

# FMW Newsletter, May 2018

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**Friends Meeting of Washington**

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

**April 8, 2018**

**Poems for Spiritual Deepening**

*juxtaposing the black boy & the bullet*

by Danez Smith

one is hard & the other tried to be

one is fast & the other was faster

one is loud & one is a song

with one note & endless rest

one's whole life is a flash

both spend their life

trying to find a warmth to call home

both spark quite the debate,  
some folks want to protect them/some  
think we should just get rid  
of the damn  
things all together.

*There Will Come Soft Rains*

by [Sara Teasdale](#)

(War Time)

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,  
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;  
And frogs in the pools singing at night,  
And wild plum trees in tremulous white,  
Robins will wear their feathery fire  
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;  
And not one will know of the war, not one  
Will care at last when it is done.  
Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree  
If mankind perished utterly;  
And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,  
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

## ***Approval of Temporary Clerk***

*Friends approved Grant Thompson's service as acting clerk for this session in the absence of Gene Throwe, Presiding Clerk*

## **Welcome of Visitors**

The Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business opened at 12:25 pm with 25 Friends present. There were no visitors today.

## **Clerk's Report, 4.2018**

### *In Memoriam*

- 4/14 Joe Johnson Memorial: The memorial service for beloved member Joe Johnson will be held on Saturday, April 14, at 11 a.m. Contact Malachy Kilbride [malachykilbride@gmail.com](mailto:malachykilbride@gmail.com) for more information.

### *Kudos & FMW Community Highlights*

- The all-out effort for March for our Lives worked out beautifully, with many many Friends stepping up to shop, cook, bake, clean, tidy, herd, shelter, nourish, and nurture almost 50 marchers all weekend! Special thanks to Jean Capps and Debby Churchman for their organizing prowess.

### *Upcoming Events*

- 4/20: Bystander Intervention Training: FMW Member J.E. McNeil will be holding this in the evening. Learn on-the-ground techniques for dealing with and diffusing harassment when you are the bystander. Contact J.E. at [jmcnrick@gmail.com](mailto:jmcnrick@gmail.com)
- 4/20: Poetry Workshop: FMW Member Susan Meehan will be continuing her workshop on poetry. For more information and to sign up, contact Bob Meehan at [babmeehany62@gmail.com](mailto:babmeehany62@gmail.com).
- 4/21 (10am-3pm) - Clerking Workshop hosted by Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Are you a Prospective Clerk? a Reluctant Clerk? an Experienced Clerk with wisdom to share? a Committee or Meeting Clerk? All are welcome as we explore the blessings and responsibilities of Clerking. The workshop is located at Sandy Spring Meeting House in MD. Lunch provided. Child Care available if requested in advance. Register with Deborah Haines ([deborah.haines@gmail.com](mailto:deborah.haines@gmail.com)) or Bette Hoover ([bette@justpeacecircles.org](mailto:bette@justpeacecircles.org)).
- 4/29 Discussion: Climate Change Risk and Opportunity, A Call to Action. Peace & Social Concerns Task Force will host a talk where you can learn more about the science of climate change, the risks and opportunities we are facing, and what DC Quakers and people of faith can

do right now! We will be joined by a highly respected climate scientist and a leader in a DC-based campaign to put a price on carbon pollution.

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

- April at FMW is our candidate for “widest range of beliefs in one Meetinghouse” month. We will be hosting the Church of the Virgin Mother (a Brazilian church which worships through dance), an Orthodox Easter celebration by Palestinians, a Shabbat service by J Street, a group called Womb Matrix about female spiritual empowerment, a girls’ empowerment group called Black Girls Fight Back, and, of course, the Democratic Socialists. We love serving a diverse and inclusive community!

### *Renovation Update*

- Friends were reminded that regular updates concerning the progress of the renovation project are distributed on the Meeting’s Google list.

