

FMW Newsletter, 12.2016

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Friends Meeting of Washington

Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

November 2016

Queries

Do you provide religious education, including study of the Bible and of Friends' history and practices, in your Meeting? Do you ensure that schools under the care of Friends exemplify Friends' principles? Do you support and strive to improve the public schools?

Advices

Education has long been important to Quakers. Friends feel that education is a lifetime effort to develop an open and informed mind and a seeking and sensitive spirit.

It became apparent to early Friends that some form of education would be necessary for leadership and ministry if the Society were to be effective in promoting Truth. In 1668 George Fox urged that schools be established for girls as well as boys. John Woolman, in 1758, cautioned Friends to "watch the spirit of children" and "nurture them in Gospel Love." And, in 1831, Joseph John Gurney exhorted, "We shall never thrive upon ignorance."

Friends are concerned to educate for individual growth, community responsibility, a knowledge of God's world and a sense of wonder at continuing revelation in this changing universe.

Voices

Friends believe that each person has the capacity for goodness and a responsibility to attain that goodness. Our schools create deliberate moral communities—communities that value the process of reflection and inquiry, and are rooted in the fundamental Quaker belief in truth as a process of continuing revelation. Quaker pedagogy is based on the principles of teachers as caring facilitators of the learning process, dialogue as the foundation of learning in the classroom, and curricula reflecting Friends testimonies and values. Friends' schools support the development of persons who are creative thinkers, peacemakers, and confident humanitarians, contributing to responsive and responsible public leadership in the world.

—Irene McHenry, Former Executive Director, Friends Council on Education

2016/11-1 Welcome of Visitors Meeting for Business opened at 12:15 pm with 18 Friends present..

2016/11-2 Clerk's Report

- Baltimore Yearly Meeting wrote about the role the Meetings can play in providing sanctuary for those in times of stress and unrest.
- The October 23rd meeting about the capital plans was successful in galvanizing our community in our effort for a more accessible and greener campus.
- The Rise Again Concert with Peter Blood and Annie Peterson with about 50 persons in attendance was a success. Peter commented that it was an exceptional community sing.
- On November 27, Thanksgiving weekend, at 4:00 pm in the Meeting Room, there will be a city-wide interfaith memorial meeting for families who have lost a child. We are looking for Friends who could help with hospitality.
- There will be a Meeting for Worship on Thanksgiving Day at noon with a shared meal at 1:30.
- The anti-harassment taskforce welcomes input. “Our goal is to create a positive and affirming environment for all attenders in line with our Quaker values. Do you have thoughts on key elements of a policy, including definitions, referral/reporting procedures, or confidentiality? Do you have ideas on implementation through raising awareness or know of community standard models from which we can learn? Please share your thoughts with Gregg Robb at Gregory.robbs@gmail.com or Betsy Bramon at betsy.bramon@gmail.com.”
- On January 28 the next workshop on Pastoral care will be on the *Family of Friends: How can we help Quaker community work?* People come to communities of faith seeking connection with the divine and with others. This can bring either intimacy or conflict. This workshop is on Family Systems Theory will help us understand relational dynamics in our Quaker Communities. Our member Liz Pomerleau, professional chaplain and pastoral care educator, will lead the workshop. Please let us know you are coming so we can order lunch and send you optional background reading.
- FMW will be participating in a Spiritual Deepening Program sponsored by Friends General Conference. More information will be forthcoming.
- There will be a meeting this evening at 6:30 with Friend Paula Palmer about the Quaker history of putting Indian children in boarding schools in the 19th and 20th centuries to assimilate them

into western society. She was urged in her research work on this issue by the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition which maintains that the full truth of these schools and their impact on Native people needs to come to light for healing to begin. An article by Paula Palmer appears in the October 2016 *Friends Journal*.

- Bob Meehan will once again be selling Quaker Treasure Chest bread to raise funds for the personal aide committee.

Major items

2016/11-3 State of the Staff Report

Debby Churchman, Administrative Secretary, brought forward the state of the staff report, a copy of which is attached. She thanked Merry Pearlstein and Brian Lutenegger for their help making the space and webpage more welcoming for events; and thanks Neil Froemming for his help with IT and equipment. She noted the many worship groups, community and advocacy activities that take place at the Meeting House and how many lives we touch. The Meeting “is on fire.” Efforts to break down the silos include monthly birthday celebrations and the piano letters. Efforts to make Meeting more welcoming include signs declaring it a safe place.

