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## FMW Newsletter, April-May 2020

### Editor's Note:

*Beloved Friends, Given COVID disruptions, the urgent need to transition our Community to ZOOM and other virtual ways of maintaining our FMW Community ties--April's newsletter took a back seat to other priorities. Below you will find one super-sized APRIL-MAY Edition. Enjoy.*

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#### **Link to Minutes: FMW Meeting for Business, March 8, 2020**

###

**5th Month Query: Personal Way of Life**

Do you live in accordance with your spiritual convictions? Do you seek employment consistent with your beliefs and in service to society? Do you practice simplicity in speech, dress and manner of living, avoiding wasteful consumption? Are you watchful that your possessions do not rule you? Do you strive to be truthful at all times, avoiding judicial oaths?

Do you strive to develop your physical, emotional and mental capacities toward reaching your Divinely given potential? Do you cultivate healthful and moderate habits, avoiding the hazards of drugs, intoxicants, and over-indulgence generally? Do you try to direct such emotions as anger and fear in creative ways? (See: [Early Quaker Testimonies](#); [The Practice of the Life of the Spirit Personal Life](#))

## **In Memoriam: John Scales**

FMW member John Scales died on April 14 following a two-year struggle with cancer. A memorial service will be held as way opens. Below are excerpts from his [obituary](#) provided by his family:

John Kent Scales passed away peacefully at home on Tuesday, April 14, after a valiant, two-year battle with pancreatic cancer. Even during his treatments, he maintained a strong joy of life and enjoyed spending time with his many friends and family. He had a love of international travel, adventure and public service, spending most of his career in key positions in the U.S. Congress, Peace Corps and USAID...

...John will always be remembered as a storyteller and lover of a good joke. He never outgrew his enjoyment of magic tricks and practical jokes. He was fond of his many summer trips to his home on Martha's Vineyard where he enjoyed sailing and swimming; and skiing in Aspen in the winter. He was always a warm and lively attendee at social events whether around his home in Alexandria or with family and friends in New England. He grew up with a love of musical theatre and continued to enjoy it and other local cultural events. He was an active member of the Quaker meeting in Washington, D.C. where a service will take place at a later date.

John was pre-deceased by the love of his life, his wife Mada McGill, who also served in senior positions at the Peace Corps.

## **Events**

**FCNL Thursdays with Friends: Love They Neighbor-People in Prisons, 4:00-4:30pm** [Go here](#) to learn more, to register for FCNL's bi-weekly [conversation](#) live and to hear prior recordings.

### **FMW Sunday Meetings for Worship Via Zoom**

#### **9:00 a.m.**

Click here to join: <https://zoom.us/j/395231896?pwd=c2JuU3lLd1kzSFJmQUtMdFo4c2Qodz09>

To join via phone dial: **301-715-8592** When prompted Enter Meeting ID: **395 231 896#**

#### **10 a.m. Sunday, May 3: Singing!**

Click here to join: <https://zoom.us/j/979505413?pwd=bGpvZlcoSmV5WXhwcZBvcUVncitQdz09>

*same Yes, we're going to try singing by Zoom. One person can lead, the rest of us can mute and sing along at home. All ages, especially young ages, welcome. This is the same Zoom room as 10:30 Worship.*

#### **10:30 a.m.**

Click here to join: <https://zoom.us/j/979505413?pwd=bGpvZlcoSmV5WXhwcZBvcUVncitQdz09>

**[pwd=bGpvZlcoSmV5WXhwczBvcUVncitQdz09](#)**

To join by phone, dial: **301-715-8592** When prompted enter meeting ID: **979 505 413#**

### **Weekday Meetings for Worship via Zoom:**

#### **Tuesdays, 6 pm**

Click here to join: [https://zoom.us/j/2025778431?](https://zoom.us/j/2025778431?pwd=U2RyVnlKQUpWcE1NTVd4a042ZFBBdz09)

[pwd=U2RyVnlKQUpWcE1NTVd4a042ZFBBdz09](#)

Meeting ID: 202 577 8431 Password: **Bayard**

Join by phone: **1-646-876-9923**, Meeting ID: **202-577-8431**.

