

FMW Newsletter, 8.2018

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Friends Meeting of Washington

Meeting for Worship with Concern for Business

Minutes

15 Seventh Month 2018

The Meeting opened at 12:25 p.m. Approximately 29 Friends and attenders were present. The Clerk welcomed Owen Hughes as a first-time attender.

Friends approved Grant Phelps Thompson's service as Interim Recording Clerk for this meeting.

Clerk's Report

Updates

- At a time when our country is engaged in cruel practices toward immigrants and asylum seekers, the Sanctuary Taskforce is seeking supportive ways to respond. Actions taken include: (i) About fifteen F/friends gathered at FMW to participate in the Families Belong Together Rally in late June; (ii) We have recently provided space for a group of Dreamers to develop a political response; (iii) Three of our members are visiting the Howard County detention center on a weekly basis; and (iv) In September, we will hold a bake/craft/whatever sale to support the Capital Area Immigrant Rights Coalition. The Coalition deals exclusively with detainees and is overwhelmed with calls for help. If you can contribute baked goods, crafts, or other items (for example, vacation homes timeshares, meals, etc.), please contact Rebecca Harris, Rebecca Nelson, or Debby Churchman.
- David Etheridge and Sabrina McCarthy, Riley Robinson, Kian and Skye Thomas-Ber, Mike and Latanja Thomas-Ber, Justin and Noura Connor, Jim Fussell, Malachy Kilbride, and Debby

Churchman attended the FGC Gathering in Toledo, Ohio in early July. They listened to inspiring speakers (including the Rev. Barber of the Poor People's Campaign), attended weeklong workshops, connected with numerous Friends (including former member Julia Isaacs) and Quaker organizations, and returned filled with both hope and specific ideas of how to work for peace and social justice in challenging times. Next year's Gathering will be held at Grinnell College in Iowa. F/friends are encouraged to attend.

Events

- July 30 to August 5: Baltimore Yearly Meeting Annual Session will be held at Hood College, Frederick, Maryland. The theme of the Session is "Radical Listening: Rooted in Love." All children (birth through 8th grade) are invited to attend free. For scholarships, please apply to the Personal Aid committee. Up to three scholarships to attend are available; apply to FMW's Personal Aid Committee for these scholarships that Baltimore Yearly Meeting provides to be used by younger Friends or those who have not attended a previous Annual Session to attend for up to two days for free.
- August 11: The Ministry and Worship Committee will hold a daylong silent retreat. Participants will read and reflect on the Pendle Hill pamphlet, "Four Doors to a Meeting for Worship" by William Taber. The pamphlet can be purchased from the FMW bookstore. The silent retreat will run from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; lunch will be served. Space is limited. For more information and to reserve a space, contact Malachy Kilbride.
- **Spiritual Formation** - Spiritual Formation Groups are created to nurture and strengthen individual's connection to the Inner Light on personal, meeting, and community levels. *Do you seek an opening to the Spirit? Do you sit in meeting in anticipation of the **still small voice**, yet it rarely or never comes? Are you ready to **deepen your connection to the Inner Light**?* If the answer is yes to any of these questions, FMW's Spiritual Formation Group may be of interest to you. For more information, please contact John Bluedorn.

Major Items

Religious Education Committee

Shannon Hughes, clerk of the committee, presented the annual report (a copy of which is attached). The Committee gave particular thanks to the employees and to the parents who provide such faithful service. The Committee is hiring an additional coordinator to help with curriculum. Friends accepted the report.

Nominating Committee

In the absence of Todd Harvey, clerk of the Committee, Gene Throwe presented the report.

Treasurer - Bob Meehan for an additional year. Friends accepted this nomination.

Review Committee for Administrative Secretary -

Personnel Committee members (the following four persons are automatically members; see Handbook)

- Marsha Holliday
- Jim Steen
- Bill Strein, clerk, Personnel
- Gene Throwe, *ex officio*, presiding clerk

Additional members, to be approved by the Meeting:

- Jim Bell, clerk, Finance and Stewardship
- Shannon Hughes, clerk, Religious Education
- Brian Lutenegger, co-clerk, Property
- Merry Pearlstein, co-clerk, Property

Friends approved the addition of these four members.

