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## FMW Newsletter - February 2020

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### **2nd Month Query: Meetings for Business**

Are meetings for business held in a spirit of worship, understanding and forbearance? When direction seems lacking, is this seen as a challenge to a more prayerful search for truth? Do we humbly set aside our own preconceived notions as to proper action, seeking instead Divine guidance as to the right course? Is the Meeting aware that it speaks not only through its actions but also through its failure to act? Do you participate regularly in meetings for business, discharge faithfully your committee responsibilities, and assume your share of financial support of the Meeting? (See: [Principles of Organization and Conduct of Business](#); [Decision Making in Friends Meetings](#))

Source: [BYM Faith & Practice, Part II The Queries](#)

### **FMW Community:**

**This month's Meeting for Business** has been moved from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, February 16, 12:15 pm in Quaker House Living Room. All are welcome!

**Spiritual State of the Meeting annual report process is starting now—Please give your input.**

Each year Baltimore Yearly Meeting sends a series of queries to area meetings to be discussed by members and attenders. These are compiled, by Ministry & Worship, into a report on the "Spiritual State of our Meeting. Please add to this process by responding to the questions detailed in the flyer below. This can be done online using [this Form](#).

**Hearing Improvement Project:** At January's Meeting for Business, it was decided that we will invest in a new hearing assistance system for FMW's Meeting Room. (See Meeting for Business Minutes below for details. You can help cover the approximately \$21K cost of this improvement, you can send a check to FMW for "HIP" (Hearing Improvement Fund). For more information, contact: Grant Thompson, [billstar@starpower.net](mailto:billstar@starpower.net)

## Events

**Gun Control--What Can Friends Do?-Meeting with Friends Cttee on Natl Legislation, Feb 2 at 12 p.m., Decatur Place Room.** Peace and Social Concerns will host a meeting with FCNL representatives to discuss gun violence: what is happening nationally, FCNL's strategy, and what Friends can do. Refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Chad Dobson at [cdobson56@gmail.com](mailto:cdobson56@gmail.com)

**Join FMW's Grate Patrol Team! Wednesday, Feb 5, 5:30 pm, FMW Kitchen:** On the first Wednesday of every month, members of our FMW community gather at the Meeting House to prepare brown bag meals for the Salvation Army's Grate Patrol (<http://salvationarmynca.org/gratepatrol/>). After the meals are prepared, two of us join a Salvation Army truck driver and make several stops in NW Washington, DC to distribute food to our community. Please come join us at the next gathering on Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at 5:30 pm at the Meeting House to prepare the food. The truck arrives at 6:30 pm and then returns to the Meeting House at 8:30 pm. We welcome your help to make the sandwiches or distribute the food on the truck or both! Kids and teens are welcome. If you have any questions or want more information, please email Louisa Terrell ([louisa.terrell@gmail.com](mailto:louisa.terrell@gmail.com)).

**Reading Early Quakers Together. Feb. 16, 9:15, Library** to discuss "This is a short Relation of some of the Cruel Sufferings for the Truth's sake of Katharine Evans and Sarah Chevers in the Inquisition in the Isle of Malta" at pages 171 through 209 in *Hidden in Plain Sight: Quaker Women's Writings 1650-1700*, available from Pendle Hill, <https://pendlehill.org/product/hidden-plain-sight-quaker-womens-writings-1650-1700/>. **Contact: Sabrina McCarthy, [sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net](mailto:sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net), cell 240.778.5234.**

**Pendle Hill: [Embracing Our Inner Critics: A Pathway to Inner Strength and Peace](#)** weekend workshop, February 21-23 with Quaker personal coach Dana Mitra. **[Embracing Our Inner Critics: A Pathway to Inner Strength and Peace](#)** For info and to register contact Pendle Hill Quaker Study and Retreat Center, 610-566-4507, ext. 137.

**Pendle Hill [Mindfulness and White Privilege](#) weekend seminar, February 28-March 1** – led by Deborah Cooper and Pamela Freeman blending mindfulness practices with an engaged exploration of racial conditioning to help white people practice anti-racism with intention and self-understanding. For information, contact Pendle Hill at 610-566-4507, ext. 137.