### *Sanctuary Task Force Seeking Researchers and Writers- Rebecca Harris*

- The Task Force is seeking assistance for the preparation of draft position statements from FMW. These statements will represent the Meeting’s collective stance on key issues before the issues arrive, so that statements can be released in a timely manner. The Task Force seeks assistance in both research and writing of statements. They hope to present the first round of drafts at the next meeting for business. Contact Rebecca Harris or the FMW Office at [reb.c.harris@gmail.com](mailto:reb.c.harris@gmail.com).

## **Major Business**

### Spiritual State of the Meeting Report (second presentation)- Grant Thompson

- Friends approved the Report, including the addition of a new paragraph that provides context on the methodology, together with the observation that any statement of our spiritual state will have limitations due to our diversity and size as a large meeting.

### Nominating Committee- Todd Harvey, Clerk of Nominating Committee

The following nominations were presented and approved:

- Chad Dobson (M), to Peace & Social Concerns, 3 year term ending 12/20
- Susan Nelson (A), to Hospitality, 3 year term ending 12/20

Nomination (Second Presentation) - Grant Thompson

- The nomination of Sigrid Elliot (A), to Ministry and Worship, 3 year term ending 12/20, second presentation was approved (exception requested due to attender status was presented at the at March Meeting for Business).

Search Committee- Grant Thompson

- Nomination of Rebecca Nelson (A) to Nominating Ctte. (first presentation), recommendation for a one year term ending December 2018 was approved.
- She is a co-covener of the Young Adult Friends, and the Meeting desires to be more inclusive of YAFS in our broader governance and leadership.
- A friend who serves with her on the Sanctuary Task Force spoke in support of Rebecca, mentioning that she is a thoughtful, organized and deeply committed individual.

Membership Committee- Janet Dinsmore

- First presentation of request for membership from Mary Lou Schram, a novelist who has led a life of activism and devotion to social justice and civil rights and has been a part of various Quaker groups for a long time. The committee endorsed her application, and as is our custom, her application for membership was held over for one month.

Healing and Reconciliation- Ken Orvis

- Friends accepted the committee's annual report, with recognition of Ken's leadership and service to the committee over many years.

Friends APPROVED the minutes as improved, with any necessary edits.

The Meeting closed at 12:50 PM with approximately 21 persons in attendance to reconvene as Way opens on , May 13, 2018 (Yes, this is Mother's Day)

**ADDENDUM: ATTACHED COMMITTEE REPORTS**

## SPIRITUAL STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT, 2018

This year the Spiritual State of the Meeting was conducted through gatherings of worship sharing. Over the years, from time to time, the committee has used surveys to analyze the spiritual state of the meeting. This year it was obvious we had a very low turnout of those who participated in the worship sharing. The Ministry and Worship Committee is tasked with preparing and presenting the Spiritual State of the Meeting Report however, it is the responsibility of all Friends to participate in this process. Inherent in any process, particularly one with a small, self-selected group of respondents, is the possibility of missing important themes or over-emphasizing views that are not widely held. The Ministry and Worship Committee continues to discuss ways to engage Friends at our meeting in the SSOM process.

We focused on our worship together and our experience of community within Friends Meeting of Washington. Several common themes emerged which are reported here. Friends' experience and concern with the various Meetings for Worship, recent conflict and disturbances, our building project, and social action were shared.

A Friend observed that there are a significant number of young people who attend Friends Meeting of Washington. The Friend thinks this is important. "Young people change the character of the meeting," said the Friend. Another Friend remarked that there was a sense of joy when the children join us for worship and this Friend said the presence of the children is a blessing. Another Friend was impressed by the support we give the children at FMW.

Several Friends concurred that committees are a huge part of the spiritual life of FMW. Committee work is important and contributes to the spiritual life of the meeting, Friends said. "It is important to be on a committee. It is how the meeting functions. It is how one gets involved." one Friend said. Another Friend shared that there is a great strength to the FMW community now. There is activism and people are involved with various social causes these days.

