

# FMW Newsletter, 7.2016

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**Friends Meeting of Washington**

**Order of Worship**

**Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business**

**June 2016**

**Queries**

Do you make your home a place of affection where God's presence is felt? Do you practice family prayer? Do you share your deepest beliefs and interests with all in the family? Do you grow together through sharing prosperity and adversity? Can you keep a sense of humor and avoid taking yourself too seriously? Do you establish family standards including the mutual obligations of children and adults?

Are you as children learning to be accountable for your own actions? Do you as parents help your children to grow in independence and responsibility? Do you consider the needs of grandparents and older members of the family circle?

## **Advices**

...we need to be mindful of those who, for any reason, live alone. While such individuals often live rich, full lives and contribute much to others, they need to be particularly included in all aspects of the Meeting, for frequently the Meeting is their family. Times and places should be provided for them to find and know each other. Single young adults need reassurance as they make life choices, which may run counter to parental or societal pressures. We also need to be aware of circumstances such as illness or unusual stress, in which those living alone may require assistance or companionship.

Our Meetings and communities are composed of persons who live in many kinds of home situations. All of us as individuals, as well as our Meetings collectively, need to create an atmosphere that is accepting, supportive and caring toward all the persons in our midst, whatever their domestic groupings, enabling all of us to grow and share with each other.

- Faith and Practice

## **Voices**

Sensitivity is the art above all that we need to cultivate. I feel this with great force because I am still trying to learn it. I recall with sadness my insensitivity years ago to the difficulties of one of my closest friends. His marriage was breaking up and although I saw him regularly during the period, I was completely unaware of his unhappiness. With such a lesson in my background, I should have learnt by now – yet I still manage to tread hard on tender toes. All this makes me even more certain that if we are to speak to others, we first need to learn to listen to them with sensitivity.

- George Gorman, 1981

## **2016/6-1 Welcome of Visitors**

Meeting for Business opened at 12:20 pm with 23 Friends present. Friends welcomed Robert McMahon as a first-time attender to our Meeting for Business.

## **2016/6-2 Clerk's Report**

- The clerks were introduced and Friends were reminded that generally Friends do not speak more than once concerning an issue.
- Sharon Thompson's health from her struggle with cancer has gradually improved but she is unfortunately not quite well enough to go on a trip planned to England with Grant. Friends are asked to hold her and her family in the Light.
- Martha Solt is undergoing chemotherapy and a Caring Bridge page has been set up to share information. No visitors, but Friends are asked to hold her and her family in the Light.
- Mary Campbell has been a wonderful resource with her medical knowledge for Martha and others in the Meeting and we are grateful.

- There will be a Memorial Meeting for long time attender Al Scott on June 18<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am, followed by people going to Capitol Hill for the peace vigil of which he was such a vital part for so many years.
- The discernment regarding a change in the Meeting's alcohol policy will continue in the form of two threshing sessions: one from 7 to 8 on Wednesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>; the other from 1 to 2 on Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup>.

## Major items

### 2016/6-3 Spiritual State of the Meeting

Greg Robb, member of Ministry and Worship, presented the Spiritual State of the Meeting, a copy of which is attached. A different process of an on-line survey and five focus groups was used this year with the result that many felt produced deeper insights and some positive directions in which to move forward. The Ministry and Worship committee is planning a meeting on the last Sunday in July and again in September to think about how the meeting will be moving forward.

The survey talked about Friends' core values and how they viewed the Meeting and the challenges the Meeting faced.

A member asked how the committee defined stewardship. The committee was asking the community how they defined it, rather than how they reacted to a definition created by the committee.

A member asked if the committee came away with a sense that the community was discouraged either by Quakerism or our community. The committee didn't feel Friends were discouraged but that they wanted to have a discussion of fundamental issues of Friends' values.

A member suggested that we reach out to people who were formerly with the Meeting.

A member wanted to know more about stewardship. He feels there is a difference between supporting greening, which is abstract, and concretely supporting the greening work of the meeting. Was there any sense of why so many care about one and not the other? There was a sense of people grappling with these issues without really knowing what to do. A member noted that the responses gave a sense of practical rather than spiritual response. There was no surge of positive energy from the report. Rather the message seemed to be, "Okay we will go on, but we are just this little band."

The committee found reluctance among individuals to reflect their beliefs in their daily lives in the outside world. There is a reluctance to be evangelical.

The report will be held over for a month.

#### **2016/6-4** Nominating Committee

Todd Harvey, clerk of Nominating Committee, noted that treasurer and assistant treasurers are nominated in July so they brought this forward in June.

He presented the nomination of Bob Meehan, member, as Treasurer for an additional term after having already served five consecutive years.

This nomination was held over as it requires a waiver from the normal term limits of term for officers of the Meeting.

#### **2016/6-5** Marriage and Family Relations

Tim Olabi, clerk of Marriage and Family Relations, presented for the first reading the proposed marriage of attendee Jane Connor and Robert McMahon under the care of the Meeting. The wedding is planned for September 24, 2016 at the River Road Unitarian Church.

The request will be held over for one month.

#### **2016/6-6** Property Committee Update

Merry Pearlstein and Brian Lutenegger, co-clerks of the Property Committee, reported on continuing events concerning our Meeting space; a copy of their memo is attached. They noted an up-tick in event rentals of the Meeting House and that a positive result of the loss of one of our long-time tenants was the opportunity to fix the bathroom in the Carriage House. The Meeting consulted with an events planner who made suggestions for our space. There will be gender-neutral signage on single-user

restrooms and pictorial signage for the multiuser restrooms. The Meeting is planning on installing leased solar panels to reduce both our carbon foot print and our utility costs.

A member requested that they look into who is providing the solar panels as many of them are built by slave prison labor in Oregon. A member asked if the Historic Preservation Review Board was involved in the solar panel discussions and it was noted that has been looked in to already. A member noted that he had done collaborative solar panels and wondered if we have looked at the co-op model. He also wondered the payoff time period on the panels. It was noted that the panels are being paid over time and we will own them outright after 12 or 15 years. The cooperatives are generally only for residential installation of solar panels.

Generally we expect the cost of electricity will be reduced by more than the monthly fee so we should come out ahead.

#### **2016/6-7** Personnel Committee annual report

Bill Foskett, clerk of Personnel Committee, presented its annual report, a copy of which is attached. He noted that our administrative secretary, Debby Churchman, brings diligence, competence, imagination and love to our Meeting. The committee recommends to Finance and Stewardship to raise her salary by the amount of the originally proposed bonus.

The Meeting minutes its appreciation of the work of our administrative secretary, Debby Churchman.

Friends **ACCEPTED** the report.