#### **Meetings for Suffering** (for more detail see below)

##### Thursdays 5:00-6:00 pm:

<https://zoom.us/j/455263117?pwd=OGercFFRRG5ZdnBGbC9QZFpOUGhrUT09>

Meeting ID: 455 263 117 Password: 673902

Join by phone by calling **301-715-8592** Password: **673902#**

##### Fridays 12:00-12:30 pm:

<https://zoom.us/j/239417702?pwd=bVVLTWNCdHRHOVZESjZTVnJmQlhFZz09>

Meeting ID: 239 417 702 Password: 673902

Join by phone by calling: **301-715-8592** On prompt enter password: **673902#**

### **Peace & Social Concerns supports DC transition from methane gas to renewable energy: FMW can play leading role in faith community**

“Natural gas”--methane--is a powerful greenhouse gas driving climate change when it leaks into the atmosphere from drill sites, during transport, from the crumbling pipes under our streets and in our homes. Both methane and the nitrogen dioxide created when it is burned (even in properly functioning stoves and other household appliances) is damaging to human health. FMW's Peace and Social Concerns Committee has joined over 20 District climate, faith and community organizations in signing **this letter** calling on DC Council to hold hearings on the need to transition from fossil gas to renewable energy sources--something that DC's gas utility, Washington Gas and its parent Altagas committed to as part of the merger agreement. This will be the first step in a public campaign to move DC away from gas to cleaner, healthier energy sources for our residential heating and cooking needs. FMW can play a crucial role in reaching out and helping to build faith community support for this campaign, which is a necessary step if DC is to meet our climate goals. For more information, contact Barbara Briggs, [BarbaraHBriggs@gmail.com](mailto:BarbaraHBriggs@gmail.com).

### **Christ House Dinner, 6:15, Fourth Sunday of the Month. Please RSVP**

Thirty years ago, Gray Handley and Rose Mary Romano perched their new daughter, in her baby carrier, on a table in Christ House kitchen. Their little girl became a sister, a toddler, a first grader, a teenager and a young adult. For most months since then the family has prepared dinner once a month for 50-60 people.

Christ House is a health care residence, housing both short term and long term residents. It was established in 1985 to care for chronically ill, homeless people discharged from local hospitals, suffering from illnesses such as cancer, stroke, heart disease, and kidney failure. It is the only facility like this in the District and one of very few across the country. Community organizations, like FMW, serve Sunday night dinner.

A typical meal is meatloaf, mashed potatoes, veggie, seasonal dessert and fruit. Vegetarian entrees are available upon request. Gray and Rose Mary have developed an efficient routine:

one hour to plan and shop on Saturday; four hours to prepare and serve the meal and then eat with the residents on Sunday. Cleanup is handled by Christ House staff.

After thirty years, Gray and Rose Mary have no intention of giving up this rewarding activity. But they are each busy professionals who travel for their jobs. When both are away at the same time, they need a reliable back up. Think about it. Could you be this back up?

Dinner is served at 6:15, fourth Sunday of every month. RSVP.

## **Thinking About Race (April 2020)**

### **Inclusive Quakers**

“I adore silence. However, as a Black woman, I am aware that for Black, Indigenous, and communities of color (among other marginalized groups), silence has been a form of oppression that cuts us off from sharing our voice and agency and more. A reframe for those quiet meetings would require us to explore questions about speech and silence. How do we teach about vocal ministry? What messages about silence and speech do we send to seasoned Friends and newcomers.? How might silence inadvertently encourage greater distance among Friends? What is the right balance?

“... Even as we gather for meeting for worship and offer Spirit-led vocal ministry, this too is within a broader societal context of structures, systems, and institutions that further oppression and racialization.

“A reframe for Quakers would be to take a deeper exploration of our good intentions. How do our intentions affect others, either intentionally or unintentionally? How might we look deeper at our intentions and align them with our actions? When might our intentions not align with our values? What do we do individually and as a corporate body when this happens? How might our good intentions further support our implicit bias?”

From “How to Be an Inclusive Quaker: The Unwritten Norms of Speech and Silence,” by Valerie Brown, in March 2020 **Friends Journal**, pp. 18- 20. Readers of **Friends Journal** may well have recently read these words. Along with the whole article, they are worth considering as Baltimore Yearly Meeting Friends strive to ensure that we are an anti-racist faith community.

This column is prepared by the BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR) and sent to the designated liaison at each local Meeting. The BYM WGR meets most months on the *first* Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Locations vary to allow access to more Friends. If you would like to attend, on a regular or a drop-in basis *or via Zoom*, contact clerk David Etheridge, [david.etheridge@verizon.net](mailto:david.etheridge@verizon.net).