Friends discussed our worship together at FMW over the last year. There has been some conflict and change within the last several months. One Friend noted that we now have 6 separate Meetings for Worship at FMW. The most recently added Meeting for Worship came into existence to address and resolve a recent conflict. The new Meeting for Worship has now taken on a life of its own. "All our Meetings for Worship shouldn't be the same, each Meeting for Worship has its own characteristics" a Friend said. However, more than one Friend wondered if the newest Meeting for Worship will survive? A friend stated that the latest Meeting for Worship will survive but only if there is energy behind it. "The uncomfortable things that happen are a sign of some good which will come" another Friend said regarding conflict in the meeting. Other Friends also remarked on the various Meetings for Worship at FMW.

A Friend noted that there has been a “spiritual deepening” in the last several months since disturbances at Meeting for Worship, in the Meeting Room at 10:30, have been addressed. The goal of our worship is to be “gathered and deep”, a Friend shared. Other Friends agreed that it is a good thing to have Meetings for Worship which have different characteristics and numbers of those who worship together. “Different People have different needs” a Friend remarked speaking to the different Meetings for Worship at FMW. Although, another Friend observed that “...we are not meant to be a home for everyone, we are a lay-by for some who come to worship with us.”

Although the FMW construction project and our social action was not a specific topic of the worship sharing for the Spiritual State of the Meeting, Friends were led to share their concerns and thoughts.

The building project has gotten people “disturbed” and it is a part of the upheaval we have been experiencing one Friend said. “We cannot be a part of a community which is only about a building project” one Friend said. “We should be both about social action and a building project” another Friend said. One Friend raised a concern about whether our involvement with social issues will “flourish”? “Having to pay a mortgage is a huge part of what we have to do for the next 20 years. What will this do to our meeting” a Friend said and asked, “What is our dream for the next 20 years?” It was pointed out that the construction project leads to the vibrancy of the meeting because Friends see a future here at FMW. In addition, the growing meetings in Baltimore Yearly Meeting are those under construction, a Friend noted. “What keeps us together at FMW? Is it the construction project or our social action? Or is it the reason for why we are undergoing a building project and for our social action?” a Friend said. One Friend concluded by stating that within the Religious Society of Friends, we value listening. The Friend said “I look forward to holding that value in The Light because we will be tested by the commercial aspect of what we are doing and our social action. Listening will be important to us as we move through the next 20 years.”

Healing and Reconciliation (H&R) Committee Annual Report, 2018

Members: Ken Orvis, clerk, Zoe Plaughter, Betsy Bramon, Ylene Larsen, Janet Dinsmore

The role of the H&R Committee is to limit any hurtful behavior in Meeting-related settings and initiate processes for healing and reconciliation between members and attenders. Activities can include interrupting hurtful exchanges, active listening to discover ways toward harmony, and proactive taking steps to foster healing. Its interactions with individuals complement efforts of the Ministry and Worship Committee to resolve conflicts within the Meeting community. H&R may recommend long-term actions to Ministry and Worship, the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, or the Committee of Clerks. H&R does not itself undertake any action other than those directed toward healing and reconciliation.

While our committee has undertaken direct or supportive action in several Meeting conflicts in 2017, we have also noticed that much of this work has been led by other committees. In particular actions by, Ministry and Worship, Personal Aid, and Clerks have reduced the need for our committee. We welcome these efforts as a sign of our Meeting's health and vitality.

We anticipate a continuing need for H&R to quickly and sensitively respond to interpersonal conflicts when they arise. However, the overlap of our mission with the work of Ministry and Worship and Personal Aid has led us to consider a new structure for our committee.

As the Meeting evaluates the committee structure overall, we hope that H&R's status can be reconsidered. In particular, we would advocate for a change, such as changing H&R to a task force or subcommittee under the Ministry and Worship Committee. Such a change in status should in no way limit prompt responses to conflicts. We are aware of and value the role of our committee. We are aware of the value of proactive steps and are committed to making the Meeting community more joyful, safe, and welcoming, even to renewed reminders to the community to reach out to newcomers every Sunday.

