

February 2014 Newsletter

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Friends Meeting of Washington

Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business Minutes

12 January 2014

Advices

Since its founding over 350 years ago, the Religious Society of Friends has testified to the worth of every individual by refusing to participate in war. We repudiate war because it violates the primacy of love, destroys lives that God has given, and tears the fabric of society. Members of our Society have traditionally refused to serve in the armed forces. The Peace Testimony is, however, more than a mere refusal to participate in war.

Fox's assertion that he "lived in that light and power that takes away the occasion for war" and Woolman's advice that we "examine our lives to see that the seeds of war are not contained therein" firmly establish connections between this and other testimonies. As we work for peace in the world, Friends need to search out the seeds of war in ourselves and in our way of life. Instead of joining in actions that may lead to destruction and death, Friends are urged to cooperate to save life and strengthen the bonds of unity among all people. Work to create the conditions of peace, such as freedom, justice, cooperation, and the right sharing of the world's resources. Seek

not only peace with one another, but peace with the earth. Recognize that wars can arise when poor environmental practices lead to scarcity and unjust distribution of resources.

Our faith calls for us to be fully present to the person before us. We need to bring into God's light those emotions, attitudes, and prejudices in ourselves which lie at the root of destructive conflict, acknowledging our need for forgiveness and grace.

Queries

Do you endeavor to live "in virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars"?

Do you work to make your peace testimony a reality in your life and in your world?

Do you weigh your day-to-day activities for their effect on peace-keeping, conflict resolution, and the elimination of violence?

Are you working toward eliminating aggression at all levels, from the personal to the international?

Voices

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. - Matthew 5:7-9 (NRSV)

Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal. - Martin Luther King, Jr., 1967

George Fox did not say that he believed war to be wrong, or that in his opinion brute force never settled anything; he went straight to the heart of the matter and said that he "lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars." To uphold such a testimony involved a dedicated life. The Quaker peace testimony is more than a repudiation of war, and more than a denial of the use of force; it is a way of life to which we must be faithful in small things as well as in great, in our human relationships, our business and social activities, and in the life and witness of our meetings. - Elfrida Vipont Foulds, 1966

May we look upon our treasures, the furniture of our houses, and our garments and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions. - John Woolman, c. 1760

2014/1-1 Welcome of Visitors Approximately 31 members and visitors.

Bertrand Rossert was welcomed as a first time attender to Meeting for Business (MfB).

2014/1-2 Clerk's Report

Catherine Vanderwaart and spouse Elisabeth Oppenheimer are pleased to announce the birth of their twins Anna Rives Vanderwaart and Nathan Peter Vanderwaart, born on Monday, January 6. All are doing well and will be heading home soon.

The Clerk proposes replacing the after-Meeting for Business potluck by instead serving soup and bread on MfB days and starting MfB at ten past 12, with a general effort to end by 1:30. We need someone to coordinate a signup for two people to make soup each month. Friends **agreed** with this proposal.

Major items

2014/1-3 Membership Committee Annual Report and second reading of proposal regarding associate membership – Hayden Wetzel

Two particular items were highlighted in the Membership Committee Annual Report; first, that the Committee acknowledges that it suffered last year because it did not have enough members. Second, the Committee has completely rewritten membership procedures and standards for record-keeping.

The Committee made a recommendation regarding the policy for associate membership. The Committee has recommended a new policy whereby associate members' (children of members) are automatically removed from membership at age 25 if, after appropriate notice, they fail to request membership.

A Friend asked for more information about the meaning of "appropriate notice." Hayden Wetzel, Clerk of Membership, observed that the current policy adds to Committee workload and places responsibility on the Meeting. The new policy places responsibility on the individual to request membership. With the new policy, the Meeting no longer needs to act to terminate or drop membership. Another Friend asked a question about the tone of the letter notifying the associate member and made a suggestion that the letter invite dialogue with the associate member. Another Friend spoke about her experience – as a 30 year-old – regarding how to communicate with associate members about this issue. She suggested that the Committee work with Young Adult Friends to find out their interests and to engage them in welcoming associate members considering their relationship to the Meeting. She pointed out that YouTube and other methods of communicating might add to the effectiveness of such contact. A Friend suggested that communications be as welcoming as possible and offer specific methods by which associate members can discuss this issue, including possible Clearness Committees or with Young Adult Friends. The Committee indicated its openness to suggestions about how to welcome and communicate with associate members.

