

# FMW Newsletter for December 2012

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## FRIENDS MEETING OF WASHINGTON

### MONTHLY MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH A CONCERN FOR BUSINESS

November 11, 2012

**11/12.1 Opening** The Meeting opened at 12:13 pm with a period of silent worship. David Etheridge served as Clerk, Meg Greene as Alternate Clerk, and Debby Churchman as Recording Clerk. The clerks read Advices, Queries and Voices concerning Community which have been proposed by the Faith and Practice Revision Committee of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

#### ***Advices***

The Meeting can consciously cultivate fellowship and community, and is enriched when all members and attenders participate actively. The working of the Spirit in our lives is expressed through ministry, pastoral caring for each other, and the example provided by lives lived in the Light. As we worship, work, and laugh together, we forge bonds of trust, understanding, and communication.

When need arises to address contentious issues, they then may be addressed openly and honestly. Conflict thus experienced can also build trust and intimacy. When resolution is not immediate, the Meeting can make room for different expressions of continuing revelation, while persisting in earnest search for unity. Convictions that might divide or disrupt a Meeting can, through God's grace, help to make it creative and strong. The larger Quaker community has many resources that can help meetings address internal conflict.

#### ***Queries***

Are love and harmony within the Meeting community fostered by a spirit of open sharing?

What helps our Meeting build trust in one another?

How do we get to know one another in our spiritual community?

How do we make time in our lives for our Meeting?

How do our conflicts have the potential to enrich the life of our community?

#### ***Voices***

Where, then, can seeking men and women find a community in which meditation, worship, religious education of children, common undertaking and adventurous experiments, common festivals, and

spiritual therapy are all going on, not as part of an expensive organized professional program, but as part of the informal natural life of a close religious fellowship?

–Douglas Steere

How can I participate in a fairer distribution of resources unless I live in a community which makes it possible to consume less? How can I learn accountability unless I live in a community where my acts and their consequences are visible to all? How can I learn to share power unless I live in a community where hierarchy is unnatural? How can I take the risks which right action demands unless I belong to a community which gives support? How can I learn the sanctity of each life unless I live in a community where we can be persons, not roles, to one another?

–Parker Palmer

The Inward Light is a universal light given to all men, religious consciousness itself being basically the same wherever it is found. Our difficulties come when we try to express it. We cannot express; we can only experience God. Therefore we must always remember tolerance, humility, and tenderness with others whose ways and views may differ from ours.

–Pacific Yearly Meeting

It is not easy to find community and fellowship in the modern world. Many Friends view relationships within the local Meeting as similar to partial relationships established with people met regularly at work, at play, and in the neighborhood. It is perhaps too much to expect that we all will make the Meeting central to our lives. But unless the Meeting fellowship can be made to speak to something deep in our lives, our Society falls short of fulfilling the true spiritual needs of its members. –  
Baltimore Yearly Meeting

**11.12-2 - Welcome of Visitors** - Approximately 26 friends were present. The Meeting welcomed Cyrus Sideva and James Karani, both of Kenya.

**11.12-3 - Clerks' Report** -David Etheridge, Clerk, asked the meeting hold in the Light Paul and Ricky Didisheim as Ricky recovers from her recent eye surgery. He also asked the Meeting to hold in the Light Meg Greene as her family gathers to be with her father, who is in the hospital. In addition, he asked the Meeting to hold in the Light Laura Nell Obaugh whose daughter has suffered a stroke. Laura Nell is also grieving the recent death of her sister-in-law.

David informed the meeting that a memorial meeting will be held at FMW for Kathryn Solt, mother of FMW Member Martha Solt, on Friday, November 23 at 2:30 pm.

David told the Meeting that the Committee of Clerks will meet next Sunday, November 18, at 12:30 pm in the Parlor to act on the Personnel Committee's recommendation to hire a new Administrative Secretary and Events Manager.

## **MILESTONES**

**11.12-4 - Membership Committee** – Gerri Williams, Co-clerk of the Membership Committee, presented the following:

Transfer of membership for Blair Forlaw, from St. Louis (Missouri) Monthly Meeting

Transfer of membership for Ken Orvis from West Knoxville (Tennessee) Monthly Meeting

These transfers will be held over for one month, as is our custom.

## **REPORTS**

**11.12 – 5 Ministry and Worship Committee annual report** – Debby Churchman, Clerk of the Ministry and Worship Committee, presented the committee’s annual report (see attached).