Should the Meeting decide to restructure H&R as a Task Force rather than a Committee, we recommend remaining as a "standby" during the process of restructuring.

The Committee wishes to recognize the wise leadership of Ken Orvis whose work on behalf of Healing and Reconciliation has continued despite his significant burdens of responsibility as Property Manager at this time.

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(This ends the Minutes & Reports from the April 2018 Meeting for Business)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

May 2: Help make sandwiches for the **Grate Patrol** to take to our vulnerable neighbors, starting at 5:00 pm. For more information, contact Steve Brooks at [sbrooks@uab.edu](mailto:sbrooks@uab.edu)

May 4 – 6 – **Spiritual Formation Program Spring Retreat, Shepherd's Spring Retreat Center (Sharpsburg, MD)** You are invited to join Friends from across Baltimore Yearly Meeting for the Spring Spiritual Formation Retreat at the beautiful Shepherd's Spring Retreat Center. To find out more about the retreat and the Spiritual Formation Program, go to the BYM website at [www.bym-rsf.org/events/spiritform/](http://www.bym-rsf.org/events/spiritform/). We look forward to contemplating words of wisdom and faith, time for personal reflection, sharing with spiritual friends and growing in spiritual community with you. Registration will open in the spring of 2018. Scholarships will be available.



May 5: Help make breakfast for our vulnerable neighbors. Convene at 6:15 am at **So Others Might Eat**. For more information, contact Tim Schleicher at [timothy.c.schleicher@gmail.com](mailto:timothy.c.schleicher@gmail.com)

May 5 - 6 – **Junior Young Friends Conference, Opequon Quaker Camp (Brucetown, VA)** Junior Young Friends should plan to begin arriving at 7:00pm on Friday. For information, check the Young Friends website ([http://bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/jyfs/jyfcon.html](http://bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/jyfs/jyfcon.html)) or contact [contact Jocelyn Dowling](mailto:Jocelyn.Dowling@gmail.com). (301-774-7663) Please remember that the deadline to register and be guaranteed a slot is one week before the conference (April 27). Any one registering after that date will be placed on a waiting list and may not be able to attend.

May 12 – **BYM Peace and Social Concerns Committee Networking Day, Friends Meeting School (Ijamsville, MD) THIS HAS BEEN MOVED FROM MARCH 24**

Based on last year's survey & other suggestions from Monthly Meetings, Networking Day will offer an opportunity for folks from various BYM Meetings to meet and exchange ideas and resources about each other's successful Peace & Social Concerns programs. We also will offer four, practical 90-minute workshops for your most popular topics--two in the a.m. (A) and two in the p.m. (B), each led by Friends with experience in these areas:

**A)** How Friends can speak to polarization & racism in our communities

**B)** Strategies for addressing homelessness, reentry & poverty – shelters, “open tables” & more

**C)** Immigrants, refugees & sanctuary in our midst (update - new resources)

**D)** Issues and outreach: Peace festivals, death-with-dignity, LGBT, animal rights, healthcare under Trump

Workshop sessions will begin at 11 a.m. & 1:30 p.m. During breakfast/arrival time, Friends will be encouraged to mingle and share info. about specific programs/activities of our own Meetings. Coffee, bagels & pastries will be provided at 9:30; lunch (wraps, salad, chips, drinks) will be provided at noon. Vegetarian/vegan treats may be included both times. **Donations are welcome, but not required**, to assist with our Networking Day costs (est. \$14 per person). REGISTRATION INFORMATION: ***Please let us know by reply email-a) participant name(s), b) email(s), c) Meeting for each participant, and d) which two workshops you prefer to attend.*** (***NOTE:*** If you are interested in more than two workshops, but cannot attend them all, we will have extra copies of resource materials that you may take with you back to your Meeting.) ***Also, please tell us if you need child care or have any other special needs.***

May 11 – 13: **Come to Catoctin** - It's that time of year again! Please join us for a relaxing, rustic day, or two, or three, of hiking, lounging/playing by the lagoon, potluck meals and fellowship. Sign up for meals + meal clean-up is here <https://tinyurl.com/Catoctin2018spring> **The cost is \$20 per adult per night for over-nighters and \$10 per day per adult for day-trippers.** Please reach out to Anita Drever, [anita.drever@gmail.com](mailto:anita.drever@gmail.com), with any questions. We hope to see you in the woods!