A Friend asked if we have a minimum age for membership and suggested that when associate members turn 21 they be contacted to ask if they wish to become members. Support was expressed for this view of proactively reaching out *before* approaching young people about the impending end of their membership. A Friend said that the basic approach should be about associate members belonging to the meeting. Another Friend requested that people in Young Adult Friends take on a role of reaching out to associate members to engage them in the life of the meeting. Hayden Wetzel affirmed that the Committee knew the associate members individually and was certainly reaching out in a loving way.

Friends thanked the Committee for the report and asked the Membership Committee to return to MfB with a recommendation in the next couple of months about how it plans to reach out to associate members.

2014/1-4 Nominating Committee report – Beth Cogswell

Nominations:

- Friends **approved** the nomination of Adam Hixson to the Mary Jane Simpson Scholarship Committee.

- Friends **approved** the nomination of Shannon Zimmerman as Recording Clerk (2nd presentation, waiver; membership application in progress).

- Friends **approved** the nomination of Louise Levathes as Interim Clerk, Peace & Social Concerns (2nd presentation, waiver, non-member).

- Friends **approved** the nomination of Shannon Zimmerman to Healing & Reconciliation (2nd presentation, waiver, membership application in process).

- Ann Herzog, Marriage & Family Relations (2nd presentation, needs waiver; non-member). Some Friends questioned whether a non-member may or should be authorized by the Meeting to legally sign the marriage license. Friends **approved** this waiver with the understanding that, as a non-member, Ann cannot be approved by the Meeting as a signatory on the DC marriage license.

- Friends **approved** the nomination of F.T. Clark to Marriage & Family Relations (2nd presentation, waiver, non-member).

- Friends **approved** the nomination of Gene Throwe, Ministry & Worship (2nd presentation, waiver, non-member).

Resignations:

- Friends **accepted** with regret the resignation of Jean Harman from Ministry & Worship

Meg Greene, as Clerk of the Meeting, requested the appointment of Judy Hubbard as member of the Search Committee. Friends **approved** this nomination.

2014/1-5 Milestones

The presentation of the memorial minute for Miles Wedeman was postponed until February Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business so that we may consider revisions submitted by his daughter. A revised memorial minute will be presented next month.

Memorial Minute for Winnie Walker-Jones. A Friend recommended that we look into including mention of Winnie Walker-Jones' daughter's rejection by Sidwell Friends due to her interracial heritage. Friends **approved** the minute as written.

2014/1-6 Records and Handbook Committee Semi-Annual Report – Todd Harvey

Todd Harvey presented on behalf of the Committee. He reported that because there were no changes, no report was submitted.

Jean Capps, outgoing Clerk of Membership, expressed thanks to the Records and Handbook Committee for their assistance with cleaning up the membership records.

2014/1-7 Marriage and Family Relations Annual-Report – Elizabeth Pomerleau

Elizabeth Pomerleau presented the annual report for Marriage and Family Relations. There were three marriages held under the care of the Meeting this past year.

- Angela Erickson and Caleb Brown were married on October 5th, 2013,
- Jocelyn Burls and EunSung Kim were married on October 26th, 2013
- Danielle Spruance and James Sinclair were married on November 2nd, 2013.

Elizabeth reported that all three of these marriages were successfully conducted. Two couples are currently in clearness committees for marriages pending in 2014.

A Friend also mentioned that FWM partnered with the Friends Meeting of Richmond, Virginia to legalize the marriage of Frances Steward and Wendy Wadsworth on December 27th, 2013 in the District of Columbia. They have been in union for thirty years, but same-sex marriage is unavailable in Virginia at this time. Friends expressed **approval** of this support for Friends Meeting of Richmond.

OTHER BUSINESS

2014/1-8 Recorders' Annual Report

The Recorders' annual report was presented by Debby Churchman. Membership numbers are down but this is due in part to improved record keeping. Please see the full report for specifics.

