of too many emails going out on our listserv. Several suggestions:

- PLEASE DO NOT REPLY ALL! This requires a culture change. Who needs to know this information?
- Subscribe to the Digest version, which sends all of the emails in one daily dump. Potential problem--you won't receive the notices until the next day.
- Ask YAF and the Families listserv if they would object to also being included in the main listserv, so that announcements only have to go to one group.
- One Friend strongly advocates setting up an Announcements Only list, with no replies allowed. Many objections voiced to this approach.

Committee Pipeline – Our Meeting, and in particular our committee strength, depends on our pipeline to get people to go from visitor to attender, from attender to committee member, from committee member to membership, from there to clerk. How do we encourage folks to join committees?

Reach out to individual friends and speak with them about their gifts and how they would like to use their gifts. Ask them, what would nurture you spiritually? Where do you think you could grow the most?

Membership committee can more overtly ask those seeking membership which committee they would like to join.

Succession planning--begin months in advance by asking people how they would feel about joining, or clerking, a particular committee, and give it time to season.

Use our breakout rooms on Zoom to hold a committee fair.

Annual Review - Personnel will be reaching out to Clerks to ask for their comments on our Administrative Secretary's performance over the last year, and will bring a draft review to the next Committee of Clerks meeting.

Meeting ended with a moment of silence at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Debby Churchman

#####

END 3/2021 MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES & ADDENDA