Friends gave thanks for the good humor and hard work of our administrative secretary.

A Friend noted that the only way the fire can survive is when the embers are always ready. The administrative secretary has been a blessing with her talent to keep those embers alive. Her sense of humor is especially important.

Friends ACCEPTED the report.

2016/11-4 Nominating Committee

Todd Harvey, clerk of Nominating Committee, noted that following the handbook he will be bringing nominations for new clerks including Gene Throwe as Clerk and Grant Thompson as alternate clerk next month. He brought forward the nomination of Betsy Bramon as Recording Clerk early in as much as she will need a waiver since she is not yet a member. Betsy has stated that she intends to apply for membership.

This will lie over for one month.

2016/11-5 Peace and Social Concerns Committee

Mike DuVall, clerk of Peace and Social Concerns Committee, brought forward a proposed minute in support of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline, a copy of which is attached. This is an adaptation of Baltimore yearly Meeting’s minute. This is a bringing together of the issues of Native Rights and the environment.

Friends APPROVED the minute as improved.

The Minute will be sent to Baltimore Yearly Meeting, the Lakota Sioux, the State of North Dakota, and federal elected officials and members of the Department of Interior, Department of Justice, Army Corps of Engineers, and the White House. The Committee will look for other opportunities and volunteers to help send it out.

Mike DuVall, clerk of Peace and Social Concerns Committee, gave a brief annual report. The committee has grown and stabilized in membership from 7 to 11 regular members. The committee enjoyed the three-generation commitment of the Coleman family and grieves the loss of Jack Coleman within the last year. The committee has been responding to various individuals' requests from both within and without the Meeting including with AFSC, embassies, and a number of race related issues. They took under their care the "Waking up White" discussion group. Often their work has been directing people with requests to resources to help Friends with leadings take on their own work. Providing timely and efficient response remains a challenge within Quaker process. They hope to do a Meeting survey to find the resources within our community.

A Friend asked if themes were arising among the issue brought forward. Mike noted racism as the primary theme.

A Friend remembered when the committee once was laid down and celebrated its new vibrancy.

Friends ACCEPTED the report.

Milestones

2016/11-6 Membership

Gray Handley, member of Membership committee, brought forward the following request:

Associate Membership for Roxana Kendall Sabet, daughter of member Elizabeth Kendall.

Friends APPROVED the request.

Other business

2016/11-7 Capital Campaign

David Etheridge, member of the capital campaign committee, thanked Friends for their response to its beginning. The campaign has already raised \$1,044,198 in donations and pledges. There is still a need to pledge to cover the cost of our annual loan payments of \$180,000. We have annual pledges for \$85,000 but need an additional \$95,000.

2016/11-8 Baltimore Yearly Meeting interim Meeting

David Etheridge reported on 10th Month Interim Meeting held Oct. 15 at Sandy Spring Meetinghouse. Earth Quaker Witness brought a request to make sure we reduce our carbon footprint to a sustainable amount. David Etheridge brought a report on the efforts to ask Meetings in the Yearly Meeting to consider change committees to make Meetings more welcoming to people of color. The Catoctin bathhouse's funding is moving forward.

2016/11-9 Search Committee

Meg Greene, clerk of the Search Committee, discussed the problem with finding members for the Nominating committee. She asked for additional members on the Search Committee. She will be reaching out to identify new members of the Search Committee as well as people interested in serving on Nominating Committee.

Friends APPROVED the minutes as improved.

The Meeting closed at 1:35 PM with approximately 21 persons in attendance to reconvene as Way opens on December 18, 2016

STATE OF THE STAFF REPORT, 2016

This report, which you would think would actually cover the FMW staff, only really covers the **State of Debby**. Our Property Manager is supervised by the Property Committee, our Youth Programs and Child Care folks are supervised by the Religious Education Committee; our Bookkeeper is supervised by the Finance & Stewardship Committee, and our beloved Friendly Presences are supervised, God help them, by me.

My official title is **Administrative Secretary and Events Management**, with the job effort split 70/30 on each aspect. This year, that split is closer to 50/50, or even 40/60, as event bookings heat up. By now, 3 years into renting out our rooms during non-Meeting times, we are attracting a ton of groups. There were 37 different paid events here in October, and 48 scheduled (so far) for November.