#### **2016/6-8** Religious Education Committee annual report

Michael Beer, member of Religious Education Committee and Youth Program Coordinator, presented its annual report, a copy of which is attached. He noted the many activities of the thriving First Day School at the Meeting. Friends have enjoyed being made part of the young Friends activities at the rise of Meeting on many First Days under the direction of our Youth Coordinator. Our children and adults have also been active in the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Youth programs. He also reported on the many opportunities for Adult Religious Education. An opportunity to spend a year learning about sexuality via a Unitarian program—which was roundly refused by the tweens and teens—may instead be presented for the adults in the coming year.

A member asked how Michael's life was changed by being the Coordinator. He would like to change the language from First Day School to Meeting for Learning because there is a lot of learning for him and the adults as well as the kids involved. He has found it very enriching. A Friend expressed gratitude for all the work he has done for the Meeting.

Friends **ACCEPTED** the report.

### **2016/6-9 Membership**

Janet Dinsmore, clerk of Membership committee, brought the membership request of Mary Melchior for a second reading. She is a long-time attender among Friends.

Friends **APPROVED** the request for membership.

She also brought the membership request of Zoe Plaugher for first reading. Zoe is a graduate student who has found FMW as a spiritual home since 2010. The difficult events of the last year highlight the value of the community and aided in her growth and in the growth of the Meeting. She finds safety in our collective silence but now knows we all bear responsibility for our ministry. She has attended other Meetings but FMW reaches her in a deeper way from the first time she attended.

This request will be held over for one month.

A Friend asked if Mary Melchior had requested associate membership for her children. The committee will follow up with Mary Melchior.

### **2016/6-10 Finance and Stewardship**

Ed Husted, Financial Coordinator, presented for the Finance and Stewardship Committee the second presentation of the FY 17 budget and a copy of our Asset and Liabilities Statement, both of which are attached. He noted that our contributions continue to go down. Building revenue is expected to go down with the renovation, so that too has been a struggle. We try to raise more than we spend so that we have a reserve, but this is not happening. Because of this struggle the money given to other organizations was reduced and it was decided to budget for half the request for money for new furniture.

A Friend asked about in-kind contributions. The Financial Coordinator noted that in-kind contributions do not affect the bottom line.

If things do not improve there may have to be additional cuts later in the year and Finance and Stewardship will return to Meeting for Business to make these requests if need be.

Friends **APPROVED** the budget.

## **Milestones**

### **2016/6-11**

J. E. McNeil presented a memorial minute for member Joan Gildemeister, a copy of which is attached. A member noted how thoughtful Joan was and how she would bring many important ideas together. In spite of the description in the minute of the things she owned, she had a lack of attachment to things and a willingness to live her values.

Friends **APPROVED** the minute.

**2016/6-11** Friends **APPROVED** the minutes as improved.

**2016/5-10** The Meeting closed at 2:10 pm with approximately 19 persons in attendance to reconvene as Way opens on July 17, 2016.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

### **Friends Meeting of Washington**

#### **Spiritual State of the Meeting 2016**

#### **REPORT – June 12, 2016**

### **Background**

The idea for a new approach to the Spiritual State of the Meeting (SSOM) survey in 2016 originated in events of 2015. The SSoM report adopted in the spring of that year identified a tension in Friends Meeting of Washington between “long-timers” in the Meeting who had been attending ten years or more, and relative “newcomers” who are often unsure of “how things work and how they can fit in.”

Awareness of this tension was heightened in mid-2015 when incidents of inappropriate behavior and harassment on the part of one Friend came to the attention of the broader Meeting. These incidents, which had been ongoing for some time, were thought to evidence problems in communication and problem-solving between older and young adult Friends. One dimension of this challenge was the fact that, in addition to personal communication, digital and social media had been used as a tool for the troubling behavior.

In response, in their October 2015 annual report, the Committee on Ministry and Worship recommended the creation of a Futures Task Force to identify ways to better bridge the generational gap and make recommendations to carry the Meeting into a future that is more diverse, digital, and dynamic than any Quakers have ever experienced before.

## **Process**

Members of Ministry and Worship designed a 15-question closed-ended survey intended to lay the groundwork for a more substantive discussion about the Meeting in the Future. M&W made the survey available to members and attenders of FMW online via Survey Monkey. Hard copies were also available. A total of 91 people responded to the survey – a richer number than in recent previous years.

Once the initial survey results had been tallied, and following the custom of 2015, M&W convened a series of 5 focus groups in order to gain additional perspective from Friends on some of the findings. These focus groups included Friends of all ages and were extremely helpful in expanding our understanding.

One of the most important messages from the focus groups is that Friends would like to have ongoing opportunities to dialogue about issues such as the ones that emerged from the SSoM survey. They feel that regular (monthly, semi-monthly?) opportunities to get together for substantive conversations will be much more beneficial to the Meeting's spiritual health than a once-a-year survey that is presented, discussed, adopted, and then put on the shelf.

## **Summary**

The Friends Meeting of Washington survey and focus groups illuminated a community that is remarkably diverse, but also grounded in a shared understanding of several key principles and testimonies. This draft report presents six themes that illustrate this diversity and commonality.

- 1. Integrity and equality are foundational Quaker testimonies.**
- 2. Stewardship will be increasingly important in the future.**
- 3. We do not expect that Friends will have a great impact in the world of the future.**
- 4. Our inspiration comes from many sources – well beyond traditional Quaker works.**
- 5. Our spiritual practices focus inward and outward.**
- 6. The Society of Friends – and FMW -- face external and internal challenges to growth.**



Preceding each theme in the body of this report is a quotation cited in the survey or focus groups. Following each theme is a query that may be used for further dialogue and illumination.

Text Box: “There is that of God in everyone.” Nine of every ten of us agree.

**Themes**

### **Integrity and equality are foundational Quaker testimonies.**


When asked to weigh each of six Quaker testimonies, more Friends selected “integrity” and “equality” as important than any other. We asked Friends to elaborate in our focus groups. They emphasized that integrity and equality are not necessarily higher in rank than the other testimonies; rather they are foundational. They underpin everything we believe and do. They keep us grounded. One Friend pointed out that we are Seekers of Truth, and integrity is a by-product of living in the Truth.

A majority of those responding to the survey indicated that the Quaker testimony on “simplicity” was less important. And yet, simplicity was cited as being “very difficult to implement” by more of us than any of the other testimonies. It also received the “worst” rating in terms of how the world we live in respects our principles.

Queries:

What does “equality” mean in an interconnected global community with members of so many races, ethnicities, languages, cultural backgrounds, sexualities and gender identities, abilities / disabilities, income levels, ages? What does it mean in the community that is our Meeting?

In this world, have we given up on “simplicity,” or do we need to spend some time as a community redefining it in today’s context? How can we (should we?) let our lives speak?