## **Minutes - FMW Monthly Meeting for Worship with Concern for Business April 19, 2020**

About 40 Friends gathered by Zoom at 12:15 pm.

**Query for Worship Sharing:** What spiritual practices are helping you right now?

A friend shared feeling comforted by reading about other difficult events as a reminder that we have survived challenges before. Another friend mentioned making a gratitude list, a list of overwhelming moments, asking for clarity and leading, and holding others in the light. A friend talked about mantras and the Serenity Prayer in particular. A friend shared the RAIN technique for dealing with stressful moments: Recognizing emotions, Allowing feelings, Investigate the source, Nurture through self-compassion. A friend decided to think of this time as a retreat and felt the joys of exercise and cooking at home. A friend shared gratitude for outdoor space and the

reminder in the weather that all things are impermanent. Many friends mentioned their gratitude for the good things in their lives.

## **Clerk's Report, April 2020**

***In Memoriam:*** Beloved member John Scales died last week. A memorial meeting will be held later.

### ***Upcoming Events***

#### **“Midweek Meeting for Worship, Tuesdays, 6 pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/2025778431?pwd=U2RyVnlKQUUpWcE1NTVd4a042ZFBBdz09>

Meeting ID: 202 577 8431 Password: **Bayard**

Join by phone: **1-646-876-9923**, Meeting ID: **202-577-8431**.

#### **“Meetings for Suffering” in this time of COVID 19**

During the years of greatest persecution of Friends, in the second half of the 17th century, Friends would hold those in prison in the Light during special Meetings for Sufferings. They also created a "fund for sufferings" to assist the families whose loved ones were incarcerated and unable to provide financial support. We are now faced with a pandemic that is causing profound suffering for all of humanity throughout the world and has touched each of us in our community in different ways.

We will gather, virtually, on **Thursday evenings 5:00-6:00 p.m.** and **Fridays 12:00-12:30 p.m.** in a worship sharing format that will allow each person attending to share what is most heavy on their heart and experience and receive the prayerful support of the community. We want to hear about how your family and friends are suffering through this ordeal and hold both those living and deceased in the Light. Please join us so we can share the burden of your suffering.

#### **Thursdays 5:00-6:00 pm:**

<https://zoom.us/j/455263117?pwd=OGercFFRRG5ZdnBGbC9QZFpOUGhrUT09>

Meeting ID: 455 263 117 Password: 673902

Join by phone by calling **301-715-8592** Password: **673902#**

Clerk: Joe Izzo: (202) 526-2471

#### **Fridays 12:00-12:30 pm:**

<https://zoom.us/j/239417702?pwd=bVVLTWNCdHRHOVZESjZTVnJmQlhFZz09>

Meeting ID: 239 417 702 Password: 673902

Join by phone by calling: **301-715-8592** On prompt enter password: **673902#**

Clerk: Bertrand Rossert

#### **April 22, Quaker Trivia Evening, April 22, from 7pm to 9pm via the Zoom link**

**below.** Your team can have a **maximum of 4 players** (no Googling!) If your 4 players are not in the same place, you'll need to figure out how to coordinate with them: you can phone a friend or have them connected on a separate messaging platform.

**TO PLAY:** Sign your team up by **5 p.m. April 21 using THIS FORM.** The game should last around 2 hours and it will focus on a mix of Quaker-specific trivia and general knowledge. There will be 4 rounds of 5 questions each, plus 4 bonus rounds where you identify pictures, songs, or other information. If this were bar trivia, you would typically be charged \$5 per person to play. We're not doing that, of course, but if you have it in your wallet and your heart, please donate that \$5 or more per person to Friends Meeting of Washington or your local Meeting.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Rebecca Nelson ([rebeccaleenelson99@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccaleenelson99@gmail.com)) and Joe D'Antonio ([jdantoniodc@gmail.com](mailto:jdantoniodc@gmail.com))

### **Clerking Workshop with BYM's Marcy Seitel, April 26, 1:00 pm. via Zoom**

Marcy Seitel walks us through the spiritual and practical practices of clerking  
Here is the link to join via [Zoom](#).