2014/1-9 Property Committee Updates – Jean Harman

- FMW has a new ground floor furnace, which is one of four heating units. This process was expedited due to the urgent nature of the request. The approximate cost was about \$4000.00.
- Committee members attended a hearing before the District of Columbia Real Property Tax Appeals Commission (RPTAC) regarding the proposed assessed value the FMW property for

2012. The RPTAC will make a decision within approximately the next 30 days. Someone from the tax office will come to FMW to look at the property this coming week for a possible reassessment for future tax purposes.

This has become an issue because some of the licensees using space in the FMW campus, while non-profits whose mission is congruent with FMW values, do not serve District of Columbia residents; under DC law fees from such non-profits are not exempt from DC property taxes. Once a decision is issued, the committee will report to MfB with the results from the hearing and the committee's recommendations about further action, if any.

2014/1-10 Minutes, Friends **approved** the minutes

2014/1-11 The Meeting closed with approximately 26 members in attendance.

Membership Committee

Annual Report for 2013

January 2014

Gerri Williams and Jean Meyer Capps co-clerked the committee until May, when Gerri Williams moved to Minnesota and Hayden Wetzal was appointed co-clerk. Other members were Maurice Boyd, Joan Gildemeister, Joe Izzo and Andrew Lightman. Andrew has resigned from the committee.

The Committee completed the project of periodic review of membership of Friends with whom we have long been out of touch, and of associate members over the age of 25, two long-term efforts that this committee has to periodically undertake. This backlog has largely been caught up and that new systems have been put in place to keep up-to-date.

We did not hold a New Members reception due to the small number of new members but one will be held when there are more new members and after our new committee members have settled into the routine.

Aside from the routine duties related to membership, our committee focused on three major areas this year:

- Rethinking the nature of associate membership, a type of junior membership given children at the request of their parents. The committee has recommend that Associate Membership automatically end at the Friend's 25th birthday, preceded by reminders that the associate member either apply for full membership, transfer to another Quaker meeting or resign membership. Inaction on the part of the Associate Member would result in their membership expiring when

they turn 25. The change has been presented to Meeting for Business but has not yet been approved.

- In collaboration with the Meeting's Administrative Secretary the Committee undertook a complete review of our membership procedures, including the records in the Logos database. The committee would like to thank Friend Debby Churchman for her enthusiastic help in our efforts to streamline the membership records and data and improve the flow of information from the time someone enquires about membership through their approval by the Meeting for Business. These changes should result in significantly more timely access to information to members and potential members of the Meeting.
- The Committee has written or revised a complete set of letters and forms that will be used to keep applicants informed of their status throughout the membership process. This project has been a particular goal of our out-going co-clerk Jean Meyer Capps and was completed just before her term ended.

In 2013, new members to FMW were:

- Katherine Brandt and Kimberly Acquaviva (full) and Greyson Acquaviva (associate), not yet welcomed;
- Kiflu Kidane (full), welcomed by Gerri Williams and Ray Allard;
- Thomas Goodhue (transfer in)

We also accomplished the welcome (by Michael North and Todd Harvey) of Patrick Marchman, who was approved as a member in the preceding year.

The meeting's Membership Committee suffered this year from a very small number of committee members and circumstances that kept several of those Friends from participating fully in the work of the committee. It is ironic and regrettable to say that we were fortunate to have very few requests for membership in the past year, since that is the work we want to do, but in fact that is true.

Hayden Wetzell and Jean Meyer Capps

Co-Clerks, Membership Committee

Winifred (Winnie) Walker-Jones

August 16, 1925 – December 27, 2010

When Winnie Walker-Jones applied for membership in the Religious Society of Friends in January of 1948, she wrote "there is no longer any doubt in my mind, now God has given an answer to my soul."

Born on August 16, 1925 in Cortland New York to Joseph Arthur Walker and Winifred Ann Roberts, Winifred (Winnie) Walker graduated from Keuka College in upstate New York in June 1947 as an honor student and editor of her school newspaper. She spent several summers doing volunteer work in projects of the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia.