Text Box: “The best recreation is to do good.” Four of ten of us agree. An equal number say “probably.”

### **Stewardship will be increasingly important in the future.**

More than two-thirds of us indicated on the survey that the Quaker testimony of “stewardship” is not very important. And yet, an equal share of us believe that stewardship will become more important in the future. None of the other testimonies was considered to be increasing in importance by as many of us as was stewardship.

In the focus groups, Friends emphasized that stewardship is important in terms of the environment, but it also means taking care of the Meeting – financially, spiritually, and by nurturing and mentoring others.

Queries: What does “stewardship” mean in today’s world of finite resources (energy, land, clean water, food, money, time, talent, more)? What aspects will become more important in the future? Will we be challenged most directly at the personal, Meeting, community, national, or global level?

 Text Box: “I believe in the light of Love.” Three of every four of us agree.


**We do not expect that Friends will have a**

**great impact in the world of the future.**

The survey asked whether Quakers as a group will have an “important” impact, a “little” impact, or “no” impact on each of testimonies in the next ten years. Across all testimonies, the vast weight of responses was in the “a little” impact category. Friends were most likely to believe that we will have an impact on peace and equality over the next ten years – although this was true for fewer than one-third of us. When asked to assess the future influence of Quakers on all six testimonies, approximately one of seven of us said “I don’t know.”

In the focus groups, Friends pointed out that “largely silent meetings are not always nourishing.” Our Meeting is a place we can go to in order to restore “our connection with our values.” There are people in the Meeting who exemplify these core values; they let their lives speak? “What happened to the FMW of 1968 and radical activism?”

Query: Do our responses to this question indicate a lack of confidence? Lack of inspiration? Too many things on our plates? Or do Quakers choose to let our lives speak through activism in organizations and causes outside the Meeting?

 Text Box: “There is more to spiritual life than complying with the rules and practices of a church.” More of us agree with this statement than with any other on the survey.

**Our inspiration comes from many sources – well beyond traditional Quaker works.**

Friends find spiritual inspiration and nourishment from many different sources. When asked what is “central to our lives,” more of us selected the teachings of Jesus, Mysticism, and Christianity than any other source. The teachings of Jesus were also cited as being “inspirational” to more than half of us – following the source of inspiration selected by an even greater number of Friends: the teachings of Buddha. Other sources of inspiration included Taoism and Judaism.

More than three-quarters of us “mostly disagree” with Fundamentalist and Evangelical Christianity – a more negative rating than was received by any other spiritual resource.

One-third or more of us indicated that we simply do not know much about Hinduism, Islam, Taoism, or the teachings of Moses.

Query: Are these various perspectives in tension in our community? Are there ways we can ensure they enhance our communal spiritual experience?

 Text Box: “I am seeking continuous revelation.” Almost seven of every ten of us agree.

**Our spiritual practices focus inward and outward.**

Friends were asked how we enhance our spiritual lives. The responses were quite diverse and reflected an emphasis on both inward and outward expressions of faith. Half or more of all Friends said that we

provide service to others; read philosophy, ethics, or spiritual writings; meditate regularly; meet socially with friends; study social issues; and pray. Fewer Friends participate in activities customary within other denominations, such as studying the Bible, fasting, or seeking to attract others to our faith.

In the focus groups conducted after the survey, examples of faith in action provided by Young Adult Friends were the most animated and wide-ranging. Young Friends illustrated their views with personal examples related to how we work, what we buy, what we eat, what we own, how we live, how we view global and national events, how we tap into talents, how we relate to one another.

Query: Do we foster and nourish an ongoing exchange of spiritual experiences and perspectives between older and younger Friends? Are there things we could do more or better?

 Text Box: “Those who are guided by the light of God are one.” Three of every ten of us agree, but four of ten said “No” or “I don’t know.”

## **The Society of Friends – and FMW -- faces external and internal challenges to growth.**


We asked why there are so few Quakers compared to other faith groups, and Friends answered both broadly and specifically. Half or more of us feel that people in general are growing more secular in their thinking, people who enjoy silence are not good at marketing themselves to others, and many people still have a stereotypical image of Quakers.

A significant number of us also referenced two concerns about our own meeting, which have come up repeatedly in previous surveys and discussions. One such issue involves vocal ministry that is jarring and spiritually unsettling – or as one Friend put it, “intempestive” – and that discourages newcomers from ever coming back.

Another issue is that “meetings are so tolerant that they tolerate bad behavior and harassment.” One Friend in a focus group said that “we live in denial, and don’t want to hear about these things.” Another challenged that “we need to equip ourselves better with communication and integrity.”

Query: These challenges have come up in different forms, but repeatedly, in SSoM surveys of recent years. What do we need to do differently to address them, or are we content to live with them as they are?

## **Recommendations**

 Text Box: “Opting out is not a neutral choice.” “We have to make imperfect decisions in an imperfect world.” Observations from the Young Adult Friends Focus Group

We encourage Friends Meeting of Washington to use the results of the SSoM process to

stimulate ongoing dialogue about ways in which individual Quakers and our Meeting can let our lives speak in the dynamic future that already surrounds us. Those who participated in our focus groups asked for regular opportunities to get together and discuss the issues that emerged. We believe that

this is a very good idea, which will be enriched by the full participation of both long-time members and new-comers, and by those of all ages. Perhaps the queries presented in this report can provide starting points. There are many more, for sure.

## **Update from the FMW Property Committee**

June, 2016

Since we presented our annual report in April, there have been several developments Friends may find of interest.

Bookings for special events are on the uptick, with a variety of groups meeting here and providing encouraging feedback. It is too early to know whether this is a seasonal, temporary increase or a long term trend. Event rental income for the fiscal year ending this month should total just over \$65,000. While this is less than the \$88,500 budgeted (when we anticipated continued use by Fluent City), it gives us confidence we can meet the \$70,000 budgeted for FY 2017. We are grateful for the work of Debby Churchman, events manager, and Brian Lutenegger, who has helped expand marketing through various listings.

There have been several changes among our long-term tenants. Tostan has vacated Carriage House, and much of that space has now been leased to current tenants City Dogs Rescue and Ginkgo Street Labs, who will be vacating their smaller but more rentable spaces in Quaker House. Available spaces are being advertised on Craig's List and other media, and property manager Ken Orvis reports someone has expressed interest in an office in Quaker House.

The committee has decided to take advantage of the temporary vacancy of Carriage House by making much needed repairs to the second floor bathroom where a leaking toilet mount has resulted in damage to the underlying floor and enabled effluvia to penetrate first floor spaces on occasion. An unused bathtub will be removed as part of this repair and renovation. This work may cost up to \$10,000. We are also getting bids to refinish the floor on the upper level.