**FMW book discussion on Fostering Community**, April 26, 9 to 10 a.m. via by Zoom, and monthly on 4th Sundays. Join facilitators Roseanna Stanton and Bill Parker to discuss "Recognizing Community," Part 1 of Charles Vogl's book, *The Art of Community: Seven Principles for Belonging* (2016), <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/28762683-the-art-of-community>. The book discussion will continue monthly on the Fourth Sunday at 9 a.m. You can find a sample of the book at <http://www.charlesvogl.com/static/pdf/ArtOfCommunitySample.pdf>. Contact Sabrina McCarthy, Clerk, Pastoral Care Working Group, [sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net](mailto:sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net), cell 240.778.5234, for information and instructions on how to join by Zoom.

**Friendly Bible Study** will be held online on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. For more information, contact Gene Throwe, [gthrowe@gmail.com](mailto:gthrowe@gmail.com)

### ***FMW Community Highlights & Kudos***

**Zoom meetings for worship will continue at least through May.** Clerks are considering when and how we may be able to reconvene physically at the Meetinghouse or in the garden, following social distancing guidelines.

Holding in the Light FMW members and attenders dealing with Covid-19: Joe Izzo, Yael Fitzpatrick, Andrew Hall, Barbara Briggs

**Young Adult Friends holding weekly Zimmers**, and making an effort to incorporate BYM YAFs as well.

**9 Friends at FMW are currently working on making face masks and other PPE** for both the Mary's Center and for a homeless clinic in DC. We have extra material and a good pattern, if you're interested in giving this a try. Contact Debby at [dchurchm@yahoo.com](mailto:dchurchm@yahoo.com)

**Last year, Susan Bien donated 463 dozen+ cookies to the Meeting.** And how we miss them!

### ***Keeping in touch and fostering communications in the FMW Community:***

FMW's contact directory is BREEZE Church management system.

Go to FMW's website: [Quakersdc.org](http://Quakersdc.org).

In the left-hand shortcuts column, click on Meeting Directory.

For more info and to add or correct your information, contact Barbara: [admin@quakersdc.org](mailto:admin@quakersdc.org)

### **Major Business**

#### **Membership - Rob Farr and Kathy Lipp-Farr**

- Chris Kearns-McCoy, second presentation
- Jose Santos Woss, first presentation
- Transfer: Thomas Goodhue to Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

Rob Farr gave the second presentation for Chris Kearns-McCoy. His membership was approved.

Kathy Lipp-Farr gave the first presentation for Jose Santos Woss. She shared his involvement in our Meeting through Young Adult Friends and as a valued member of Property Committee, as well as in the wider world of Quakerism in his work at FCNL.



Thomas Goodhue has requested transfer of membership to Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting, which the Meeting granted with much gratitude.

### **Nominating Committee - Martha Solt**

- Chris Kearns-McCoy for Personnel Committee - until 12/31/2022
- Jean Capps for Ministry and Worship - until 12/31/2022
- Martha Solt as Assistant Treasurer - until 12/31/2020

Friends approved all of the above nominations.

Friends discussed the separation between Religious Education, focusing on children's education, and Ministry and Worship, focusing on adult education. This should be reflected in the handbook.

### **The Trustees determined their co-clerks for this year.**

- Chris Wickham, Co-Clerk of Trustees - until 12/31/2022
- Mark Haskell, Co-Clerk of Trustees - until 12/31/2020
- Elaine Wilson, Co-Clerk of Trustees - starting 01/01/2021 until 12/31/2022

**Ministry & Worship:** Spiritual State of the Meeting Report, second presentation - Marsha Holliday

- Friends approved the Spiritual State of the Meeting Report.
- The Meeting thanks Marsha and the Committee for all of their hard work on the report.

### **Property Update - Merry Pearlstein**

- The gates of the garden are intentionally left open, both to give comfort from our gardens to neighbors and to meet egress requirements.
- Due to COVID-19, there have been no events and space rentals, greatly reducing our annual income.

### **Finance & Stewardship - Dan Dozier**

*Presentation regarding FMW's financial situation in the context of COVID-19*

- Dan Dozier shared a report on expected event income loss and its impact.
- PPP loan application was submitted for just over \$42,000 (2.5 times monthly payroll), but the Meeting has not heard back yet. The PPP would cover a small amount of our expenses but would not make a great impact. The Meeting is eligible as a non-profit, religious organization. We must use 75 percent of the loan towards payroll over eight weeks in order to be considered for forgiveness. The balance can be used towards mortgage or utilities. The Meeting thanks Brian Lutenecker for his help in this process.