**FMW's Racial Equity Change Cttee and BYM [STRIDE](#) Anti-Racism Series begins February 22.** This 5-part antiracism series will be led by Khalila Lomax, coordinator of the STRIDE program, committed to ensuring that young people from all racial, geographical, and economic backgrounds have the opportunity to benefit from the Quaker camping programs conducted by the [Baltimore Yearly Meeting](#). FMW, 10:30 am – 12:00 pm, Sat, Feb 22, March 28, April 25, May 23, June 27. Please RSVP the [STRIDE Coordinator](#) Dyresha Harris at [OIC@bym-rsf.org](mailto:OIC@bym-rsf.org)

**Spiritual Friendships.** Feb. 23, 11:30 to 1:30, Terrace Room. You are welcome to join us either for Worship 11:30 to noon or for Check-in at noon, followed by reflections. Inspired by FMW former member Margery Larrabee, we consider the spiritual issues in our lives, explore spiritual

disciplines, and share thoughts about readings. Contact: Sabrina McCarthy, [sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net](mailto:sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net), cell 240.778.5234.

**Spiritual Autobiography-Share Your Experience!** Have you written a spiritual autobiography? Committed to Spirit-led giving? Prepared for the end of life? Would you like to share your experience in a workshop with Friends? To contribute to “*Sustaining Each Other in Community: A Year-Long Series on How Our Meeting Can Support Us,*” please get in touch with the Ministry & Worship Committee. Contact: Sabrina McCarthy, [sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net](mailto:sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net), cell 240.778.5234.

**Spiritual Journey Meditation Group.** Feb. 24, 1:00 to 2:30, Library for meditation, worship sharing and check-in. Contact: Sabrina McCarthy, [sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net](mailto:sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net), cell 240.778.5234.

**Looking for hospitality for 2 Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS) Fellows during FCNL's Spring Lobby Weekend, Sat. March 28 to Tues. March 31 in D.C.** Hosts are ideally located within a Metro-accessible commute to National Press Club/US Capitol vicinities. Please contact Claire at [claire@quakervoluntaryservice.org](mailto:claire@quakervoluntaryservice.org) asap if you're able/interested in hosting these young adults.

## News

**Polar Bear Plunge-FMW Raises Funds for Climate Change and Justice!** FMW Peace and Social Concerns and friends organized an 18-member team, the **FMW Quakers** to participate in the Chesapeake Climate Action Network's 15<sup>th</sup> annual Polar Bear Plunge to “Keep Winter Cold.” (FMW's administrative secretary, Barbara Briggs, also helped CCAN organize the event.). The FMW Quakers turned out in force in their rainbow cape beach towels—and raised (by far) the most of any of the Plunge teams—over \$15K for CCAN's climate and justice work, and our own! We helped CCAN meet their fundraising goal of \$160,000, and are starting to think about next year!

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## ***What is the Spiritual State of our Meeting?--Please contribute to our Report to Baltimore Yearly Meeting.***

***Baltimore Yearly Meeting sent Friends Meeting of Washington these queries:***

- **How do we nurture healthy vocal ministry? How do we nurture ministries of other kinds and affirm one another's gifts? How can we improve the way in which we recognize and speak to one another's gifts?**
- **What paralyzes us or prevents us from answering our call? What fears do we experience? Which fears drive us and which fears create obstacles?**
- **Do we have the courage to create space for our human fallibility and vulnerability? In what do we find that kind of courage?**

***FMW's Ministry and Worship Committee would also like to hear from you re:***

- **What do you want/need/seek in a spiritual community?**
- **How are you finding those things at FMW?**
- **What do you wish for that would make FMW a better spiritual community for you?**

***Please share your written responses BY FEBRUARY 16:***

**Comment Box** in our Main Lobby or **Online on this Google Form**

FMW's Ministry & Worship Committee will:

- compile our Meeting's *Report* at the end of February, based on Friends' responses to the queries
- bring the draft *Report* to Meeting for Business in March for approval

BYM's Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee will read FMW's report along with reports from all its monthly meetings to discern the spiritual state of BYM.

The BYM Committee writes a report on the *Spiritual State of the Yearly Meeting* to be read at the BYM Annual Session in August. The BYM Report is shared with other yearly meetings globally.

**Questions?** Sabrina McCarthy, [sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net](mailto:sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net), cell 240.778.5234

***Thanks for helping us to prepare FMW's Spiritual State of the Meeting Report!***

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## Friends Meeting of Washington

### Minutes

### Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business January 12, 2020

**Query for Worship Sharing:** What are you looking forward to at Friends Meeting of Washington in 2020?

Friends discussed closure from the process of renovation, peace in our renovated space, the joy of children playing in the new grass and hope for worshipping there.