Clerk of the Review Committee

- Bill Strein, clerk, Personnel

Friends approved Bill Strein to serve as Clerk of the Review Committee.

Other Business

Peace and Social Concerns Committee

Multnomah Monthly Meeting, Portland, Oregon has adopted a minute supporting the United Nations General Assembly's Nuclear Weapon Ban. They have circulated their minute to other Quaker Meetings around the country, asking that Friends everywhere consider adopting similar supporting minutes. Elaine Wilson, clerk of Peace and Social Concerns Committee, reported that the Committee urged Friends Meeting of Washington to adopt the minute substantially in the form approved by our Oregon Friends. A Friend suggested that we add language calling on the government of the United States of America to approve and sign the Treaty. The matter was held over to the next Meeting for Worship with Concern for Business awaiting the addition of this language.

Property Committee

Merry Pearlstein and Brian Lutenegger presented for the Committee.

The Committee announced the arrival of a new tenant in Quaker House, ASAP (Asylum Seekers Assistance Project). ASAP is a relatively new organization that helps settle asylum seekers in the area as they seek housing, employment, language training, and other practical support. Approximately one-third of those they serve are LGBT refugees fleeing violence in their countries of origin. The organization embodies Meeting support for Friends' concerns for those in need. They welcome volunteer assistance from members of the Meeting. With this new tenant, all our rentable spaces are now occupied.

Personnel and Property Committees

Bill Strein, Merry Pearlstein, and Brian Lutenegger presented for the Committee.

The Personnel Committee and the Property Committees are responsible for defining the duties and qualities that the Meeting is seeking as it hires an Administrative Secretary and an Events Manager following the retirement in October of Debby Churchman, who currently fills both functions. The Committees asked Friends to share ideas and feelings about the positions and the qualities they require for success to assist them in their discernment.

A Friend noted how important it is to coordinate the work of the two positions. Will there be a mechanism to resolve differences of priorities if they should be in conflict? Is a hierarchy needed? What is the role of the committees in resolving potential conflicts?

There are personal qualities that these jobs require – patience, a deep understanding of Quaker process and history, and an understanding of the strengths and challenges of people who comprise the community. Someone who is grounded in faith, good at listening, and strongly supportive of Friends' testimonies is important. It is crucial to have someone who is organized and willing to handle details. Comfort with technology would be welcome.

A Friend reminded us that we need to be exquisitely sensitive to issues of racial justice, not only in our search for applicants but also in the conduct of the work to be done.

A Friend asked whether it was a requirement that the people hired be members of the Religious Society of Friends. The current Handbook requires membership in the Religious Society of Friends for the Administrative Secretary; the Events Manager is not mentioned in the current Handbook.

A Friend asked how the decisions made by the Events Manager would be guided – what role will traditional Quaker values play in agreeing to rent space?

A Friend noted the increasingly large number of people employed by the Meeting in a variety of roles. There may be a time when we need to consider coordination and uniformity of treatment for all of those who serve our community.

LGBT Inclusion

Last month at the Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, friends were asked to reflect on the query, “What is your vision of a fully Lesbian / Gay / Bisexual / Transgender / Queer-Questioning / Asexual-Allies / Inquiring-Intersex [LGBTQAI] inclusive Meeting?” What would or should Friends Meeting of Washington be doing to be more inclusive of the variety of the ways in which human sexuality and gender are experienced and expressed? Gene Throwe led a session to permit Friends to share views in response to this query.

A Friend asked if there were ways in which the Meeting is being unwelcoming or inhospitable to members of these communities.

Should we consider having a banner on our fence rotating with other banners (racial, climate change, etc.)?

Should we revise our statement of welcome that dates to 1982?

What are other religious groups in the area doing that we can emulate? For example, Church of the Pilgrims flies a rainbow flag year around on their building. We might consider a flag that includes additional colors representing additional sexualities and genders.