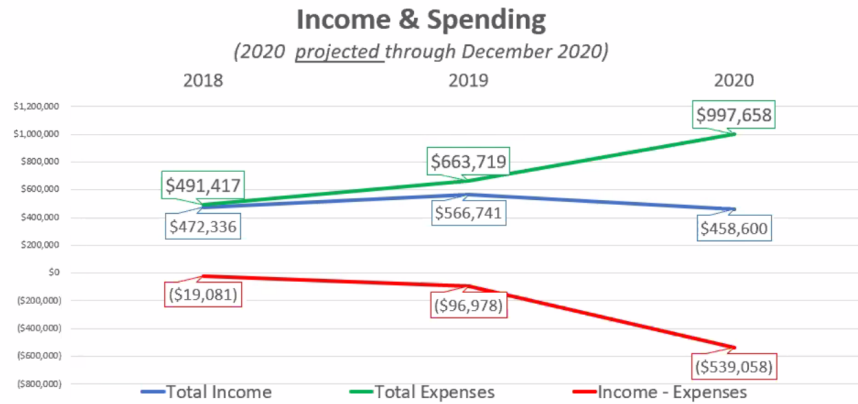
Discussions of finances are in terms of calendar year not fiscal years.

- The Meeting is considering asking Sandy Spring Bank for forbearance on our mortgage. The Meeting has a \$216,000-\$218,000 annual mortgage payment.
- The Meeting has approximately \$500,000 in more in expenses than in income projected this year. Our funds at Friends Fiduciary are used as an endowment, security for our loan, temporarily restricted funds. We currently have approximately two years of mortgage payments in Friends Fiduciary.
- Expenses have gone up, even though donations have increased. Some Capital Campaign Committee pledges have expired after a five year term. There are slightly over 200 donors each

year. Although this is a difficult time for individuals, the Meeting will reach out to Friends for increased donations and look for opportunities to cut expenses. Most of our expenses are mandatory - utilities, mortgage, and personnel. The main increase in expenses is the mortgage. The Meeting donates approximately \$96,000 per year to organizations we support. The chart below is in calendar years not fiscal years:

## Spending exceeded income 2018 – 2020

*We planned to close this gap in two-three years. Now, loss of rental income will widen it .*



- A friend shared that during this tough time we need to have faith in Spirit and faith in Friends to help us overcome our financial burdens. Finance and Stewardship asks for our community to step up and contribute more. A friend shared that with the given economic situation, it may be challenging to get additional donations. Friend asked about a suggested donation. Another friend shared that we should reach out to members and attenders to donate for the first time or increase donations.

- Finance and Stewardship will send an email asking “What should our priorities be if we need to make financial cuts?” in order to gain insight from the Meeting. They should also use this email to ask for commitments from donors.

- DC property tax is charged for the portions of the campus that are rented out. The tax is paid indirectly by tenants through their rental payments.

- This is the beginning of a longer conversation, and the budget will be presented at May’s Meeting for Business, laying over for consideration and approval at the June Meeting for Business.

- We would ask friends to consider FMW as the event venue for their future events.

Meeting for Business ended at 2:05 to reconvene as way opens on 5.10.2020.

### **ADDENDA: ATTACHED COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **FMW Event Rental Report, March 2020**

Prepared by Brian Lutenegeger, Event and Rental Manager

[eventspace@quakersdc.org](mailto:eventspace@quakersdc.org) or 202-483-3310 / 734-255-6829 while FMW is closed

#### Financials

Here is a breakdown of how we’ve fared so far in FY20 (through March 31, 2020) in terms of booked events for the current fiscal year:



## FMW Event Space Bookings

Fiscal Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
Before FY Start	\$25,511	\$24,648	\$11,098	\$15,964
July	\$5,791	\$9,592	\$3,302	\$4,405
August	\$5,833	\$14,764	\$3,623	\$16,228
September	\$8,095	\$8,528	\$2,543	\$23,296
October	\$13,826	\$9,582	\$3,686	\$20,319
November	\$7,160	\$4,281	\$3,394	\$6,147
December	\$5,635	\$7,621	\$5,363	\$6,649
January	\$29,877	\$9,714	(\$50)	\$15,098
February	\$10,166	\$8,764	\$4,376	\$8,147
March	\$9,288	\$10,305	\$967	(\$10,345)
YTD Total	\$111,893	\$97,494	\$37,335	\$105,907
Year End Total	\$130,777	\$115,600	\$41,749	\$0

Our fiscal year runs from July 1 to the following June 30th.