#### Clerk's Report, January 2020

##### *In Memoriam*

- This month, we held memorial meetings for Ken Jadin, husband of our beloved member Leslie Jadin, Glenn Louis Meyer, brother of Jean Meyer Capps, as well as Alex Mathews

##### *Upcoming Events*

- **Pastoral Care Working Group, January 12, 9:15 a.m., Terrace Room.** All are welcome, as we consider whether to hold sessions on deep listening as a spiritual discipline, faithfulness groups, and Herndon Friends' approach to Personal Aid, as well as when to start reading Charles Vogl's book, *The Art of Community: Seven Principles for Belonging*. Contact: Sabrina McCarthy, [sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net](mailto:sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net), cell 240.778.5234.
- **Reading Early Quakers Together, Carriage Room, Sunday, Jan 19, 9:30.** All are welcome to this new reading group, which will meet every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday. We'll begin with "Some Account of Circumstances in the Life of Mary Pennington" at pages 211 to 224 of *Hidden in Plain Sight: Quaker Women's Writings 1650-1700*. Pendle Hill: <https://pendlehill.org/product/hidden-plain-sight-quaker-womens-writings-1650-1700/>.
- **Interested in a deeper connection with the Spirit?** If so, attend a Spiritual Formation mini-retreat on **February 2nd, 2020** from 12:00-2:00pm. Experienced BYM retreat leaders Amy Schmaljohn and Alan Evans will facilitate. Experience the power of spiritual friendship in a Sacred Circle and learn more about FMW's active Spiritual

Formation program. A simple meal will be served prior to the retreat. For more information or to RSVP contact John Bluedorn, [john.bluedorn@gmail.com](mailto:john.bluedorn@gmail.com).

- **Gun Control--What Can Friends Do?** At rise of Meeting on Sunday, **February 2**, Peace and Social Concerns will host a meeting with representatives from Friends Committee on National Legislation to address the issue of gun violence. We will learn what is happening nationally with that issue, what strategy FCNL is following, and what we as Friends can do to lessen gun violence. The meeting will last 90 minutes and be followed by refreshments. Learn how to follow your peace testimony to make change. For more information, contact Chad Dobson at [cdobson56@gmail.com](mailto:cdobson56@gmail.com)
- **Polar Bear Plunge on Saturday, January 25!** Peace & Social Concerns is raising money for climate and social justice work! P&SC and friends (12 & counting!) have formed a “fundsharing team” to join the **Chesapeake Climate Action Network’s Polar Bear Plunge**. Friends are invited to [join](#) the **FMW Quakers** plunge team and to [donate](#) to support CCAN and P&SC’s climate work by going to [www.KeepWinterCold.org](http://www.KeepWinterCold.org). Click [Donate](#), then search for the FMW Quakers team!
- The Working Group on Pastoral Care plans to hold a **Threshing Session on the use of Clearness Committees at FMW on Sunday, March 29** from noon to 1 p.m.

#### *Kudos & FMW Community Highlights*

- Lewis Randa of the Peace Abbey Foundation has found another home for the memorial stone for civilian victims of conflict.
- The Meeting has engaged an attorney concerning the will of a deceased member of the Meeting.
- Next month, we will hold the Meeting for Business on the THIRD Sunday, because of the Women’s Retreat during the second weekend

#### *Tenant Updates- Activities at our Meeting House*

- As of the end of December, we had booked just over \$93,000 worth of events through the end of this fiscal year (June 30<sup>th</sup>). We now have a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/fmw.event.venue/>) specifically for event rentals. Interesting space users in recent months has included a group of customized computer keyboard enthusiasts, a women’s retreat for informatics professionals connected to a national conference, several well attended events for the DC area’s Ethiopian community, as well as numerous staff meetings and office retreats. Among all of their projects completed during 2019, Monarc Construction selected their completed renovation of FMW as the site for their holiday party. Although November and December were unexpectedly slower than anticipated in terms of rental bookings, inquiries have picked up for January and beyond.