Winnie grew up in New York and, with her family, was a member of the local Episcopal Church. She entertained doubts about that church and was a seeker of other churches. Her first contact with Friends came during her sophomore year at college when she met the AFSC youth secretary and then, the following summer when she volunteered for the AFSC Student-in-Industry project in Philadelphia and where she regularly attended Meeting for Worship. She wrote of attending these meetings "I found that for which I had been searching – I hadn't know what I was searching for, but I did know that I had found it." She wrote in her application for membership to FMW that "God wishes me to join Friends... I can say no more."

Winnie obtained a job teaching at Bacone College, Oklahoma's oldest continuing center of higher education, began in 1880 with the help of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, Professor Almon C. Bacone, a missionary teacher, who started a school in the Cherokee Baptist Mission at Tahlequah, Indian Territory. On January 31, 1948 Winnie wrote: "Very simply – I desire to become a Friend. Long and serious meditation and prayer has resulted in a positive and clearly defined spiritual conviction that it is the faith in which I can best serve God and find the deepest peace within. Up to this very day I have intellectually been sure that such was the course I wanted to take, but have resisted because of the lack of a spiritual 'yes.'"

Knowing that there were no Friends meetings near her Baptist College to seek a meeting in which she could become a member, she corresponded with the American Friends Fellowship Council. The Council had an arrangement with FMW and the 57th Street Meeting in Chicago whereby those Meetings would consider applications of persons who are not living near an established Monthly Meeting. On June 4, 1948 Winnie applied for non-resident membership in the Friends Meeting of Washington and became a member of FMW on September 20, 1948.

She married Harry Jones in 1950 having met him while they both attended Howard University. Winnie Walker-Jones was mother of Karen Cecilia, born on June 12, 1952 and Kenneth Lawrence, born January 19, 1955; mother-in-law of Helen Horvath; and grandmother of Rachel Jones. After their marriage, Harry and Winnie decided to live outside the continental U.S to an area where their inter-racial marriage in 1950 was less subject to the racism in the U.S. She applied to Friends overseas programs to work; from the record the American Friends Board of Missions was not supportive and refused to hire an inter-racial couple. Winnie and husband Harry moved to Denmark where they both taught English at the American University in Denmark from 1950 to 1952 and during that time, and until her death, Winnie continued to remain a member of the Friends Meeting of Washington. Her husband was a long-time professor of English at Morgan State University. They were divorced in 1974.

Winnie was a wife, professor, birder, and leader. She served on the Supervisory Committee of BYM for two years before becoming Clerk of Representative (now Interim) Meeting, starting in 1979. In 1984, while serving as Clerk of Representative Meeting, the Presiding Clerk became ill and she presided at the Annual Session. Winnie then served as Clerk of the Yearly Meeting until 1988.

"Every organization she joined, she wound up heading." This message, given by one of her children at her Memorial Service, describes Winnie's path in Baltimore Yearly Meeting and her beloved Friends Meeting of Washington.

Winnie was a respected Washington-area birder. She led bird walks at the BYM annual sessions and after she retired and moved to Friends House in Sandy Spring, MD.

September 1980 Winnie wrote about her membership and activities at the Friends Meeting of Washington that “(my) own spiritual development has been in great part the result of continued encouragement on the part of this Meeting, its committees, its Business Meetings, its regular Meetings for Worship, and, above all, its individual members. I am grateful.”

Winnie also served Friends Meeting of Washington as Clerk and as Co-Clerk in the late 1980s, assisting less seasoned Friends to become comfortable clerking. In a report on the Spiritual State of FMW in June, 1989, a time when the Meeting was riven with dissent about the issue of same sex-commitment and gay marriage, Winnie wrote that “We turn again into the path lighted by the spirit of truth and love in the sure knowledge that as we pursue our ministry, we will continue to find, always, that with the thorns, there will be blossoms as well.”

Recorder’s Report 2013

By year to year count these are the figures for the Meeting’s membership as of December 31, 2013.

The figures: According to our database, there are 312 members and 67 associate members, for a total of 379 members. Of the adult members, 207 are residents and 105 are non-residents.

Changes in 2013:

On the plus side, we gained 3 new members and one new associate member. In addition, one Friend transferred his membership in to Friends Meeting of Washington. Total gains were 5 members.