Like every other venue where people gather and every other sector of the event industry, March was an extremely challenging month – and this will continue well into the spring at least. We did manage to book more than \$10,000 worth of events in March. But, over the course of the month, more than \$20,000 worth of events canceled. So, as a result, we experienced a loss of booked events totaling more than \$10,000.

Given the way I handled COVID-19 related cancellations described below, we *earned* \$13,595 from event rentals in March – because we are generally holding on to deposits paid for events in anticipation of rescheduling in the future.

I will have more to say about the cancellations later in this report.

The chart above shows the very sudden drop in booked events during March. As of this writing, it is not clear when FMW will be able to reopen, so it is hard to know how much more we will make during this fiscal year from event rentals.

FY21 Event Bookings

The chart above also shows the \$20,000 worth of events for FY21 that we have now booked, including more than \$16,000 during March. Of course, we cannot definitively say where FMW and our society will be by July in terms of the ability to host larger events. But we hope all of these events will be able to move forward. Several of these events are later in the fiscal year and we certainly hope these events happen as planned.

#### COVID-19 and FMW's Event Rentals

As noted above, more than \$20,000 worth of events were canceled during March. This includes both events that had been on our calendar for some time as well as events which booked in February or early March but canceled prior to making any payment to FMW or returning a signed contract.

During normal times, we normally specify all payments made to FMW for event spaces are nonrefundable once paid. For cancellations, we allow the space user to apply the deposit paid at the time of cancellation to another event taking place within the same fiscal year.

Given the spate of cancellations and the public health situation, I invoked the "act of god" clause in our contract. I extended this window of time, giving space users the opportunity to apply their deposits to another event scheduled by the end of FY21 (6/30/2021). Only if this arrangement didn't work for a space user did I then offer a refund.

I strongly believe this was the right thing to do from a customer service perspective and in the interest of keeping both new and existing space users as customers over the longer term. Most event space users readily accepted the offer to apply their deposit in full to another event taking place by the end of June 2021. Several have commented on our flexibility and generosity – and I believe this approach is consistent with Quaker values. As a result, I have only issued \$1,749 in refunds so far during the pandemic.

In our accounting system, I was instructed to apply deposits to be transferred to a future event as income earned. This is where the more than \$13,000 of income I mentioned above earned from event rentals in March comes from. I anticipate most event space users will rebook in the next fiscal year (as a few have done already). When they do rebook, I will enter them in our booking system as a free rental up to the value already paid to us. Of course, some may not rebook at all.

#### Nonprofit versus market rates

Of the \$105,907 booked so far this fiscal year, \$16,957 worth of rentals has been at our full market rates (approximately 16.0 percent, a slight decrease from last month's 16.5 percent). The remainder of the booked events have received some type of discount:

- a) A discounted nonprofit or tenant rate
- b) A lower rate due to construction
- c) Memorial service and weddings under the care of the meeting where we do not charge for space for the service itself – only for the cost of the event host
- d) Some other factor

Our standard nonprofit discount is 20 percent off our market rates.

Thus far, we have been able to accommodate all requests for Meeting- and Quaker-related activities at FMW around outside space rentals. We are making every effort to accommodate Sunday afternoon and evening rentals, while ensuring that all of our internal activities on Sunday mornings are unimpeded by outside events. There will be a few upcoming events on Sundays when the space user will arrive at 1pm and we appreciate the help of hospitality and others to

make sure our spaces are ready. If we find that this does not work, we will adjust for future events.

### Marketing Efforts

I am continuing to add content to our new Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/fmw.event.venue/>) specifically for event rentals. I have also created an Instagram account for FMW (<https://www.instagram.com/friendsmeetingofwashington/>) that I am learning how to use. I have several upcoming opportunities for some pro bono social media support, in the form of one of the photographers I've been working with and/or a possible high school student intern this summer.

Also in March, we discontinued our Yelp advertising, although we will continue paying a smaller amount to them in order to keep some aspects of the enhanced profile. While the direct inquiries I received through Yelp were generally not helpful, it is more difficult to measure Yelp's impact on traffic to our website, phone calls, and emails. I do know that we received a number of visitors to our website through Yelp, but I have no way to know how many bookings we received from those inquiries. I may advocate rejoining Yelp advertising at a later date.

We did decide to join Wedding Wire / The Knot for one year, two popular sites used by couples looking to be married. In a few days, I have received several inquiries through Wedding Wire. Since we have room on our calendar in the summer and fall, I am hopeful that we may be able to capture some weddings that had been planned for this spring but had to be postponed. I am also looking ahead to weddings that will take place in 2021 and 2022.