Can we ask people to list their preferred personal pronouns on their nametags? Do we acknowledge a wide variety of sexualities and genders that exist? Could we educate ourselves on the variety of ways that people express and experience their genders and sexuality?

A Friend remarked that the Meeting has made enormous progress over the years in its ministries to gays and lesbians; we do a poorer job in recognizing and celebrating the variety and fluidity of human sexuality and gender.

We need to be sensitive to avoiding placing the burden of education on those who may be victims of discrimination.

Does the Meeting in Quaker House, with its “special welcome,” send a message contrary to our current Meeting-wide stance on these issues? Should our welcome be expressed at every occasion when Friends meet in worship or to conduct their work?

Friends recounted the history of Friends Meeting of Washington and its relationship with those with differing expressions of their sexuality and gender.

Close of Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

The minutes were read and approved.

The Meeting closed at 1:45 p.m. with approximately 25 Friends and attenders present. The Clerk reminded Friends that there is no meeting for worship with concern for business during the month of August.

Minute in Support of United Nations General Assembly

Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty

Approved by Meeting for Business with Attention to Business

Held 15 Seventh Month 2018

Friends Meeting of Washington

We, Quakers of Friends Meeting of Washington, Washington DC, United States, support the new United Nations General Assembly's Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty. (A copy of that treaty is available at: <http://undocs.org/A/CONF.229/2017/8>)

In accordance with the Quaker Peace Testimony, Quakers have worked tirelessly for abolition of nuclear weapons ever since United States airplanes dropped two of these secretly produced bombs on August 6 and 9, 1945. The bombs destroyed both Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan, and the world has not yet recovered from all that those two bombs destroyed.

This treaty may seem imperfect to many Friends because it does not seek the elimination of nuclear energy as well as weapons. It is, however, the longest step world governments have taken toward the actual elimination of these weapons from our already wounded earth.

There is much work yet to do if we are to achieve actual abolition, to which our own government is adamantly opposed. The United States Congress has allocated a trillion dollars, already being used, to modernize our own nuclear arsenal over the next thirty years. Very few of our citizens are even aware of this new United Nations treaty since the major media have not reported on its development or discussed publicly its impact.

We request that all Friends and Quaker Meetings, which are so led, join to make this Treaty more widely known. Let us show our fellow citizens that the door to abolition of nuclear weapons is open. Let us proceed together as the Spirit leads and as the Way opens.

Annual Report

Religious Education Committee

Friends Meeting of Washington

[\[here\]](#)

(This ends the Minutes and Reports from Meeting for Business.7.2018)

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 29 to Aug. 1: Pendle Hill Workshop on “Beyond Gender-Based Violence” Pendle Hill is hosting a program that grapples with the roots of gender-based violence and paves a path toward a world where women, men, and people of all gender identities can thrive together. For more information, contact lblount@pendlehill.org or to go <https://pendlehill.org/learn/beyond-gender-based-violence/#.WzKHkFUa70>

July 30 – Aug. 5: Baltimore Yearly Meeting Annual Session, Hood College, Frederick, MD. “Radical Listening: Rooted in Love.” All children (birth through 8th grade) may attend free. For more information, go to www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession For scholarships, please apply to the Personal Aid committee at emilie.schmeidler@gmail.com.

August 1: Help make sandwiches for the **Grate Patrol** to take to our vulnerable neighbors, starting at 5:00 pm. For more information, contact Alan W. Field" alanwfield@gmail.com or Louisa Terrell, louisa.terrell@gmail.com

August 3 – 5: Pendle Hill Workshop: Fierce Biblical Women Speak Power to Us Today. A multitude of women in both the first and second testaments claim power and summon strength to challenge systems and create more justice. Most seem fearless! Sometimes nameless, often forgotten, we will draw upon the stories of many fierce biblical women, and the fierce women of our own lives, integrating their messages for us today. Through collage, journal writing, sharing, and deep listening, we will bring these women to life again. Interfaith conversation and participants all along the gender spectrum are welcome. For more information and to register, go to: <https://pendlehill.org/events/fierce-biblical-women-speak-power-us-today/#.Wo9O1jEna70>