Another member of the M&W Committee noted that it is disruptive having people entering during worship. Our hope is that latecomers will gather in worship in the parlor before they join the main Meeting.

Another Committee member noted that various solutions have been considered by the Committee.

A Friend noted that a truly centered person could work the late arrival of others into their worship.

Another Friend noted that people could be encouraged to come through other doors rather than the noisy one at the top of the stairs.

Another Friend noted her support for using alternative doors and suggested that we need to train our attenders and members to wait between the doors to be sure no one is speaking as they enter.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

**11.12 – 6 Search Committee** - David Etheridge reported that the Search Committee has nominated Meg Greene to serve a second term on the Nominating Committee through 2015. Friends APPROVED.

**11.12 – 7 Memorial Minute** - David Etheridge named Laura Nell Obaugh to write a memorial minute for former member Charles Harker, since his meeting (Sandy Spring) does not prepare such minutes. Molly Tully will participate in this effort as well. Friends APPROVED.

A Friend notes that Friend Chuck worked for FNCL, and suggests that the minute writers get input from there as well.

A Friend thanked the Clerk for including the voices, queries and advices at the beginning of our Meetings for Business.

**11.12 – 8 Adjournment** With approximately 29 Friends present, the meeting adjourned at 12:39 p.m. to reconvene as way opens on Sunday, December 9, 2012 at noon.

Administrative Secretary

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## **Ministry & Worship Committee**

### **Annual Report, November 2012**

The Ministry & Worship Committee is responsible for overseeing the Right Order of Worship. In response to expressed concerns, the Committee conducted two experiments this year in pursuit of a more inclusive worship environment.

At the beginning of the year, the Committee asked Friends to help decide if a reconfiguration of Meeting room seating would improve the worship experience of Friends who have difficulty hearing. Initially, all worshipers were asked to sit only in one end of the room. This improved worshipers' ability to hear messages, but the arrangement significantly disturbed many who found it incompatible with some Quaker traditions and aesthetically displeasing. With encouragement from the Meeting for Business, an alternate arrangement was tried, which encouraged more face-to-face seating in the center of the room.

his arrangement has proven somewhat helpful to those with hearing difficulties and apparently more acceptable to other worshippers.

A second experiment has concerned the order-of-worship. With guidance from the Religious Education Committee and the endorsement of Meeting for Business, the Committee has begun a 3-month trial in which children attend First Day School from 10:30-11:15 a.m., and then join meeting for worship until the close of meeting. This change is intended: to help make the transition of children from parents to First Day School teachers and back safer and smoother; to allow children to join a gathered MfW; and, to provide the children an opportunity to share their First Day School experiences with the full FMW community. The experiment also includes closing the Meeting Room door at 10:35 a.m. and encouraging those who arrive after that to worship in the parlor until 11:15 a.m. to minimize MfW disruptions. Meeting for Business has asked the Committee to report in December on whether this new order-of-worship enhances the FMW worship experience and the inclusion of children. The Committee is eager for feedback on all aspects of this experimental order-of-worship.

In addition to addressing FMW's inclusiveness in worship, the Committee has tended to other ministry and worship concerns during the year. It has established a rotation for sitting Head of Meeting which provides an opportunity for each FMW committee and task force to serve twice per year. In response to specific requests or events, the Committee organized four clearness committees, one memorial meeting, one travel minute (for an attender working at the Quaker Peace Center in South Africa), and a letter of support (for a member called to serve as a Quaker chaplain). The Committee helped convene a "called" listening sessions focused on inclusivity and safety, which was facilitated by Deborah Haines, a member of Alexandria Friends Meeting. In October, the Committee also helped organized an inter-generational party, with joyful support from numerous Friends – and FMW's first Moon Bounce!

Many of the Committee's efforts over the last nine months have been undertaken to assist the FMW community as it seeks to provide a safe environment for its children while also attentively welcoming individuals that have a history of child sexual abuse. The Committee has been actively engaged in discerning how FMW can be a haven for worship and communion that both protects its most vulnerable and embraces our unity with all who seek the Light. Interactions surrounding these issues have revealed underlying divisions and hurts within our Meeting community. For some, these divisions, when coupled with misunderstandings, have led to a loss of trust and uncertainty. As one of several FMW Committees addressing these concerns, Ministry and Worship will continue to hold FMW in the Light and to undertake actions designed to nurture Meeting-wide community understanding through shared worship and fellowship - guided by Spirit.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Harper, Debby Churchman, Gray Handley, Kevin Camp, Ray Allard, Tracy Hart, and Virginia vanesyan

**(Here end the Minutes for the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business,  
November 11, 2012)**

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FMW Newsletter, December 2012

Friends welcomed Debby Churchman as our new full time administrator on November 19th. She will be in the Office weekdays from 8-4:30, and available at 202-483-3310 or at [Administrator.dcfriends@verizon.net](mailto:Administrator.dcfriends@verizon.net).