### Wedding Open House at FMW

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we held a wedding open house and vendor showcase event at FMW on Saturday 3/14. Not surprisingly, the attendance of potential clients for FMW was low. But we did have a number of enthusiastic partner vendors setup tables and lots of good food provided by one of our partner caterers. We had a tent setup in our west gardens for the first time which offered new opportunities for photos of our garden in use. We hope this is the first of many such events down the road once the COVID-19 pandemic resolves. Thank you to those in the FMW community who helped make the event a success. An important goal of this event for FMW was to strengthen partnership with vendors we may refer wedding and other clients to once they have booked event spaces at FMW. By that measure, it was successful.

### What I am Working On

My position has always been a combination of sales, marketing, and customer service with a healthy dose of web design and other miscellaneous tasks thrown in. The slowdown in future bookings and events taking place has reduced the sales and customer services components of my work – and allowed me to focus more on the marketing aspects of this work that I was struggling to get to on a daily basis.

So far, I have:

- Made additional updates to the event rental website, including new photos and minor design changes as well as focusing on “search engine optimization” or SEO. SEO helps ensure that we appear near the top of Google search results when someone searches for terms such as “event venues” or “wedding venues”.
- Worked with our vendors to solidify connections
- Updated our profiles on social media, creating new posts, and begun working on profiles on other sites
- Watched lots of online webinars and attended virtual happy hours with industry professionals

·Thought about future marketing opportunities and creating an FY21 budget

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## **SPIRITUAL STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT 2020**

### **FRIENDS MEETING OF WASHINGTON, WASHINGTON, DC**

As we opened our newly renovated meetinghouse, there was a deep sense of peace, new light, and physical beauty in our buildings at Friends Meeting of Washington. Our renovations and environmental upgrades, nearly completed, improved our campus more than many of us could have imagined. Our physical improvements impact our sense of who we are as a meeting and what we can be for our members and attenders and for our community and neighbors, now and in the future.

Meetings for Worship continued throughout our renovations and remain a bulwark for our community. Since mid-March, we have been meeting virtually to avoid exposing our meeting community to the COVID-19 virus. Addressing this problem, we decided to close our meetinghouse on First Day mornings and meet virtually online.

Our experiment with this new format has been successful. We had 48 attenders at our first virtual meeting and about 100 at our second meeting. Our meetings have been centered and deeply quiet between our spoken, on-line messages. Our Bible Study Group has met by telephone conference call, and we are also offering on-line Committee meetings and Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business.

In these new and challenging times, Friends Meeting of Washington is redefining both worship and community. We hope and intend to support all of our members and attenders under these challenging times, and we long to return to our lovely meetinghouse. We are drawing upon the spiritual nourishment that we have received in the past, as we hold our Meeting in the Light and face our futures together in the Spirit.

We began planning our renovations 18 years ago. We had two physical needs: we needed an elevator, and we needed to manage rain-water run-off. Taking on the financial responsibilities associated with our renovations, we have better met our needs as a community, while providing access to most spaces and protecting the ecology of our neighborhood.

We now have a \$3.5 million mortgage, which we think and believe that we can pay off over time. We recognize that the challenges and opportunities of our renovations have brought a considerable financial burden to our Meeting going forward. Beyond taking on the financial responsibility of making mortgage payments, we have also taken on the opportunity of ministering to the larger community in our role as a hosting space. While maintaining our focus on the spiritual health of our Meeting, we are discovering new opportunities for ministry that we could not have previously imagined.

We have connected together all of our buildings, improved some of our spaces, added some new space, and installed extensive fire sprinkler and alarm systems. Except for our attic room, which has a view of our new green roof on one side and our new rainwater retention pond on the other, we have made almost all our spaces wheelchair-accessible, including most of our west garden. With solar panels on the roof of our meetinghouse, we are providing green energy, and saving about \$13,000 a year on electricity costs. Still to come: landscaping our new terraces, a revised Assembly Room floor, and a hearing assistance system in our meeting room.

Our first obligation in our newly renovated meetinghouse is to nurture our individual and collective spiritual lives. Our second obligation is to be an events and conference center for Quakers and our wider world. As a spiritual community, we are growing into an awareness of how to manage and merge these two responsibilities. This is about our ministry. We want to

share our campus, which is becoming a spiritual center for others, as well as for ourselves. We are at a cross roads in redefining ourselves, and we find this to be an exciting time.