Members of the committee met recently with an event planner who toured our spaces and provided input concerning desired improvements and marketability. The committee has authorized architect Evan Lippincott to consider, in further consultation with event planners, and sketch various design options to make the first floor of the Meetinghouse (particularly the Assembly Room) more desirable for our own use as well as more marketable for receptions. His study will consider estimated costs of these options as well as potential increases in event rental income. Evan will perform this study for \$3,000.

We are changing to gender-neutral signage for some of our restrooms.

At the request of many FMW members and attenders, the committee has been exploring the possibility of solar energy in recent months. We are nearing agreement with Solar Solution LLC to install solar panels on the west side of the Meetinghouse roof via a 15-year Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). After 15 years, FMW will own the system. Solar Solution has worked with a number of other religious communities in the area and the references have been overwhelmingly positive.

Solar Solution estimates that the 26.01 kW system they install will be able to generate approximately 45% of our overall power usage. The PPA requires a down payment of \$250 as well as a fixed monthly

payment of approximately \$146. Since our Pepco bill will also be reduced, we expect an overall reduction of our electricity costs each month. Solar Solution estimates savings of approximately \$1,600 in the first year and average annual savings in excess of \$1,900 during the PPA. Equally important, we will keep approximately 33 tons of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere each year. The Property Committee will reconfirm with Solar Solution the exact amounts payable under the PPA. However, we believe that we will come out ahead by installing this solar power system in terms of both our financial wellbeing and our sustainability footprint.

We will keep you informed of other relevant developments as they occur. As always, we welcome Friends' questions and suggestions.

## **Annual Report of the Personnel Committee of Friends Meeting of Washington**

June 12, 2016

The Personnel Committee is tasked to recruit, recommend and oversee the Administrative Secretary for FMOW. Personnel Committee prepares the position description for the Administrative Secretary and reviews and recommends compensation and benefits. Members of Personnel Committee and the Administrative Secretary also confer as need arises regarding matters for which way forward may not be clear, resources or training needed and working conditions. Personnel Committee reviews the performance of the Administrative Secretary annually. Committee members are Bill Strein, Jim Steen and Bill Foskett (Clerk).

Decisions to enter or renew Meeting's contract with the Administrative Secretary are recommended by Personnel Committee and made by the Committee of Clerks with consent of Meeting for Business. Personnel Committee works closely with Finance and Stewardship in matters regarding compensation and benefits.

Personnel Committee does not oversee the work of Laurie Wilner or Ken Orvis, who coordinate directly with the Finance and Stewardship Committee and the Property Committee. Our committees consult each other to assure that our treatment of Meeting staff is fair and consistent.

During FMOW FY16 Personnel Committee conferred with Finance and Stewardship in offering the Administrative Secretary and other FMOW staff relief when changes in District of Columbia parking enforcement began to impose expensive fines on them while working on-site. Our committees also collaborated to adjust health insurance arrangements as individual staff became eligible for Medicare. We are grateful for the expertise and insight that other committees have brought to these matters, for their help to Personnel Committee and for our staff's patience as we reached unity on these matters.

In Spring, 2016, Personnel Committee began our annual review of the work of the Administrative Secretary by considering the impact of changes in the current and future challenges of this job. The Committee agreed, in consultation with Finance and Stewardship, that the bonus component of the Administrative Secretary salary should be incorporated into the base salary for this position in FY17. We recognized that the exact criteria for award of the bonus were unclear to us and that anticipated construction will make it much more difficult for the Administrative Secretary to market our unused space to outside organizations and individuals. We also conferred with Finance and Stewardship to recommend a cost-of-living increase in the Administrative Secretary's annual salary in accordance with federal regulations regarding overtime.

We also asked FMOW committee clerks, officers and conveners of other permanent or ad hoc groups within FMOW to share their experiences in working with the Administrative Secretary during the

year. Personnel Committee reviews their observations and then meets with the Administrative Secretary to discuss the Secretary's self-assessment of the year's work, working conditions and expectations and needs during the coming FMOW fiscal year. We completed our FY16 review in May, 2016. We appreciate the insights and experiences Friends shared with us and for the insights the Administrative Secretary offered. We are very grateful for the diligence, competence, imagination and love that our Administrative Secretary, Debby Churchman, brings to our lives.

## **Report of the Religious Education Committee for June 2015-June 2016**

**Committee members:** Kim Acquaviva (Clerk), Michael Beer, Betsy Bramon, Jane Connor, Anita Drever, Nicole Else-Quest, Carl Johnson, Carrie Mitchell, Virginia Avanesyan (Youth Program Coordinator and *ex officio* committee member)

The Religious Education committee cares deeply for the spiritual lives of the children in our Meeting and we rejoice in how much they bring life and Spirit to our Meeting. FDS and youth programs at Friends Meeting of Washington have continued to grow and deepen in the twelve months since our last report, thanks to the ongoing commitment of our community. The following describes our progress and programming during the period from June 2015 through June 2016:

### **Nursery – Head of Nursery: Makai Kellogg**

The Meeting offers child care to our littlest attenders – those from birth through 4 years of age -each week during 10:30 Meeting for Worship as well as during the monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business. Our nursery continues to serve a growing body of Quaker families and visitors to FMW, thanks to the ongoing leadership of Makai Kellogg, Childcare/Nursery Coordinator. Makai supervises all staff in the nursery and ensures the hygiene and physical safety of the nursery environment in addition to welcoming families in the sensitive and warm manner we have become accustomed to. Our nursery is well staffed a rotating team of paid caregivers providing care to a growing number of young children in the Meeting. We continue to provide skilled childcare for special events at FMW and are grateful to the Meeting for approving the Religious Education budgets that have made this possible. We are also deeply appreciative of Makai Kellogg for her work as Head of Nursery. Her energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to providing exceptional care to the Meeting's children are priceless gifts.

### **Lower Elementary – Coordinators: Carrie Mitchell and Anita Drever**

The Lower Elementary, the "Quakes"(LE) class at First Day Program supports the religious education of children ages 4 to 7 years old. This group has an average attendance of 10 children of FMW members and attenders, as well as parents of School for Friends. Many parents join the sessions. There are always two teachers for each class. We start our program together with Upper Elementary by lighting a candle and having a silent worship in a circle. We typically have introductions and then engage in activities. Stories often serve as an anchor with craft/art projects that follow.

### **Upper Elementary – Coordinators: Michael Beer and Virginia Avanesyan.**

The Upper Elementary (UE) group focuses on the religious education of children ages 8 to 11years old. Attendance has averaged about 4. There are always two adult leads/teachers for every First Day, and

we continue to have a number of volunteers who help make the UE class a dynamic and Spirit-filled learning community for our youth. Activities this year included making a video on climate change, inventing a game called Quaker Bingo, exploring ethical values, baking every third Sunday and leading the birthday celebration for the meeting, watching videos about Quaker history, learning and performing songs, yoga, and making cards.