On the minus side, 9 members transferred out of the Meeting, 5 (mostly associate) members resigned, 5 out-of-touch memberships were terminated, and 7 members died. Total losses were 26 members—19 of them the result of death or improved record-keeping.

Our data base now lists 9 Sojourners, 4 of whom are Klemeks. Last year, it listed 5. We lurch forward.

Report from Marriage & Family Relations Committee 2013

Submitted by Elizabeth Pomerleau, Clerk

“It is hard to imagine more gratifying service than working with couples that are part of Friends Meeting of Washington and wish to commit their lives to each other and connect their lives to our community through Marriage under our care.

During our initial conversations with any couple wishing to be married under our care, we explain the deep meaning of that request.

Our clearness process for marriage or commitment reflects our essential belief about the way in which Friends test the religious call of two persons into a lifelong relationship, as well as our belief about the meaning of spiritual commitment within a faith community. Early Friends were clear that marriage was essentially a religious covenant. They saw this as quite different from marriage as a legal or social relationship; when a choice was necessary, they chose to have their marriages considered illegal rather than modify their religious witness.

So early Friends held the witness that no person had the legal (magistrate) or spiritual (priest) authority to "pronounce" two people married. Marriage was accomplished when a meeting witnessed two people exchanging vows, confirming a call to lifelong commitment.

However, the call to commitment is not limited to two individuals. It involves the meeting as well, since the couple's spiritual leading occurs in the context of a faith community, and is tested in that community as any other leading would be. The question for the couple is, "Are we called to a covenant relationship with each other?" The question for the meeting is, "Are we clear to take this marriage-- this whole relationship--under our care?" (The question is not, "Are we clear to take the wedding or ceremony under our care?") The clarity reached when a meeting takes a marriage under its care is a double clarity--the couple and the meeting."

A. Marriage

-- From *Grounded in God: Care and Nurture in Friends Meeting*,

Patricia McBee, Ed.

The Marriage and Family Relations Committee of Friends Meeting Washington has continued to pursue the lived experience of the above quotation. We continue to wrestle with the best way to nurture couples in our community in a loving, supportive way. In 2013, we have been honored to work with the following couples, who were married under the care of FMW:

Angela Erickson and Caleb Brown, October 5, 2013

Jocelyn Burls and Eun Sung Kim, October 26, 2013

Danielle Spruance and James Sinclair, November 2, 2013

In our clearness committees, we spoke with each of the couples about their meeting and courtship, their desire for commitment, their family of origin, their hopes for a future family together, and much more. Each couples expressed their deep love and commitment to one another and to their spiritual journeys in the community of Friends Meeting Washington. These profound, intimate conversations were a joy to share for our committee with the couples.

We also partnered with Friends Meeting Richmond, Virginia to help a lesbian couple that is married under the care of FMR to legalize their union in the District of Columbia (unavailable in Virginia at this time.) That couple was:

Frances Stewart and Wendy Wadsworth, December 27th, 2013

Our committee has struggled to regain its equilibrium and momentum after the transition of clerks. Susan Griffin stepped down from clerking MFR committee in order to pursue other passions and commitments here at FMW. Elizabeth Pomerleau is the new clerk of MFR committee, and has been working to overcome the steep learning curve that comes with new clerkship.

Overall, our committee is committed to continuing to seek a fuller understanding of marriage in the Friends tradition. As we move into 2014, we are already working with 2 couples in clearness committees.

Here ends the Minutes and Reports of MfB

UPCOMING EVENTS

Come to **S.O.M.E.** on **Saturday, Feb. 1** at 6:15 AM and be prepared to flip pancakes and help prepare breakfast for our vulnerable neighbors. 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

Feb. 1 – BYM – Camps Registration Opens for New Campers Kids grow spiritually when they explore new horizons in nature and in Quaker community. Registration opens at 7:00 pm for new campers at Opequon, Shiloh, Catocin, and Teen Adventure on Saturday, February 1. Baltimore Yearly Meeting runs three camps for children 9-14 and two camps for teens ages 15-17. All of these camps are residential. Activities include community building, Quaker values, and developing a love of the outdoors. Trips out of camp include backpacking, rock climbing, and canoeing. See bymcamps.org for information and to register online, or contact Jane Megginson, Camp Program Manager. (717-481-4870 or jane@bymcamps.org). A small scholarship is available through Friends Meeting of Washington; contact Kim Acquaviva (kdacqua@gmail.com) for more information.