August 4: Help make breakfast for our vulnerable neighbors. Convene at 6:15 am at **So Others Might Eat**. For more information, contact Tim Schleicher at timothy.c.schleicher@gmail.com

August 11: The Ministry and Worship Committee will hold a **day-long silent retreat**. Participants will read and reflect on the Pendle Hill pamphlet, "Four Doors to a Meeting for Worship" by William Taber. The pamphlet can be purchased from the FMW bookstore (copies in the Library). The silent retreat will take place from 9:30am to 5pm. Lunch will be served. Space is limited. For more information and to reserve your space contact Malachy Kilbride at malachykilbride@gmail.com.

September 14 – 16 – Spiritual Formation Program Fall Retreat, Shepherd's Spring Retreat Center (Sharpsburg, MD) You are invited to join Friends from across Baltimore Yearly Meeting for the Fall Spiritual Formation Retreat at the beautiful Shepherd's Spring Retreat Center. To find out more about the retreat and the Spiritual Formation Program, go to the BYM website at www.bym-

rsf.org/events/spiritform/. We look forward to contemplating words of wisdom and faith, time for personal reflection, sharing with spiritual friends and growing in spiritual community with you. Registration will open in the summer of 2018. Scholarships will be available. For more information and to join others from FMW who plan to attend, please contact John Bluedorn at johnbluedorn@gmail.com.

RANDOM HAPPENINGS

So I went to the 2018 FGC Gathering in beautiful, downtown Toledo, Ohio with a thousand other unprogrammed Quakers. We are, by our nature and our faith, an optimistic people—some would say overly optimistic. Some would say downright delusional. Most of us are pacifists, after all; you have to have a long view to hold onto that kind of hope.

Nevertheless, nearly everyone I spoke with was just dragging, so depressed by the relentless news. This was just after that horrible week in which the Supreme Court held up the Muslim ban, said that partisan gerrymandering was okeydokey, and okay'd refusing to serve gay people due to religious concerns. It was also the week that Justice Anthony Kennedy announced his retirement, and journalists in Annapolis were killed by yet another violent white male who felt he had been disrespected. A tough, tough week. No wonder we were all so low.

Numerous workshops addressed how to stay hopeful when working for seemingly hopeless causes, and many conversations revolved around how each of us was holding onto sanity (ignoring the news, putting ourselves on news diets, hanging out with pets, going on lovely hikes and kayak trips, working on get out the vote campaigns, etc.). I took a yoga workshop which couldn't have been more healing—gentle yoga, qi gong, and guided meditations all restoring our souls. I also volunteered at the Healing Center, where countless Friends came for massages and energy work and active listening. It all helped. Our inner optimism started to percolate upwards.

Then the Rev. William Barber, fresh off of 40 days (and a total of 4000 arrests by participants) of the Poor People's Campaign, came to speak to us. He is a Pentacostal preacher man. He is very, very good at his job. (You can listen to his talk [here](#).) He showed us how all of the social justice issues are inter-related, all fitting together into one big whole. He understood our pain. He told us the time for mourning has ended—it's Movement Time. He told us to stand up and let our lives shine. Oh boy, did we! There was hootin' and hollerin' and food stomping and Quakers singing "We won't be silent anymore." It was remarkable, like those stories of Jesus healing people who then popped out of bed and started dancing around. Felt like spiritual renewal. I hoped it would last.

And now I'm back in DC, land of relentless news. I don't think you have any idea how hard it is to be in this town until you leave—this quiet onslaught of daily misdeeds. But the good news is, it's not just the Quakers tilting against the "powers and principalities" and systematized violence and suffering. Every day, it seems, there are new groups rising up to resist. And I'm so grateful for the way this Meeting has stepped up to do its part, whether in supporting protestors (and participating in the protests) or doing hands on work in the detainees centers and at the polls. I know that each of you is working daily for justice. I am so glad to be a member of the Religious Society of Friends. Honestly, where would we be without each other?

- Debby