### **Overview of Programming in Lower and Upper Elementary Classes**

Programming for elementary and pre-k children was rich and varied. Yoga, Quaker history, Music, Service Projects, and making films on Climate change, peace and inventing a Quaker board game. A longer list of activities is available at the end of this report. Our youth benefited greatly from the knowledge, experience, and passion shared by our special guests, and we are deeply appreciative of the gifts of time, talent, and Spirit each of them shared with our youth.

### **Junior Young Friends/Tweens & Teens – Coordinator: Kim Acquaviva**

This year the Junior Young Friends group (AKA “Tweens and Teens”) invested considerable time and energy into getting to know one another more deeply. In the third-floor “teen lounge” where we meet, the Tweens & Teens engaged in a multi-week “Philosophy for Quakers” workshop facilitated by Carl Johnson, learning how to pose and answer philosophical questions. One week, the Tweens & Teens spent First Day morning at DC Central Kitchen preparing food for local institutions (including homeless shelters, senior centers, and schools). This year the Tweens & Teens also: played board games to build community; talked about consent, sexual assault, and the significance of these issues to youth as Quaker; discussed ways to share their gifts and energy with the Meeting as a whole; talked about the testimony of integrity, swearing oaths, and telling lies; participated in outdoor Meeting for Worship; assisted with the Easter egg hunt; volunteered at the Shoebox Project; and learned about the Peace Tax Fund from J.E. McNeil. Although there are always two or more adults present, the Tweens & Teens Group continues to evolve toward being a youth-led experience. It’s been a joy to watch the tweens and teens grow in their quest to figure out who they are, how they fit within the world as a whole, and how they can use their gifts to make that world a better place. The Tweens & Teens give particular thanks to the steadfast volunteers who have given their time, energy, and enthusiasm to the group throughout the year.

### **Multi-generational Meeting for Learning.**

Every 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month, all kids joined a multi-generational meeting for learning. Events included: a neighborhood cleanup and nature walk, Coins for Quoins to raise funds for the meeting, making cards to hold people in the Light, and singing a song for the Meeting.

### **Baltimore Yearly Meeting**

Our Yearly Meeting (BYM) continues to have a very active youth program that includes regular weekend retreats at Monthly Meetings throughout BYM for those in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade – Junior Young Friends – (see <http://jyf.bym-rsf.net>) and those aged 14-20 – Young Friends – (see: <http://yf.bym-rsf.net/>). The BYM programs enable the teens to get to know other younger Friends from all over the area while practicing lived Quakerism through the regular retreats they have. The next gathering for both Young Friends and Junior Young Friends is Annual Session (<http://www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession>). It takes place from August 3<sup>rd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> at Hood College. Rising 6-8th graders stay in dorm rooms with their parents, but gather throughout each day for various activities. Rising 9th graders have the choice of participating in the middle school program or the high school program. Rising 10-12th graders and FAPs stay in rooms all on the same floor, and build a lived community like a conference. If they are 18 years old, high school graduates have the



choice of participating in the high school program, or the Young Adult Program (18-35 years old). Friends may contact Alison Duncan, BYM Youth Programs Manager, at [youthprograms@bym-rsf.org](mailto:youthprograms@bym-rsf.org) for more information.

### **Adult Religious Education Study Group – Coordinated by John Scales**

During the past 12 months, the study group met generally once or twice a month on Sundays before the Meeting for Worship. It benefitted by the contributions of new, as well as long-standing members, as they shared in their readings and led discussions.

Over more than a decade of its meetings, it has considered a wide range of topics of interests chosen to enhance appreciation of contributions Quakers and others make to individual spiritual growth and society. Sessions over the years have addressed Quaker history and Quaker leaders (e.g. George Fox, John Woolman), social activists with Quaker backgrounds (e.g. Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony, Bayard Rustin), and writers with Quaker influences (e.g., James Michener, Thornton Wilder, Walt Whitman). Religions such as Hinduism, Judaism, and Buddhism have been considered in terms of their tenets and differences and similarities to Quaker beliefs and approaches. Since June 2015, led by members of the study group, we have focused on the history of Nantucket Quakers and the life activities and extensive writings of Rufus Jones, Quaker teacher, writer, mystic and activist.

### **Youth Programs Coordinator**

The Religious Education Committee is very pleased with the work Michael Beer has done this year in his role as Youth Programs Coordinator. The First Day Programs continue to grow under his leadership and coordination, and his organizational skills have been critically important to the success of the First Day Programs this year. We are grateful to Michael for all that he has done for the children of FMW and we look forward to his continued work in the role of Youth Programs Coordinator in the year to come. Michael's passion for high-quality First Day programming combined with his deep understanding of and commitment to Quaker values makes him a treasured asset in his role as Youth Programs Coordinator.

### **Summer Plans**

This summer, FMW will offer play for the elementary grades as well as nursery care for the youngest friends.

### **Discussions Regarding Future Programming**

The Religious Education Committee has been exploring the possibility of incorporating the Unitarian Universalists' "Our Whole Lives" human sexuality education program into our First Day Programs. If FMW were to do this, it would comprise the entirety of the First Day Program for Tweens & Teens for a year and would require an investment of time and money from the Meeting in having adult leaders trained. Before moving further down this path, the R.E. Committee sent two surveys – one to Tweens & Teens and one to their parents – to assess their interest in this and other programming possibilities for the coming year. The survey is still open but the results so far are pretty revealing:

We asked tweens and teens the following question: "If the program for the Tweens and Teens group for 2016-17 consisted of twenty-eight (28) one-hour sessions of "Our Whole Lives: Lifespan Sexuality Education," how would this affect your attendance at First Day School?" So far, 100% of the Tweens & Teens who responded to the survey answered, "I would DEFINITELY come to First Day School LESS OFTEN than I do now." When asked, "If Friends Meeting of Washington offered twenty-eight (28) one-hour sessions of "Our Whole Lives: Lifespan Sexuality Education" AFTER First Day School (from 12pm to 1pm), how likely would you be to sign up to participate?," 100% of tween and teen



respondents answered “Never going to happen!” In-person discussions with the tweens and teens have indicated universal opposition to coming to First Day School if the focus were shifted to human sexuality education for a year, with several of the youth saying, “this shouldn’t be like school.”

In light of the strong feelings among tweens and teens regarding shifting the First Day Program to a focus on human sexuality for a year, and in light of the strong interest from several adults on Religious Education to offer Our Whole Lives to FMW, the Religious Education Committee will be exploring the possibility of paying to send several adults to get trained so that they can facilitate an “Our Whole Lives” series for adults (both parents and non-parents).