### **Major Business**

Nominating: Gene Throwe

Second presentation for:

- Bill Parker (A), Clerk, Hospitality
- Arlene Lutenegger (A), Marriage & Family Relations
- Tom Yonker (A), Ministry & Worship
- Jim Bell (M), Clerk of Marriage & Family

New Nominations:

- Chris Kearns McCoy (A), Peace & Social Concerns, 2022
- Jim Fussell (A), Peace & Social Concerns, 2022
- Joe Izzo (M), Ministry & Worship, 2022
- Ann Herzog (A), Ministry & Worship, 2022
  - This nomination will be held over for one month.
- Beth Cogswell (M), Membership, 2022

Friends approved all above nominations, with Ann Herzog's nomination held over for one month.

Resignation: Beth Cogswell from Peace and Social Concerns

Friends accepted Beth Cogswell's resignation.

Membership: Rob Farr, Second presentation, Frank Garvey,

Frank Garvey was presented for membership and approved.

2019 Annual Report

Rob Farr presented a list of both new and transfer members. Judy Hubbard has agreed to host a welcoming dinner for new members and a wide diversity of other Quakers to foster a more inclusive and intergenerational welcome.

Religious Education: Jake Ritting & Allen Fawcett, 2019 Annual Report, revised

There can be limited overlap between parents of young children/ members of Religious Education and Business Meeting attenders. A friend said she wished to offer support to the RE program. The RE program is working to have additional consistent volunteers. Child safety is working to develop a pool of "Second Adults" to assist as a presence during First Day School. Most volunteers are themselves parents of young children, and RE hopes to expand volunteers across different groups of people. A friend mentioned that he volunteered after being asked to share something specific and bringing his own experience to the children. Another friend discussed the spiritual and community benefits of her volunteering with RE.

Jacob Ritting and Allen Fawcett's work as co-clerk are minuted with gratitude.

Property Committee: Ken Orvis, Property Manager, Proposal to improve acoustics in Mtg Room

Ken Orvis discussed acoustic issues in the Meeting Room. Large Quaker Meetings have inherent acoustic issues, especially because the speaker can be seated in any portion of the room. Technology has caught up with the Quaker problem. The Property Committee has presented a quote for \$20,668 to upgrade the Meeting Space with three hanging tiles with embedded microphones. The sound from an activated microphone is amplified without echoes and background noise using a dedicated wifi system in the room, where hearing aids or headsets could connect. Members of the property committee tested and found this solution to be effective.

This is not within the Property Committee's current budget. It is proposed that this funding come out of the Meeting's general funds, with opportunities for additional donations from those who are able. \$3,000 have already been pledged for this project.

A friend heartfully mentioned his hearing difficulties and support for accessibility by funding this project through Meeting funds. He also mentioned that this as an opportunity for donations,

given that it's a project that will have a great impact. Regardless of fundraising, he believed we should still go forward with the project.

A friend asked about tonal differences in the voices the system is able to pick up and if the system has been used in local venues. The technology was developed for conference room settings, but the Property Committee is not sure if there is a local venue where this is in use. The system was designed to work with a variety of human voices, and the Property Committee didn't notice differences in amplifying lower and higher voices during their testing.

A friend asked about less expensive alternatives, especially given our current renovation debt. Property Committee responded that this may be the most effective option but that they have looked at other options for reducing background noise. Carpeting the room may raise additional problems. Combining other smaller solutions could cost over \$50,000.

A friend shared that some older friends have stopped coming to Meeting due to hearing difficulties. He shared that with a renovation focused on accessibility, we should continue our work to be more accessible. Another friend shared that we would not ask an elevator user to pay for the elevator, so we should not focus on fundraising for this effort from members who are most affected.

A friend asked if we could work with a telecommunications company for corporate sponsorship. Another friend responded that corporations don't often give to religious organizations.

The Meeting approved moving forward including specialized fundraising.

#### Change Committee: David Etheridge

David Etheridge presented queries to address structural racism at FMW. In Meeting for Worship with Concern for Business and Committee Meetings, the queries would be considered, preferably with some documentation while we make decisions.

A friend mentioned the power of queries within our Quaker tradition. He also shared the positive differences made at Pendle Hill when using similar queries. David Etheridge shared that the queries were developed with help from Pendle Hill and Friends General Conference, as well as Baltimore Yearly Meeting..

Friends approved the below queries to address structural racism.

These queries are a tool to help us become aware of the racism that is built into our culture and our Meeting, and work to heal it.