That's on top of what Friends do here regularly, with five worship groups meeting each week, committee meetings, a Buddhist sit, 3 different meal preps to serve our vulnerable neighbors, 3 book discussion groups (okay, one of the books is the Bible), an adult discussion group, and various spiritual groups meeting every month. That doesn't even count the extra stuff we've nourished—a lecture on the history of slavery and another on lynching, Paula Palmer's work on Quakers and the Indian Boarding Schools, our splendid Fence Ministry showing the community our affirmation that Black Lives Matter, and our support of various peace and justice events.

The Meeting is also becoming **something of a leader** in Quaker communities. Our pastoral care committees, after considerable research and discernment, have been offering a series of workshop on pastoral care issues. So far, they've covered Boundaries and Predatory Behavior; the next is on Family and the Quaker Community. We're teaching our own, but reaching out to other Meetings who are sending their pastoral committee members to learn. Ken Stockbridge, Clerk of BYM, has put improving pastoral care onto his list of things he'd like our Yearly Meeting to be doing. He hopes to develop policy around these issues.

We've also been turning more outward as a Meeting and **connecting with our neighbors**. I got the Dupont Circle Civic Association to include us in their house tour through the clever trick of answering the phone and saying Yes (with input from various committees). More than 200 folks came that day to see our space, many of whom asked about worship times.

I used the same clever method to encourage a young woman to hold a city-wide, interfaith meeting for family members who have lost a child. She has a special concern for those in DC whose children have been murdered in the last year.

All of these efforts require **staff support**, whether it's simply finding a room for a committee meeting, editing/printing an appeal letter, listening to Friends' concerns, putting together clearness committees, working with Personal Aid to draw community support to needy members, ordering books for the Library, and just generally providing support for Friends' leadings. This is in addition to the usual business of running the office, creating and sending our Announcements and the monthly newsletter, keeping up with signage, conducting the annual Directory Update, doing the required paperwork for decisions made at Meeting for Business, and trying to ensure that all of the scheduled meetings have the support they need to go smoothly. The IT committee (mostly **Neil Froemming**) have provided almost nonstop support for all of this, sorting out printers and cords and AV equipment and computers and helping to keep them running or appropriately replaced. **Ed Husted** fields calls from me regarding figuring out what the office can afford. And **Ann Herzog** took the lead on updating one of bulletin boards, which we did in an afternoon. She wanted it to feature all of the ways to serve our community; I insisted on maintaining the **ministry of comics**. The other bulletin board is on schedule to be updated to serve as a simple intro to Quakerism and FMW.

Then there's dealing with the needs of potential renters. The average booking takes 6 to 10 emails, one or two visits, a ton of paperwork, finding a Friendly Presence, and doing follow up with the FP and the organization. Multiply that 48 times for November. You will see how grateful I am for the fabulous **Property Committee** who I bug almost daily, looking for advice and policy help. This year, they have helped find new social media venues to advertise our space, reworked the rental webpage, and connected us with the well-informed **Mackenzie Delmotte** of Washington Parks & People, who is teaching us how professionals deal with events management.

We continue to provide much-needed space to small and midsize nonprofits to do their strategy work, which I like to think is supporting Quaker values in the world. Folks who use our space almost always comment on the peace of the place. Here are some recent reviews and photos:

I spoke with everyone on my team, and they were all delighted with the space and your attentiveness and flexibility. It is such a lovely, historic place, and having access to the garden was wonderful. We appreciated being able to bring in food and stay after hours for only a small fee. Malissa has sent an email to the entire organization recommending the Quaker Meeting House as a lovely, affordable retreat/meeting space, so you may see additional Ocean Conservancy teams reaching out to you in the future. The Development team definitely looks forward to returning when we hold an off-site meeting again. Thanks for all your help!

We had a great time last week. The space was huge enough and it was able to accommodate all of our guests for the workshops. The staff was amazing and provided all of the support we needed. We will definitely rent out the room if it is available for future workshops. Thank you so much for hosting us, and for your receptiveness.



- Debby

Friends Meeting of Washington

in Community with the

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline

Minute

Friends Meeting of Washington, with Baltimore Yearly Meeting, supports the sovereign government and people of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe as they wage a nonviolent and legal battle against those who would endanger their heritage and their future natural resources. The wise leaders and their supporters are strong in spirit and wisdom, in patience and in vision. The Lakota and Dakota people, with their allies, have inspired unity among Native nations and others in their quest to save their lands and people from harm. They are waging this moral and legal struggle not for themselves, but for future generations.