**Patapsco Friends** invite all to a **Christmas Caroling Party and Holiday Sale on December 9<sup>th</sup> from Noon to 4:00pm!** An opportunity to purchase Quaker books, as well as unique clothing, quilts and crafts made by and for the benefit of Kenyan AIDS widows will be accompanied by light refreshments and singing with friends. For a map and more information, call 410-465-6554, or consult <http://patapscofriends.com>.

The next opportunity for the monthly **Potluck and Quaker dialogue at William Penn House is Sunday, December 9, at 6:30pm.** The program will feature Nadine Hoover, the coordinator for Friends Peace Teams in Asia, West Pacific. Nadine will speak about the development of the Peace Teams and their work in Indonesia, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Korea and the Philippines, where they provide non-violence training, trauma healing and community discernment to an area torn asunder by thirty years of war and a massive tsunami. Bring a dish to share at this thought provoking gathering. As always, family members, friends and neighbors are welcome.

**Our all Meeting Shoebox Project will occur on December 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> this month.** On Saturday, the 15<sup>th</sup>, it has been a tradition that Young Adult Friends lead the way with preparations for Sunday. These preparations include the 'building' of the cardboard boxes, the folding of information cards, the famous "Booty Duty", in which we open hundreds of cellophane packages of sox and separate pairs to be placed into the gift boxes, the folding of tee shirts, "Rubbish Patrol" in which we keep the working areas free of empty containers, paper and cellophane, the stacking of boxes along the walls in preparation for filling, wrapping and deliver on Sunday. Saturday is always great fun and fellowship with all ages accomplishing the necessary preliminaries and enjoying one another, some music, and pizza! Sunday continues the annual project where everyone does their part to contribute by filling, wrapping, counting and planning for delivery to area shelters, so that our homeless friends may enjoy a gift of the season filled with useful items. Please come and help for some part of either day!

**A Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Healing** will take place on **Saturday, December 22 at 10:30am in the Parlor.** A number of Friends have expressed their grief over the death or illness of a family member or loved one. Others have shared their sadness and confusion over their own or a loved one's illness. This Meeting will be a special opportunity to hold our own and others' concerns in the Light during the holiday season that can often be an especially difficult time.

There will be a **potluck evening meal and candlelight Meeting for Worship on Christmas Eve** in the Assembly Room. Friends are encouraged to bring a dish to share, musical instruments and assist with setting up tables and chairs at 5:45pm for the shared meal at 6:30pm.

There will be a **Meeting for Divine Worship** at Noon on Christmas Day in the Decatur Place Room. All are welcome. The office will be closed on this day.

**Notes from Friends: Olivia James wrote of her experience** of FMW's first shared Thanksgiving gathering, "...You guys are wonderful...thanks for letting your Light shine....and making my Thanksgiving!" She is reacting to our first annual shared Thanksgiving celebration held here in the Meetinghouse Assembly Room. Attended by more than twenty of all ages, two dogs, and at least one turkey, we shared music, song, food, laughter, games and thanksgiving during the afternoon hours.

**Laura Helper-Ferris of Memphis Friends Meeting wrote,** "I had the great pleasure of visiting your meeting last month. I very much liked how the clerk, or person clerking the meeting for worship stood up to briefly welcome people and explain what to expect/how to behave.....I'll add that it was also really wonderful to visit for a very personal reason: my maternal grandmother's family were longtime attenders if not members of Florida Street Meeting. My grandmother, Beatrice Hunt Wixom, and great aunt, Ada Hunt Eisemann came with their parents (Beatrice and Hermon Hunt) in the 1910s, and Ada and her family stayed in DC and kept coming to meeting into (I think) the 1970s. A very rich time."

We still have Scull Calendars and Quaker Motto Calendars for sale in the office.

**Looking forward to January 2013.....**

The Office will be closed on New Year's Day and for Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, January 14.

Mark your calendars for **The Mary Jane Simpson Scholarship Committee's** fund raising **luncheon** in honor of Barbara Nnoka on **Sunday, January 6, 2013**. If you would like to contribute food, please contact Bill Strein. We would love to see all for fellowship and support of this important cause.