1. How will we provide opportunities for those most likely to be directly affected by the choices we are contemplating to influence the decision making process?
2. How could the choices we are contemplating affect those who have been harmed by systemic, institutional, interpersonal and/or internal racism?
3. To what degree have privilege, class, stereotypes, assumptions, and our ability to include other perspectives affected this decision making process?
4. How will the choices we are contemplating promote equity, diversity, and inclusiveness? Will they enable us to be more friendly and whole, engaging across racial divisions?
5. How do the choices we are contemplating support the declaration of our Yearly Meeting that we aspire to be an anti-racist faith community?

#### Personnel Committee: Bill Strein, Final changes to policy around hiring/firing



Bill Strein shared that Personnel Committee only has two members and is interested in additional members. As FMW has changed and grown, the personnel policies have needed updating. After responding to a specific instance with an employee, the Property Committee made the changes shown in the report below. Copies of the new personnel manual and changes are available online. Three employees are half time or more, and approximately 20 employees work less than half time. The committee welcomes further input from Friends.

## **ADDENDA: ATTACHED COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT: 2019**

Submitted by Rob Farr (clerk), Judy Hubbard (recording clerk), Janet Dinsmore, Gray Handley, Joe Izzo, Kathy Lipp-Farr, Zoe Plaughner, Marcia Reecer (members)

New Members: Betsy Bramon, Katie Breslin, Danielle (Dani) Carnes, Petra'Rahim Carnes, Joseph D'Antonio, Frank Garvey, Steve Chase.

Transfers to FMW: Amanda Nadeau, Rebecca Nelson.

Transfers to Other Meetings: Tara Tappert,

Sojourner Letters: Greyson Acquaviva

2019 was a busy year for Membership. On March 31 we held a welcoming reception to all members who joined FMW during the previous 18 months. Usually held annually, this had to be delayed because of the building renovation.

In the past the Committee asked established members of the Meeting to welcome new members by inviting them to their homes or taking them out to lunch. This seemingly simple task was often not accomplished in a timely manner because of conflicting schedules and members' travel plans. So, in order to ensure that every new member and transfer is properly welcomed, the Committee decided to hold a welcoming dinner whenever there were enough new members or transfers. We anticipate doing this twice a year, but could do it more often if needed. Unlike the annual welcomes in the Assembly room where all members who stay for refreshments attend, the guest list would be comprised of Quakers who have similar interests or backgrounds as our new members. The first welcome dinner was hosted on Nov. 17 by Judy Hubbard at her home and was considered a success by all who attended.

2019 was the last year for members Joe Izzo, Janet Dinsmore and our senior member, Marcia Reecer. We appreciate their many years of service to Membership, but know that their guidance and wisdom will remain with us and continue to be felt in other areas of the Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted on Jan. 5 2020

### **Annual Report of the Friends Meeting of Washington Religious Education Committee: 2019**

The following is the report of the Religious Education Committee of the Friends Meeting of Washington.

Our focus this year has been building a sustainable, parent and volunteer lead program to provide a Quaker religious education for our children.

Our program consists of four age groups: Nursery (0 to 4), Quakes (4 to ~8), Middle Group (~9 to ~13) and the Teens (~13 to 18).



The nursery is staffed with child care professionals lead by Kattora Enoch-Long on an interim basis during Makai Kellogg's absence for maternity leave.

The Quakes are being team-taught this year by a group including Julie Johnson, Earl Eutsler, Jessica Wolfey, Alison Snyder, Marissa Yeakey, and other volunteers

The Middle Group is being taught by Cait Hone, Marsha Holliday, and other volunteers.

The Teens are being taught by Virginia Avanesyan, Hannah Davidson, and Jacob Ritting, and other volunteers.

### Transition period

The program was in a challenging place this Spring.

Committee Clerk Shannon Hughes was in the process of moving to Germany with her family and would no longer be able to serve on the Committee. This was a big loss. Shannon served as Committee Clerk, and was also the lead teacher for the Quakes (ages 4-9) on a weekly basis. Her departure resulted in a loss of leadership, and left a major hole in the schedule every week that needed to be filled.

Michael Beer discontinued his role as Youth Coordinator.

And at the same time, Committee members Nicole Else-Quest and Susi Remold were also leaving the area and no longer able to serve on the Committee.

This left Rob Vaughn as the sole remaining Committee member, with Michael Beer, Cait Hone, and Virginia Avanesyan remaining as an *ex officio* members.