Friends Meeting of Washington joins the Standing Rock Tribe and its allies in seeking full tribal consultation on a government-to-government basis, as is legally required by treaty and law on any and all matters that relate to or may affect their lands, people, or traditional homelands. We urge the President and the federal executive branch agencies to honor the Federal Trust Responsibility to the indigenous people of our country and to *immediately* act to preserve the burials, lands, and resources of the Standing Rock nation now and in the future. We are encouraged by the decision by the United States Departments of the Interior, Justice, and Army to suspend pipeline construction near Lake Oahe. However, this is a suspension not a revocation, so there is no guarantee that construction will not resume. We must continue to show our support in words and deeds until the matter is justly settled. Treaty rights and preservation of indigenous sacred sites must be honored for the Standing Rock Tribe and all Native nations.

May we all learn to make wise decisions to benefit future generations. In the words of the Lakota, Mitakuye Oyasin—We Are All Related.

NOTE: This Minute is adapted to FMW based on the minute written and approved by the Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) on October 15, 2016. It was brought to the Meeting by the Indian Affairs Committee, which has been in existence since 1795.

(this ends the Minutes and Reports for the November 2016 Meeting for Business)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 1 to 4: Visioning & Creating a Moral Economy, a workshop at Pendle Hill. Join Gar Alperovitz, George Lakey, Mark Engler, and many others to help imagine and strategize an alternative moral, sustainable economy. For details, go to www.pendlehill.org or call John Meyer at 800.742.3150.

Dec. 3: Help make sandwiches for our vulnerable neighbors! **Grate Patrol** convenes at 5:00 pm in the Assembly Room. For more information, contact Steve Brooks at sbrooks@uab.edu

December 4 - STRIDE Jarring Session, Friends Meeting of Washington (Washington, DC) DC STRIDE is calling on volunteers to attend a jarring session at 1pm to make the recipe jars for their latest fundraiser for BYM Camps! The session is expected to end around 4pm. For more information, [contact Jamie DeMarco](#).

December 5 – Incarcerating US, Bethesda Public Library (Bethesda, MD) Come to Bethesda Public Library for the film *Incarcerating US* at 6:30pm, followed by a panel discussion until 9:00. Admission is free. The panelists are Tracey D. Syphax, Eric E. Sterling, Kevin Ring, and José Santos Woss. *Incarcerating US* is a feature-length documentary that exposes America's prison problem and explores ways to unshackle the Land of the Free through vital criminal justice reforms. With 2.3 million people behind bars, the U.S. has the largest prison population in the history of the world. For more information call 202-365-2420.

Dec. 7: Help make breakfast for our vulnerable neighbors at **So Others Might Eat**, starting at 6:15 a.m. The kitchen is at 70 "o" St. NW, adjacent to a parking lot. For more information and to sign up, contact Betsy Bramon at betsy.bramon@gmail.com

Dec. 7: Discover Sandy Spring Friends School, (Sandy Spring, MD) Are you considering a Friends education for your child? Please join us for Discover SSFS on Wednesday, December 7th to learn more about our academically rigorous college preparatory program for children in PK (ages 3 and 4) – 12th Grade. Our students develop a love of learning through close collaboration with their teachers and peers (average class size is 14). We invite you to come and learn about our inquiry-based approach, and how we incorporate the natural beauty of our 140-acre campus in hands-on learning. We hope you can make it! Please [RSVP](#). The event program is as follows:

8:15-8:45AM – Registration and Breakfast

8:45-9:00AM – Welcome Remarks

9:00-11:00AM – Tour and Classroom Visits

Dec. 10 – 11: FMW Shoe Box Project For many years, Friends Meeting of Washington has filled thousands of shoe boxes (now cake boxes) with items which are especially useful for the homeless in DC. The Shoebox Project has been going for more than 20 years, following a leading by the Peace & Social Concerns Committee. These boxes (about 1,200 per year) are distributed at DC shelters and

other organizations that serve homeless people. Boxes will be assembled the weekend of December 10 and 11. It has become an amazing undertaking and there are a number of ways for you to help. One way is to help assemble the boxes on Saturday, December 10, any time between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., or fill the boxes on Sunday, December 11 any time between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. at our Meeting House. For details, contact Steve Brooks (sbrooks@uab.edu)

Dec. 10: Poetry Workshop at Friends Wilderness Center, 10 am to 2 pm. Keith Curtis, a poetry lover and writer, will facilitate the sharing of poetry, yours or ones of others you like. Lunch will be served for those who register for it and pay \$10. . Please RSVP to Sheila Bach