We recognize that, as a Meeting, we have additional demands, challenges, and opportunities because of our location in downtown Washington, DC. Being in the Nation's Capital provides us with considerable diversity, both in local, national, and international politics and also in theologies; and so, we work intentionally to stay open to the Light as it continues to be revealed to us.

Over the last three years, the Ministry and Worship Committee struggled to address the needs of Friends and attenders who speak in meeting for worship, frequently, at great length, or injuriously to others. We offer a separate meeting with volunteers who welcome and receive such messages. This has allowed our 10:30 a.m. meeting for worship to achieve greater depth of worship, with a calmer atmosphere overall. Although we do not need our separate meeting at this time, we are prepared to re-establish it within a week, if need be.

Visitors to our various meetings for worship include college and university students, members and staff of Congress, lobbyists, government workers, interns, Friends who have recently settled into Washington, DC, tourists, and visitors to the city. Consequently, in addition to the pastoral care of our members and attenders, we also have a ministry of hospitality, providing a spiritual home for those who are here temporarily. Like FCNL and the William Penn House, we minister to those who are attempting to impact the Federal Government concerning the testimonies and values of Friends. All the while, we are addressing the queries on structural racism that Baltimore Yearly Meeting has requested and that our Meeting has approved.

Before the closing of our meetinghouse out of concern for the COVID-19 virus, we had meetings for worship at 9:00 a.m. in the Quaker House Living Room and at 10:30 a.m. in our Library or in the Quaker House Living Room and in the main meeting room. At 6:00 p.m. on First Day evenings and on Third Day evenings, we met in the Library. Children had First Day School on First Day mornings from 10:30 a.m. to 11:15 and joined the main meeting room at 11:15 a.m.

With around 35 or more children participating in First Day School, our children's program has been thriving. For safety, parents deliver their children to their classes at 10:30 a.m. The children enter our main meeting room for the last 15 minutes and sit with their parents. The first thing we do at rise of meeting is to ask our children to report on what they did in First Day School. It is inspiring to hear our children's voices in meeting. At this time, our First Day School is also meeting virtually.

Our Pastoral Care Working Group, a subcommittee of the Ministry and Worship Committee, is preparing a series of workshops for 2020. We recognize that, as lay ministers, we need to continually grow and train ourselves in the ministry of pastoral care. We are supporting a series on deepening our listening skills and a series on clerking, and the Ministry and Worship Committee has also spawned a Working Group on Clearness Committees.

Before COVID-19, we started meeting for business in our more intimate Quaker House Living Room. We hear each other better in this smaller space and manage space usage more efficiently with our new arrangement. Young Adult Friends are taking more leadership roles on Committees and in our meetings for business. Their involvement is injecting new life, as well.

We began both a Greeters and a Welcomers program under the care of the FMW Ministry and Worship Committee. Our purpose was to greet worshipers before meeting and to explain Quakerism, as best we can, to newcomers, and to ourselves, after meeting. We typically have had a congregation of about 150 people on First Day mornings, and we often have 10 to 25 visitors or more at Meeting. A summary of the results of our survey on the Spiritual State of our Meeting is attached as an appendix.

Our meetings for worship are often deep, usually comforting, and, sometimes, amazingly gathered. We think and believe and experience that all is well at Friends Meeting of Washington and that we are growing and walking in the Light, despite our many challenges and what sometimes seems like darkness in our Nation's Capital, in our country, and in our world.

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### **Property Committee: FY 2021 Budget Considerations**

Fiscal year 2021 will be extremely challenging for the Property Committee and for the Meeting. Until such time as people feel safe participating in in-person events again, which may not happen for another 18 to 24 months or more, we can expect to realize very little in event rental income. We also project substantial reductions in rents from our office tenants (licensees). It seems likely that projected income from office and event rentals for the next fiscal year will be at best a quarter of the approximately \$400,000 projected for FY 2020.

We are looking for ways to pare expenses. The Meeting aspires to continue to support its staff members, contractors and our excellent custodian whom we engage through a third party as long as possible. There will be some savings in expenses related to event rentals, but we still have to maintain the buildings and grounds, heat and cool the spaces to a minimal level, and make the mortgage payments. In marketing, we are trying to reduce costs while maintaining an effective on-line presence for an eventual reopening.

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**[Link to Minutes: FMW Meeting for Business, March 8, 2020](#)**