Allen Fawcett and Jacob Ritting, who were new to the Committee, immediately became Committee Clerks, and by default assumed the Youth Coordinator responsibilities, which included setting curriculum, recruiting teachers, and communicating with parents and other stakeholders. In addition, they assumed teaching responsibility to fill the gaps in the schedule, and were asked to implement the continuing obligations of the child safety policy, which includes obtaining background checks for volunteer teachers.

Soon thereafter, Makai Kellogg, who had been the lead nursery school person for several years, and responsible for supervising and scheduling the other nursery staff, departed for her maternity leave.

### Recognizing Cait Hone's contributions to the program this year

The one island of stability amidst this sea of change was Cait Hone. Cait was the lead teacher of the Middle group nearly every week, developed her own curriculum, and scheduled additional adults to be present to conform with the child safety policy.

In addition, Cait stepped up to a leadership role starting in the Spring, serving not as an *ex officio* member of the Religious Education Committee, but also playing a key role in scheduling lessons, determining curriculum, and coordinating volunteers.

The Religious Education Committee is very appreciative of Cait's dependability, the wonderful way she had of setting the kids at ease, her well-thought out lessons, her infectious good cheer, and the wonderful connections she formed with the kids. She was a tremendous asset to our Meeting. She made her lessons not only informative, but fun, and the kids loved being in her presence.

Cait let us know that she is ready to step back from her day to day teaching role starting in December. We are very appreciative of her contributions to the program.

## Developing this year's programming

The Committee held a series of meetings in the Spring and Summer to solicit input from parents and other stakeholders about the direction of the program.

Several themes emerged from these planning sessions.

First, a number of parents who wished to volunteer to teach, but felt they needed support in preparing to lead a class, in the form of curricula, lesson plans, or ideas for what to do, and wanted more advance scheduling notice to allow them to prepare themselves to teach.

A number of stakeholders expressed a desire for more content that more directly addressed Quaker religious testimonies and values.

A number of stakeholders expressed a desire for a welcoming environment where their kids felt comfortable, and that building bonds with the other children would greatly increase their kids comfort level, and their interest in regular attendance.

There was a sense that an organizing principle for this year's lessons could be the SPICES. This is an acronym used by Quaker educators to encapsulate an affirmative statement of Quaker testimonies and values. The acronym stands for the values of Simplicity, Peacefulness, Integrity, Community, Equality, and Stewardship.

There was also the sense that the Meeting's ongoing renovation project was an opportunity to talk about environmental stewardship as an important Quaker value.

Finally, discussion about various aspects of the child safety policy sidetracked several sessions that were scheduled to make decisions and plans about programming for the kids.

In addition to these thematic discussions, several offers to lead major programs emerged.

Marsha Holliday volunteered to teach a twelve session Quaker bible study program geared at the Middle Schoolers. She graciously offered to adapt the program to our "Middle group" which serves a broader age range than she had originally envisioned. This program is happening once per month this year, and will likely continue into next year.

Mark Haskell and Elise Stork donated money to hire sculptor Kevin Reese to design and build a mobile for the new stairway as a collaborative project with the kids. This program is underway and includes five sessions where the kids will design and build the mobile with Kevin's help and guidance. The group decided the piece will have themes of community and stewardship. The final session will be an intergenerational collaboration to hang and balance the piece. This project has been tremendous fun.

Luciaelena Sanchez offered to lead a Quaker choir. Choir practice has been taking place immediately at the rise of meeting.

Hannah Davidson offered to lead the teens discussion group this year, and Virginia Avanesyan offered to continue the teens cookie baking for grate patrol.

Several people offered to teach on a regular basis: Earl Eutsler, Jessica Wolfey, Alison Snyder, Julie Johnson, Luciaelena Sanchez, Emilie Schmiedler, and Elaine Wilson. In addition, Julie Johnson, Earl Eutsler, and Jessica Wolfey offered to collaboratively take responsibility for lesson planning for the Quakes.

## Our Program so far this year

We decided to continue to offer programming in three distinct age groups this year in addition to the nursery.

We planned out lessons for each First Day from August 25 through December, including curriculum and designated teachers for each class.

We began with a discussion of the SPICES and their meaning, as an overview.

We are now about halfway through the mobile project, led by Kevin Reese. To supplement that project, last weekend the group took a field trip to view the Calder mobiles on display at the National Gallery of Art.

Marsha Holliday has begun her Quaker bible studies course, which has been very well attended.