(snbach@earthlink.net, 304-728-4820) or see www.friendswilderness.org

December 10 – 11 – Junior Young Friends Conference, Goose Creek Friends Meeting (Lincoln, VA) Please arrive at 10am with sleeping bag, pad, pillow, change of clothes and toiletries. Please remember that the deadline to register and be guaranteed a slot is one week before the conference (December 2). Any one registering after that date will be placed on a waiting list and may not be able to attend. For more information, contact Jocelyn Dowling, Youth Programs Manager. To register, [go to the JYF Registration page on the Yearly Meeting website](#).

Dec. 18: Friends Wilderness Center Reflection Hike Take time out to ponder the joys and sorrows of the past year and to welcome in the possibilities of the year to come. Share fresh air, fellowship, and the joys of being beneath an open sky with a brand new, magical year. Please RSVP to Sheila Bach (snbach@earthlink.net, 304-728-4820) or see www.friendswilderness.org

January 15 - BYM Camps Registration Opens for Returning Campers-Catoctin, Opequon, Shiloh, and Teen Adventure Quaker Camps [For full information about BYM Camps, see their website](#)

Jan. 27 to 29: BYM Women's Retreat, The 2017 Baltimore Yearly Meeting Women's

Retreat will be held the weekend of January 27 through January 29 for the second year at the Pearlstone Conference Center in Reisterstown MD. The theme is Quaker Wisdom: Echoes in Our Souls. We are invited to reconnect with the wisdom of Quakers past and present through

worship, stories, song, rest, and play. The plenary will feature Paulette Meier, who will share with us

how she awakened to the words of the first generation of Friends through setting them to music of her own composition. Registration is now open through this link: <https://bym-rsf1-org.presencehost.net/events/ymevents/women17.html> on the Baltimore Yearly

Meeting website. Please register by December 15.

Thinking About Race (December 2016) – Rabbi Abraham Joshua Herschel

On January 14-17, 1963, a National Conference on Race and Religion took place in Chicago. Among other speakers were Martin Luther King, Jr., and Abraham Joshua Heschel. Rabbi Heschel's address on January 14 appears as one chapter in the 1966 book **The Insecurity of Freedom**, from which this passage is drawn.

“Again I saw all the oppressions that are practiced under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them!” (Ecclesiastes 4:1)

“There is a form of oppression which is more painful and more scathing than physical injury or economic privation. It is *public humiliation*. What afflicts my conscience is that my face, whose skin happens not to be dark, instead of radiating the likeness of God, has come to be taken as an image of haughty assumption and overbearance. Whether justified or not, I, the white man, have become in the eyes of others a symbol of arrogance and pretension, giving offense to other human beings, hurting their pride, even without intending it. My very presence inflicting insult!

“My heart is sick when I think of the anguish and the sighs, of the quiet tears shed in the nights in the overcrowded dwellings in the slums of our great cities, of the pangs of despair, of the cup of humiliation that is running over.

“The crime of murder is tangible and punishable by law. The sin of insult is imponderable, invisible. When blood is shed, human eyes see red; when a heart is crushed, it is only God who shares the pain.”

This column is prepared by the BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR) and sent to the designated liaison at each Monthly and Preparative Meeting. The BYM WGR meets most months on the third 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, contact clerk David Etheridge, david.etheridge@verizon.net.

RANDOM HAPPENINGS

Friends Meeting of Washington came through the election in excellent shape to deal with the after-effects.

- Available worship times for people feeling these effects like a spiritual blow and wanting a peaceful place to turn spiritward: Check—we’ve got five of those per week, and have packed in a couple of extra worships for the parents and for the Young Adults to meet and speak of their special concerns.
- Active and well-honed Peace & Social Concerns committee for those wanting to Quaker Up the struggle for peace and justice: Check. They’re meeting, they’re ready, and they’re already diving in, with massive support for the upcoming Million Women’s March that is bringing thousands of women’s rights advocates and supporters to D.C. in January.
- Meeting campus with many available rooms for small and large nonprofits to use for strategy meetings: Check. And are they ever pouring in! My phone has been ringing off the hook with calls from social justice organizations eager to dig in and do their part to continue the struggle for peace and justice.

In short, the Meeting is on fire just at a time when we particularly need Light and heat. Well done, Friends. Let’s keep it going.

- Debby