Our annual **ski trip** will be held on **Sunday, Feb. 2** at Whitetail Mountain in Pennsylvania on Sunday, February 2, 2104. The outing is a wonderful chance for us to visit with each other and spend time outdoors (and not to mention the perfect prep for watching the Super Bowl). For information about Whitetail Mountain, please check out their website - <https://www.skiwhitetail.com/winter>. Lift tickets, equipment rental and cafeteria food are discounted when we sign up in advance as a group. Our discount grows depending on the number of our group (to qualify for the group rates there must be at least 15 of us). If you are interested in coming please sign up in the google document here - <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ccc?key=0Ajr6QeTQs3BidGpDTFVyOTNGX3FODldBbGxRM1ZsYUE&usp=sharing>.

There will be **Singing!** on **Sunday, Feb. 2**, please bring your willing voice to the Meeting Room at 10:00 am for chants and hymns of praise and longing. For more information, contact the office at admin@quakersdc.org

The **Grate Patrol** will pack and deliver 120 bag lunches and soup to people living on the street on **Wednesday, Feb. 5**. Soup or chili is made in the afternoon. At 5:30 PM we start making sandwiches and packing the lunch bags. At 7 PM, we load the van and one or two people go out on delivery for about an hour. You're welcome to help out with any or all of these things. Call Steve Brooks 240-328-5439 or email sbrooks@uab.edu for more information.

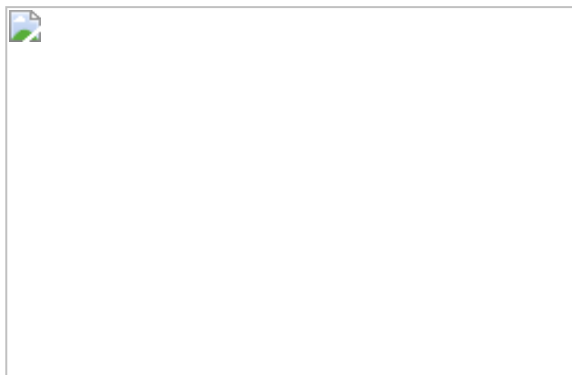
Beginning **Thursday, Feb. 6** at 7:30 pm, Jim Clay from School for Friends will teach a five-session course on **parenting two to four-year-olds**. For more information, contact Jim at jimclay@schoolforfriends.org Several parents from FMW have taken this course and enthusiastically recommend it.

Feb. 2 – Sunday – Israel, the MidEast, and the Peace Churches: One Rabbi's Passions at William Penn House (Washington, DC) Rabbi Kenneth Cohen, founder of The Vine and Fig Project, will talk about his work, his views, his hopes for Israel and Palestine, and his desires to work with people across faiths here in the U.S. to advocate for peace. The Potluck will begin at 6:30 pm. Bring a dish to share. For more information, see the William Penn House website. (williampennhouse.org/)

The **Monthly Worship and Potluck** will be held **Tuesday, Feb. 11**. Worship at 6:30; potluck at 7:00. All are welcome.

On **Tuesday, Feb. 11**, Jonathan Foust, a senior teacher with the Insight Meditation Community of Washington, will lead a two-hour workshop on **Meditation and Conflict Resolution**. Sponsored by Peace & Social Concerns. All are welcome.

Feb. 14 – 16 – BYM – Young Friends Conference, Langley Hill Friends Meeting (McLean, VA) Young Friends should begin arriving at 7:00 pm on Friday. For information, check the [Young Friends website](#) or contact [Alison Duncan](#). (301-774-7663) Please remember that the deadline to register and be guaranteed a slot is two weeks before the conference (January 31). Any one registering after that date will be placed on a waiting list and may not be able to attend.