Earl Eutsler has shared his amazing knowledge of District plant life with the kids, including what parts of plants on the campus are edible (including red bud blossoms, and the berries growing outside the Quaker House, both of which are delicious).

We have included a table of some of the lessons taught this year at the end of this report.

We also instituted a weekly email to parents on Wednesday evenings. The email describes the lessons for the upcoming First Day so as to get people excited and to give parents a better idea about what is happening.

### Looking ahead

It is the goal of the Committee to get the program on a more sustainable path by continuing to re-organize the program around the skills, talents, abilities, and limitations of its existing pool of volunteers, and the resources that are available to them.

Since 2014, the Committee shifted a significant portfolio of responsibilities to a paid Youth Coordinator. We feel this has been detrimental to the overall health of the program for several reasons.

First, there has been consistent turnover in that position, requiring the group to spend considerable time and energy trying to find suitable replacement for that position, and leaving the program in limbo between hires. The time spent and energy spent on these activities comes at the expense of planning activities for the kids and recruiting volunteers. Second, the responsibilities and expectations placed on Coordinator far exceed what can be performed by a single person on a part time basis, leading to a significant disconnect between what is expected, and what is actually performed. Third, the need to recruit at least five other teachers (three for the Quakes and middle group and two for the teens) each week means that the program is still primarily a volunteer one.

Recognizing this, the Committee agreed the Winter/Spring of last year to attempt to hire three part time teachers instead of a paid Youth Coordinator. However, the Committee did not take any steps to advertise or hire teachers before the significant turnover in the Committee that occurred in the Spring. This is understandable given that recruiting, hiring and training paid staff is a very time intensive proposition, and the competing personal obligations of the Committee members at the time.

We think the better course of action is to (1) recognize that this is a program that depends primarily on volunteers, (2) attract as many volunteers to the program by making the experience of volunteering a positive one, and a supplement to one's worship, (3) realign the program to reflect these constraints so existing volunteers are not overtaxed and discouraged.

We would also like to have the budget available to us to supplement this pool of volunteers with opportunistic hires. We expect that this will occur organically as capable people emerge who are interested in taking on a more regular responsibility of teaching. One teacher we are currently attempting to hire is an art instructor to help with the Middle group this winter. Rob Vaughn is currently leading this effort.

A related issue is the challenges the program has in complying with its existing child safety policy that requires each activity to be staffed with two leaders who must submit paperwork to be designated an Adult Childcare Giver, including passing a criminal background check. In planning out their lessons, the program leaders need to consult a database of Adult Childcare Givers and track if they have enough adults in the room with this status and renew the status as needed. This introduces an additional level of complexity to the already difficult task of recruiting and retaining volunteers and planning lessons.

In practice, the co-clerks of RE have been administering this paperwork to prospective teachers on the spot, so as not to lose the moment when they are interested in volunteering, and relaying it to the Administrative Secretary, which has been an additional burden on them and has meant that they need to protect the prospective teacher's personal information. While the co-clerks of RE question the usefulness of the background check—which only reveals prior criminal convictions—and requiring prospective volunteers to submit verification of employment and references in actually keeping our children safe, they recognize that this question touches on the work of other committees. A more active role from the Child Safety Committee in both facilitating the process of becoming an Adult Childcare Giver and staffing the RE program with the additional Adult Childcare Givers needed for the child safety policy would help greatly in alleviating these challenges.

Finally, volunteers need to be given a chance to recharge and refresh themselves. As recently as five years ago, the program took a break for the summer. Many families travel during the summer, so we have consistently had fewer children attending, while also having fewer volunteers available to lead and supervise first day school. Given the challenges presented by summer first day school, and the limited participation, we think this summer break should be reinstated.

Members of the Religious Education Committee:

Allen Fawcett (co-clerk)  
Jacob Ritting (co-clerk)  
Danielle Carnes  
Letty Coffin  
Julie Johnson  
Roseanna Stanton  
Rob Vaughn  
Marissa Yeakey  
Virginia Avenesyan (ex officio)  
Michael Beer (ex officio)  
Cait Hone (ex officio)

Other Key Contributors to the children's program this year:

Marsha Holliday  
Earl Eutlser  
Jessica Wolfey  
Luciaelena Sanchez  
Alison Snyder  
Emilie Schmiedler  
Hannah Davidson  
Meg Greene  
Elaine Wilson  
Ken Orvis  
Bob Meehan