### **Conclusion**

The Religious Education Committee is excited about the progress and programming in FMW’s youth and adult programs over the past 12 months, and we look forward to another vibrant year of religious education. We remain grateful to the Meeting for its generous financial support of our nursery, First Day Program, and staffing. Thank you to all who have made our programs a success during the 2015-16 year!

### **2015-2016 A partial list of activities and topics accomplished through the FMW Religious Education Program – Submitted by Youth Programs Coordinator Michael Beer**

#### **Quakes, Ages 4 through 7**

William Penn’s story

Lucretia Mott’s story and song

John Woolman story and choices

Miss Rumphius story

Chinese New Year and making lanterns

Allen Jay and the Underground Railroad’ and poems from Ogden Nash.

Jesus of Nazareth birth story

Valentine’s Cards

Mother’s Day Cards and Roses

Scars, injuries, and healing and resilience

George Fox and non-cooperation

Obadiah and Rachel.

Making Videos for Peace on International Peace Day

Eric Carle's 'A House for Hermit Crab', particularly good for talking about transitions to new homes

Music/singing: George Fox, Simple Gifts, Magic Penny, Love round, Sending You Light, This Little Light of Mine

Decorating Stepping Stones for the vegetable garden.

Milestones

### **Upper Elementary, Ages 8-11**

Improvisational theatre, mostly led by the kids

Quaker Bingo, Invented and developed by the kids

May Day baskets and the power of giving

Sharing our scars injuries and working towards healing and resilience

Valentine's activities for those we love

Yoga

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Meeting Birthday celebrations with the baking of Cupcakes, cake, cookies, pumpkin bread, monthly

Parable of the Leaven

Sparkling Still Story

Music...singing... George Fox, Simple Gifts, Magic Penny, Love round, Sending You Light, This Little Light of Mine

Burning our names onto wooden nametags

Ukelele 101

Quaker Monteverde Community presentation by special guests

Skype talk with Friends Peace Teams in Nepal after the earthquake

Making videos to send to Climate Summit

Milestones

### **Tweens, Teens, AKA Quaker Ukulele Collective**

Skype talk with Friends Peace Teams in Nepal after the earthquake

Quaker Monteverde Community presentation by special guests

Philosophy 101 series. Guest Presenter

Discussions on Conscientious Objection, Guest presenters

Discussions on topics of health, relationships, death, and  
much more mostly determined by the kids

Central Kitchen Service Project

Photo Display for Folks in Meeting

### **Multi-generational Activities**

Introduction to Quaker summer overnight camps

Syria coat drive for refugees

Accessibility as a human right, as a value, and also about appreciating our different abilities. Pushing wheel chairs around campus. Guest speakers.

Planting vegetable seedlings.

Camp Catoctin Retreat

Cooperative Parachute games

Collecting and sorting Coins for Quoins to support the Capital Campaign

Shoebox project for the Homeless

New Years activity for the entire Meeting focusing on new behaviors

Super Bowl Sunday retreat to White Tail for Skiing and Snowboarding

Neighborhood Clean-up and Nature Treasure Hunt

Easter Eggs

### **FY 2017 Budget**

### **Joan E. Gildemeister**

**1926-2015**

Joan Gildemeister died on November 17, 2015, just weeks before what would have been her 89th birthday. Joan was a multi-faceted person, to say the least. She was highly educated with a wide array of professional accomplishments, but was also deeply devoted to her immediate and extended family, and actively involved in Quaker and other social justice causes until the very end of her life. Joan

balanced her attention to serious concerns with boundless *joie de vivre*, which manifested itself in her lifelong engagement in the arts, her love of travel and her study of literature and cultures from around the globe. Joan was enriched by her wide circle of family and friends and was much beloved in return.

The former Joan Ely was born in Texas into a military family. Her father and paternal grandfather both had been officers of high rank and responsibility. She grew up on military bases during the Depression and World War II, but in her adult life gravitated away from military life toward pacifism and peace activities.

Joan became an internationalist during her years at Mills College in Oakland, California and then at the University of California in Berkeley, where she earned her Bachelor's Degree at the age of nineteen. Shortly after her graduation in the mid-1940's, Joan married Enrique Gildemeister and they lived in Berkeley for fifteen years. Their sons Enrique ("Rick") and Hanson were born in California. Joan and her family then moved to Peru, where Kathy was born in 1957.

After three years in Peru, Joan and her husband divorced and she moved to Washington, D.C. where her parents were then living. She got her children settled in the area and worked briefly for the federal government. In 1964, she resumed her education at George Washington University where she earned her Master's Degree in Psychology in 1967. Joan began teaching while she pursued a Doctorate in Education at the University of Maryland in College Park.

In 1971, with both boys already away from home, Joan and Kathy moved to upstate New York. Joan began to teach psychology and early childhood development courses at St. Lawrence University while working on her dissertation. She earned her Ph.D. in 1972 and then moved on to teach first at Sarah Lawrence College and then at CUNY Richmond College (now Staten Island Community College). In the fall of 1976, Joan returned to the Washington area as a Professor at Howard University where she made an indelible mark as an educator over 16 years. She integrated peace studies—the psychology of nonviolence and reconciliation—into her curricula whenever possible. After more than two decades of influencing young lives in the classroom, Joan retired from teaching.

Joan's professional career was far from over. She returned to school again in her sixties at the Washington Psychoanalytic Institute to become a psychotherapist, receiving her degree in 1994. As part of her clinical studies requirement, she worked two days each week at the Blue Ridge Community Mental Health Center in Martinsburg, West Virginia. Later, in the late 1990's, she set up her own counseling practice in her home in Washington where she provided child, adolescent and family therapy to private clients. At the same time, she worked as an independent contractor for the D.C. Public Schools conducting psychological evaluations of students, often in Spanish, and testifying as an expert in court hearings when required. Joan continued this work in support of the welfare and education of children until she moved to the Collington community in 2012.

Joan's spiritual life deepened during her years in Washington. After many conversations with the renowned Quaker Kenneth Boulding, she was led to become a member of Friends Meeting of Washington in 1980. Joan served in a variety of committee roles within FMW. She was especially influential in leading many to a better understanding of same sex relationships and gay rights issues, which ultimately helped FMW to embrace gay and lesbian attendees/members and to approve, first, "ceremonies of commitment" and, later, same-sex marriages under the care of the Meeting. Joan was also dedicated to the Friends Wilderness Center, and regularly attended Friends General Conference and the Friends Conference on Religion and Psychology.