Feb. 14 – 16 – Silent Retreat for Friends at Dayspring Retreat Center (Germantown, MD) Is your spirit in need of nourishment and refreshment? Come to the Silent Retreat at Dayspring for Friends. Members of Annapolis Friends Meeting will be given priority in registration, and Friends from Baltimore Yearly Meeting are invited to join them. The Retreat has never been full, so please join us! We will keep the silence from Friday evening until after worship on Sunday, enjoying the beauty of God's creation in meadows and woods, reading, walking, resting, praying, finding our own rhythms, listening for the Still Small Voice at Dayspring Retreat Center in Germantown, MD. The cost of the retreat is \$210.00, and the deadline for registrations is February 7, 2013. For more information, contact facilitator Jean Christianson of Annapolis Friends Meeting. (410-544-1912)

Feb. 14 – 17 – FLGBTQC Mid-Winter Gathering at Menucha Retreat Center (Corbett, OR) The Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns is holding its annual Mid-Winter Gathering at the Menucha Retreat Center with a theme of *Radically inclusive beloved community*. In addition to the ongoing focus on race and class, they intend to open their hearts and build skills to include those with different abilities and health status, as well as Friends of different theology across all the branches of Friends. Registration is now open at sites.google.com/site/flgbtqcmw2014/ and the deadline to register is January 15.

On **Sunday, Feb. 16** at noon, there will be a presentation by **Chloe Schwenke** of Adelphi Friends Meeting about her experience as a **transgender Quaker**. All are welcome to come and hear Chloe in the North Room.

On **Sunday, Feb. 16** at noon, Grant Thompson will update us about the **Capital Campaign**—where we are, where we're going, and how we're going to get there.

On **Sunday, Feb. 23** at noon, our member Bridget Moix will talk about her proposed work with archival materials at the University of Colorado and elsewhere on the work of Quakers **Elise and Kenneth Boulding**. The talk is sponsored by Peace & Social Concerns.

On **Sunday, Feb. 23** at 6:00 pm in the Assembly Room, Angela C. Erickson and Caleb O. Brown will preview **Financial Peace University**, a nine-week personal finance course to help families eliminate debt, save for the future, and give like never before. Participants will be challenged and motivated to make a plan for their money and build wealth for the future. The full course begins March 2 at 6:00 pm. Learn more and order materials at <http://bit.ly/FMWFPU> or talk to Caleb at calebbrown@gmail.com and Angela at angela.cerickson@gmail.com The program is hosted by the Finance and Stewardship Committee.

THINKING ABOUT RACE(February 2014) – OneChurch/ One Body Pledge

By Jim Wallis, President of *Sojourner's* at <http://Sojo.net>.

“Because of recent events that demonstrate the racial challenges ahead, more than 70 Christian leaders (white, African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American) are launching a pledge called “One Church | One Body.” The pledge invites everyone to engage three commitments: first, to help build a multiracial faith community; second, to help fix an unjust criminal justice system; and third, to protect voting rights for minority citizens.

“Consider joining us in our pledge and do not shy away from seeing *12 Years a Slave*. It's the start of a conversation that's long overdue.”

To sign the pledge (individuals can sign as well as congregations): <https://secure3.convio.net/sojo/site/Advocacy?pagename=homepage&page=UserAction&id=729&autologin=true>

For the whole article, see: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jim-wallis/the-most-controversial-se_b_4157353.html?utm_hp_ref=email_share

The BYM Working Group on Racism meets most months on the third Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, usually at Bethesda Friends Meeting or Friends Meeting of Washington. If you would like to attend, on a regular or a drop-in basis, contact clerk David Etheridge, david.etheridge@verizon.net.

FROM THE VAULT

A monthly series of edited extracts from the historical material of the Friends Meeting of Washington.

From Discipline of the Friends Meeting of Washington, 1938, "Introduction":

Friends are convinced that the Divine Spirit speaks directly to the human soul without the need of any intermediary; that therefore neither ritual nor altar nor priest nor creed can be necessary for

worship. The human soul in its need may at any time and in any place approach the Divine Father. In the deep consciousness that worship means the individual's unmediated approach to God, Friends hold that every one in the group should be a worshipper.

Meetings for worship begin with silence, that in the solemn hush when all inward and outward sounds are stilled each may more readily hear the voice of Him who speaks to the soul that wills to listen. This silence is not a form; it is earnest, expectant, prayerful waiting. The ideal of worship is reached when the whole group is fused into this one attitude of mind and heart. There is no rule to determine when or by whom this silence may be broken. Reliance is wholly on the promptings of the Divine Spirit.