## Activities

Easter story/Easter Egg Hunt  
Clagett Farm trip  
Seed starting exercise  
Rainbow flag creation project  
Discussion of the vegetation, including edible fruit, on the campus  
Summer play  
Origami boats  
Paper airplanes  
Boomerangs  
Chalk Art  
Sandy Spring Adventure Park (Teens)  
SPICES chart  
Quaker songs with Luciaelena  
Mobile project with Kevin Reese  
Baking cookies for grate patrol (Teens)  
Marsha Holladay's monthly bible study class (Middle group)  
Tour of new facilities with the Property Committee  
National Gallery of Art field trip  
Teen discussion classes  
Greta Thunberg  
Seneca: On the Shortness of Life

## **Personnel Committee's Proposals for Revisions to FMW Employment Policies**

In June 2019 the Personnel Committee was asked to review and revise, where necessary, FMW's employment policies, particularly regarding the hiring, evaluation and, when necessary, the termination of employees. The Personnel Committee presented a detailed outline of proposed revisions at July's 2019 Meeting for Business. Some members indicated that there was not enough time to review these proposals and that the format presented at the July meeting did not provide sufficient comparison to current policy. Personnel subsequently revised its proposed revisions in the form of revised text embedded in the current text of FMW's *Statement of Employment Policies and Procedures* using common methods for indicating revisions to a document. The Personnel Committee solicited comments from members/attenders via FMW's listserv. Five people responded. Personnel has considered those comments, as well as verbal comments made at the July MfB, and has revised its proposals.

Below is a brief summary of major proposed revisions. Other revisions are largely minor changes in wording. The full current policy document with proposed mark-ups is being distributed via the listserv.

### **Policy/Procedure: Employment Status:**

**Current:** The Administrative Secretary is hired on an annual contract. All other employees are hired "at will"

**Proposed:** The employment status of the Administrative Secretary and other employees remains unchanged. Text is added to make clear that, although employees may report to a committee, all such persons are employees of FMW as an organization and all employment actions are taken by FMW as an organization.

### **Policy/Procedure: Hiring, Evaluation and Termination of Employment: General**

**Current:** No current, general section. Except with regard to the Administrative Secretary, for which both the Employment Policies Statement and the Meeting Handbook provide much detail, there is little written policy regarding other employees.

**Proposed:** Administrative Secretary - Unchanged except for: (1) change in terminology from “Termination for Cause” to “Termination for Failure to Perform” (hiring, annual evaluation and potential termination remain with the Committee of Clerks); (2) in the case of termination, severance pay is increased from a uniform two weeks to additional severance based on length of service.

All other employees: (1) diversity in hiring statement added; (2) all employees receive a formal, written offer of employment; (3) all employees are evaluated at least annually; (4) termination for conduct – any employee may be suspended or terminated for “unethical, illegal or conduct detrimental to the Friends Meeting of Washington” or for violation of the Child Safety Policy as determined by the Child Safety Committee; employees terminated for conduct receive no severance pay.

**Policy/Procedure: Hiring, Evaluation and Termination of Employees, Half-Time or More (excluding the Administrative Secretary)**

**Current:** Current policy references this only minimally.

**Proposed:** Hiring – requires a Review Committee that includes members of the committee to which the employee reports and a member of the Personnel Committee.

Probationary Period – all new employees have a one-year probationary period during which they receive quarterly written evaluations.

Annual evaluations – after the probationary period, written evaluations are conducted at least annually.

Termination – after the probationary period if the employee’s performance is deemed to be unsatisfactory, a member of the supervising committee and the Personnel Committee must meet with the employee and develop a written plan for improvement. If the employee’s performance continues to be unsatisfactory as determined jointly by the supervising committee and the Personnel Committee the employee may be dismissed with severance pay based on length of service.

**Policy/Procedure: Hiring, Evaluation and Termination of As-Needed Employees**

**Current:** Current policy references this only minimally.

**Proposed:** “As-needed” employees are defined as those working only occasionally, for example, event hosts.

Hiring – may be hired by the committee or the individual (ex: the Property Manager) to whom the employee reports without a formal Review Committee.

Evaluation – must be evaluated annually but may be by a committee or individual supervisor.

Termination – that is, being dropped from the pool of available employees; may be done by a committee or individual supervisor but “in conjunction with” the Personnel Committee.

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