Joan was an active participant in Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Spiritual Formation program within FMW for about 15 years. She attended many retreats and frequently hosted monthly gatherings in her home for a delicious meal and a discussion of spiritual practices or a particular reading. Joan's

intellectual approach to spirituality and her deep knowledge of Quaker writers were tremendous assets to the group. Where others might read an article or a pamphlet on the chosen topic, Joan was more likely to come prepared to discuss a treatise she had mastered or another primary source she had read in the original Spanish or German. The participants formed such a deep bond that a small group of Spiritual Formation group members visited Joan at the Collington community and worshiped with her in the week before her death.

Joan's embrace of Quakerism and the peace testimony were reflected in her work as a peace psychologist and an advocate for peace studies throughout her career. She volunteered for both the American Friends Service Committee and the Friends Committee on National Legislation, supported the work of Davis House and William Penn House, participated in Peace Vigils at the Capitol, and was active in the Nuclear Freeze Movement and anti-torture initiatives. Joan also worked with "Peace Child," supported the U.S. Peace Memorial Project for a monument to American peacemakers, and was particularly involved in the post-September 11th era as one of the peace psychologists within the American Psychological Association working to prevent the involvement of psychologists in the use of harsh interrogation techniques.

Joan was a true citizen of the world. Her extensive travels gave her an appreciation of the ways we are all the same, but she also studied our differences. Joan's dedication to universal brotherhood is evident in many ways: her life-long membership and activity with World Federalists, the United Nations, and the Esperanto movement. She read and spoke fluently in German, French, Spanish and Esperanto. She traveled to many countries, relishing what she could learn in each one.

In 2005, when nearly eighty, Joan joined a three week pilgrimage to India where she visited important sites in the life of Gandhi, studied the peaceful coexistence of several very different religions there, and visited the women's micro-enterprise projects in Tamil Nadu supported by Right Sharing of World Resources, a Quaker non-profit. Her exposure to the projects fostering the empowerment of women and the education of young girls began a decade in which Joan actively supported RSWR as co-clerk of the Working Group for Baltimore Yearly Meeting. She spent long hours helping spread awareness and encourage support for RSWR through her last year of life.

Joan was also passionate about local justice, especially the plight of the poor living on the sidewalks of Washington. She was a member of the Hunger and Homelessness Task Force at FMW and worked at Miriam's Kitchen for years, at S.O.M.E., and "gleaned" at the Takoma Park Sunday Market until her health prevented it.

Joan was well-educated, well-read and a brilliant conversationalist. She was treasured because she knew so much, in depth, about so many things, never limiting herself but allowing her omnivorous intellect and untethered imagination to roam free. Her home was filled with books and art of impressive range. Her art included works from her travels but also of many Washington area artists—even a few of her own copies of works in the National Gallery.

It was there she held gatherings which were akin to an open "salon" where she might invite groups of friends to hear an Orthodox priest discuss the "Prayer of the Heart", or to see someone's slides of South Africa, or her own of China, or perhaps an ethnic meal followed by a poetry reading or musical recital. Joan's special passions for drama and song lead her to join the Thomas Circle Singers and later to create a Balkan folk group, both of which sang at her Memorial. She attended theater and performances abroad, as well as in Washington, DC.

In 2015, FMW recognized Joan among the "elders" of the Meeting. She was so committed to Quaker values and to the peace testimony in particular that during her last period of service on the

Membership Committee, Joan lamented that new members rarely cited peacemaking as a compelling reason for joining the Religious Society of Friends.

Joan's abiding concern for the children of the world and her community was evident in her personal life as well. Joan was a devoted mother to her three children, reveling in their achievements and assisting them when they faced challenges, even as adults. The premature death of her son Rick in 2007 was one of the deep sorrows in her life. Joan maintained a close relationship to her brother, Michael Ely, who was perhaps her most constant companion at the opera and symphony. She also had a special relationship with her niece Caroline and late nephew Douglas Ely. Her legacy will live on through all of them.

Joan Gildemeister was a wise elder indeed. She will be remembered as a good friend and a Good Friend.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.”

(Thus ends the minutes and attachments from Meeting for Business, June 2016)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

June 28 – July 2: **Quaker Spring: Experiencing the Inward Christ** Together Olney Friends School (Barnesville, OH). Are you longing for more quiet opportunities to worship & share with other Friends? Would you enjoy taking part in a radically unprogrammed retreat with Friends from a variety of theological backgrounds for a week or just a few days? Have you heard of Quaker Spring? Our program will be shaped by God's leading as the week unfolds. Each day will include Bible study, worship, quiet time, evening explorations, and fellowship. Quaker Spring is open to Friends of all branches! For more information and registration, see [www.quakerspring.org](http://www.quakerspring.org).

July 2: Come to **So Others Might Eat** at 6:15 a.m. and make breakfast for our vulnerable neighbors. 70 “O” St. NW. For more information, contact [Betsy.Bramon@gmail.com](mailto:Betsy.Bramon@gmail.com)

July 6: **Grate Patrol** Help prepare sandwiches to take out on the Salvation Army truck to feed our vulnerable neighbors. Come to the Meeting House at 5:30 pm. For more information, contact [sbrooks@uab.edu](mailto:sbrooks@uab.edu)

July 3 – 9: **The Gathering, Friends General Conference**, College of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, MN. This year's theme is *be humble, Be Faithful, BE BOLD*. Meet with hundreds of Friends for a week packed with programs and events, from small group morning workshops to public evening plenaries, and programs for children, teens and young adults. For more information, to go <http://www.fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering>

July 13 – 31: **Pendle Hill's Conflict Transformation Institute** Conflict is a regular part of our life in community. Leaning into it, instead of avoiding it, can be the key to making our workplaces more productive, our worship communities deeper and more faithful, and our social change organizations more effective. We know we are called to be just peacemakers, but often we just don't know how. Learn to engage conflict courageously, compassionately, and creatively. Pendle Hill's 18-day Institute for Conflict Transformation will equip you with the skills and tools to help create justice and peace confidently in your communities. Concentrating less on interpersonal conflict, and focusing more on conflict in our organizations, our workplace, and our meetings, participants will pay

particular attention to the processes that Quakers have developed to navigate the tension between “speaking truth to power” and “answering that of God in everyone.” For details: John Meyer, [jmeyer@pendlehill.org](mailto:jmeyer@pendlehill.org)

August 1 – 7 – **Annual Session 2016, Baltimore Yearly Meeting**, Hood College (Frederick, MD)

Some of us come to feel at home with Friends through worship first, some through social activism, and some through community. As we continue on our path with Friends, we inevitably encounter the other two and perhaps integrate all three into our Quaker experience. What has your experience been? Have you discovered how all three of these interact with each other as essential elements of the Quaker way? Join us at Annual Session this year to share in our exploration of this question. This year, the theme of our annual session is *Discernment and Action in Spiritual Community*. Through a truly exciting variety of plenaries, workshops, interest groups, Junior Yearly Meeting, through fellowship at meals, worship sharing, and other times, and also through our business sessions, we will have an opportunity to live out all three of these core elements of our faith. Registration is now open. Go to <http://www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession/> for all of the information and online registration. Register by June 27 to get the lower rates!