Quakerism therefore sets the prophet above the priest and a first-hand experience of God above any form of credal statement. In these things we feel that we are following directly in the path which our Lord pointed out when he said: "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." These and many other utterances of Jesus seem to point us the way. Christianity is a life, not a creed; and worship brings with it not merely a sense of the reality of God's nearness; it has also a unifying force which makes it possible even for those whose theological formulations may differ widely, nonetheless to worship together.

This meeting in Washington is to provide a place of prayer for all people; that in the dignity and beauty of simplicity it will interpret worship in its essence; and that it will promote real and vital religion. To promote this idea; to love and to interpret Truth; to foster the habit of simple, spiritual worship; to find God through worship; and therewith to emphasize the spirit of Christian unity; these are the aims of the Washington meeting.

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This statement is taken from the first Book of Discipline (now Handbook) of our Meeting. It seems an appropriate closing to this long-running series of extracts from our historical records. About two months ago the last shipment of our historical papers went out the door to the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College, and I have run out of material to publicize. This last shipment (of loose papers in folders) totaled about 250 folders going back to the beginnings of our Meeting; we retained another 150 or so at the request of committees or because they will be needed to write the next 20-year history. About five boxes of bound material went to Swarthmore earlier in the year. We have retained a full set of core documents (MfB minutes, newsletters, directories, Trustees minutes, handbooks) and they are in the library and available for your use.

With best regards to all,
Hayden Wetzels, FMW Historian

RANDOM HAPPENINGS

I am declaring February to be **National Be Kind to the Property Committee Month** for the extraordinary work they did over the holidays to keep the building warm and the pipes unfrozen. One of our furnaces—the one that heats most of the downstairs—started having some kind of nervous breakdown just before Christmas, setting off various alarms while making pitiful attempts to heat this giant pile of rocks we call the Meetinghouse. Members of the committee came by daily while our hard-working Property Manager went on his previously scheduled leave. They bought new alarms (to be sure it was a furnace problem and not an alarm problem), donated space heaters, brought in heating companies to give advice and bids, asked far-reaching questions, and called a meeting to make the decision. Ken came back toward the end of all this, and somehow managed to get a furnace company to show up the day after the decision was made and install a new, high-efficiency beast, just in time for the coldest weather in years. I am looking

for some ground that members of the committee—**Steve Brooks, Neil Froemming, Jean Harman, Jay Harris, Basil Kiwan, and Martha Solt**—have walked on so that I may kiss it, and encourage you to help me celebrate by thanking these Friends.

And a big thank you to **Hayden Wetzel** this month for bringing together Friends for a **new clerk's orientation**, walking new/experienced/ wannabe clerks through the mysteries of budgets and files and how to boss around your Administrative Secretary (hint: she responds well to dark chocolate). If you missed this, ask me for the hand-outs and the 1-minute take-away. Hayden also brought in local reps from **Servas**, an international hospitality organization that connects travelers with local people. Interested? Talk to him to learn more.

And a super big hug to **Steve Coleman** this month for tilting at the D.C. tax assessor's office, providing them with plenty of plainly stated reasons why we believe we are being taxed unfairly. After the hearing, an assessor came out to take another look. Holding this in the Light. Steve also is the force behind that wonderful **reading of a play** by **Earl Fowler**, a member of this meeting who served the American Friends Service Committee in Europe in the aftermath from World War II, and went on to be a prolific playwright. Earl's son, **Chris Fowler**, is an occasional visitor at our Meeting. It was wonderful to have this experience with the Fowler family, thanks to Steve.

In addition to the usual array of language classes, etc., FMW played host to two very poignant gatherings in January. The first was a memorial for a 3-year-old who died of a brain tumor. In addition to the memorial in the Meeting Room, his parents hosted a special activity for their son's classmates in the Decatur Place Room, helping them to process this death.

On a far happier note, FMW hosted another same-sex marriage, this one for an interracial couple from Texas. You can read their review of the wedding [here](#).

- Debby