August 12 – 14 – **Fellowship of Friends of African Descent 2016 Gathering**, Arch Street Friends Meeting (Philadelphia, PA) *Recharge, Renew, and Rejoice!* This year’s theme invites us to take time for ourselves and Recharge; calls us to Renew our commitment to social justice; and offers the opportunity to Rejoice in the Fellowship of Friends. We hope to see you there! Registration is now open! ([www.fofad.org/2016registration.html](http://www.fofad.org/2016registration.html)) Fellowship of Friends of African Descent was formed out of a desire that Black Quakers know each other. The Fellowship mission statement was adopted by the organization in 1991: To publish and respond to the concerns of Friends of African descent within the Religious Society of Friends. To provide for the nurture of Friends of African descent, their families and friends. To address and respond to issues affecting people of African descent in their communities worldwide.

**THINKING ABOUT RACE** (Summer 2016) – A “Scholarship of Belonging.”

“For far too long, society has treated minority groups from a deficit analysis, focusing on what they lack rather than what they add. Institutions have reacted to racial tensions instead of proactively creating inclusive spaces. We have taught people how to adjust to an unacceptable status quo instead of sharing the legitimate means to challenge injustice. By not taking the time to listen to people, we have let efficiency trump listening and allowed limited diversity to supplant real equity at the table, at the lectern, and in the boardroom....

“We all have good will, but we must move beyond good will. Universities can help improve a sense of belonging by setting clear goals, fostering inclusive environments, and challenging negative stereotypes about certain groups. We have to create structures that ensure participation of minority groups in decisions. We need to model and teach the competencies of deep listening and respectful dialogue across differences. We must also determine how to work cooperatively to transform deeply embedded practices that have created barriers to belonging.”

Excerpts from an article by Julio Frenk, “Why We Need a ‘Scholarship of Belonging’,” published in the May 20, 2016, **Chronicle of Higher Education**. Julio Frank is president of the University of Miami

and former dean of Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

*This column is prepared by the BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR) and sent to the designated liaisons at each Monthly and Preparative Meeting for publication in their newsletter or other means of dissemination. The 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](mailto:david.etheridge@verizon.net).*

## AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE BOARD

If you have been thinking about it but have not yet done so, please do **submit your self-nomination or recommend someone else** for AFSC service today! Standing Nominating Committee will begin reviewing nominations this week. All members of the AFSC family (staff, current and past volunteers) are encouraged to submit and to spread the word!!

American Friends Service Committee, [www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org)

## WILLIAM PENN HOUSE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Join us for the William Penn House 50th Anniversary Planning Session, June 26th @ 2pm! Established by Friends Meeting of Washington in 1966, William Penn House has provided 50 years of activism, service, education, and radical hospitality for local and national groups on Capitol Hill. We are planning events to celebrate this anniversary and would love to hear your ideas. Contribute your ideas at [this link](#) or email [jessica@williampennhouse.org](mailto:jessica@williampennhouse.org)

## RANDOM HAPPENINGS



What a horrible and hopeful month June was, between the massacre in Orlando and the sit-in on the floor of the U.S. House. The weekend of the massacre, with the help of **Gene Throwe**, Friends from six different area Meetings marched and tabled at DC's Pride event. Then came the awful news. **Orlando Friends Meeting** asked Quakers everywhere to convene a Meeting for Worship the Tuesday after the massacre, and FMW responded with a small gathering. The next evening, many Friends also joined the vigil organized by **Dignity** at Dupont Circle.

Facebook and Twitter lit up with Friends responding to Rep. John Lewis' call for a sit-in on the floor of the House, asking for an up/down vote on gun and explosive sales to people on the No-fly list. **Carl**



**Johnson** let us know about a spontaneous vigil gathering outside the Capitol, and various Friends forwarded petitions in support. We continue to hold those working on the gun issue in the Light.

More good news and bad news. In the good news department, our member, **Libby Garvey**, won a contentious Democratic primary for her seat on the County Board in Arlington. Bad news: **Martha Solt's** non-Hodgkins lymphoma is back. The good news is that, with lots of support from family and our physician member **Mary Campbell**, they figured out how to help her manage the horrible side-effects of the chemo. We await news as to whether these chemicals have successfully killed off the lymph node tumors (which would be the good news). And (bad news/good news) Friends held a very tender and meaningful memorial for our dear Attender, **Al Scott**.

**Personal Aid** held a successful AED/CPR/First Aid training (good news). The **Clerks** convened two threshing sessions to continue our discussion of the FMW alcohol policy, which has not quite reached unity (good news? Bad news? Depends on your point of view). And our Property Manager, **Ken Orvis**, changed the signs on the restrooms to ones that show what each contains (e.g. two toilets or a toilet and a urinal), in keeping with our Testimony of Equality. As he describes it:

We hope Friends understand clearly that this is not about inviting men into the "Women's Room" or women into the "Men's Room." It is about applying the Testimony of Equality to include people for whom, when asked "Are you a man, or are you a woman?" the truthful answer is "No." To include people who, when confronted with two doors each denoting the extreme end of a continuum they merely fall someplace(s) along, feel an all too familiar sense of confusion, shame, and exclusion from any sincere invitation to tend to their most basic biological needs as easily as the rest of us.

So far, the email reaction has been 100% positive (good news). Ken and I are noticing, however, that there is some confusion in folks who are holding events at the Meeting House; we are open to suggestions on what might reduce this confusion. Also, wonderful **Jen**, who reads Braille, tells us that the signs only say "rest room" and aren't helpful. We're trying to find a company that can produce a Braille sign that is more descriptive. Jen asks that we approach newcomers with sight or accessibility challenges and ask if we can help them find the restroom or figure out the least stair-filled path to wherever they want to go. Someone did this for her in a house of worship once, she says, which was incredibly awkward but oh so useful. Just sayin.

Meanwhile, my phone has been ringing off the hook with folks wanting to hold events here (good news), including many who have been here before and some brand new groups—Jews United for Justice and Jewish Voice for Peace, Teaching for Change and Teach for America, Greenpeace, the Solidarity Center, the Field School, Pyxera Global, Harvard's Center for Careers in the Public Interest (who love us, for some reason), Green Jobs, various children's parties and baby showers and memorial services and weddings, the ONE Campaign, a fellow teaching creative writing (one of his students was fed by the Quakers in WWII), and another fellow rehearsing a play for the Fringe Festival. It's crazy busy here, and I love it.

- Debby