May 13 – **Programmed Worship, Baltimore Monthly Meeting, Stony Run (Baltimore, MD)** Everyone is invited to worship with Kenyan and Evangelical/ Orthodox Quakers from the Baltimore area. This Meeting for Worship is under the care of Stony Run Friends, but operates with its own Committee of Care, monthly on the second First day of the month, at 2:00pm. Kenyan Friends seeking a Kenyan Meeting are warmly invited. Social hour at the rise of Meeting, approximately 4pm. Please contact Sujata Massey, [sujatamassey@mac.com](mailto:sujatamassey@mac.com), or Gilbert Imbati, [gilbert.imbati@gmail.com](mailto:gilbert.imbati@gmail.com) for more information.

May 19th at 930am in Douglass Hall, Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church (our partner church in the sanctuary movement). Join one of our youngest activist leaders, Reverend Stephen Green of Heard AME church, our key note speaker for "**Lessons From Richard Allen and Martin Luther King Jr. : Strategies to Achieve Justice**". An interactive panel including Pastor Lamar and young community activist leaders will expound on Allen and King's leadership as well as current issues of interracial cooperation and inter generational leadership in the contemporary fight for justice and civil rights. Free. Contact Celeste Bryant for information [bryantcm12@gmail.com](mailto:bryantcm12@gmail.com)

May 25 - 27 – **Young Friends Conference, Hopewell Centre Monthly Meeting (Winchester, VA) or The Clearing (Richmond, VA)** Young Friends should plan to begin arriving at 7:00 pm on Friday. For information, check the Young Friends website ([www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/yfs/yfcon.html](http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/yfs/yfcon.html)) or [contact Jocelyn Dowling](mailto:Jocelyn Dowling). (301-774-7663) Please remember that the deadline to register and be guaranteed a slot is two weeks before the conference (May 11). Any one registering after that date will be placed on a waiting list and may not be able to attend.

May 25 – **Conversation with the Other**, 7 pm, Friends Meeting of Washington. How to communicate with people with whom you disagree politically and help begin the healing of our nation. Contact J.E. McNeil, [jmcnrick@gmail.com](mailto:jmcnrick@gmail.com)

June 25 – June 30 – **Quaker Spring: Experiencing the Inward Christ Together Olney Friends School & Stillwater Meeting House (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. Welcoming to Friends of all Branches. Fees by freewill offering (no one should stay away because of limited means). Deadline to register for children's program: June 1st. More information & registration at [www.quakerspring.org](http://www.quakerspring.org). Or contact the planning group at [quakerspring@gmail.com](mailto:quakerspring@gmail.com) or Earl Smith. (740-309-5021).

July 1 – 7 – **The Gathering**, Toledo, Ohio. **Standard Registration for the 2018 FGC Gathering is now open! The Power of Truth** is our theme and it resonates through out the week. The 2018 Gathering is full of rich opportunities for deep worship, powerful truths and amazing speakers and workshops. For more information and to register, click here: <https://www.fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering/registration-details>

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**Thinking About Race** – Howard Thurman, "Jesus and the Disinherited"

Thurman's book **Jesus and the Disinherited**, first published in 1949, has chapters on "Fear," "Deception," and "Hate," which he calls "the three hell-hounds..." This segment, from "Fear," p. 35, resonates today:

"It is instructive to inquire into the effects of fear on the disadvantaged. Fear becomes acute, in the form of panic or rage, only at the moment when what has been threat becomes actual violence; but the mere anticipation of such an encounter is overwhelming simply because the odds are basically uneven. This fact is important to hold in mind. The disadvantaged man knows that in any conflict he must deal not only with the particular individual involved but also with the entire group, then or later. Even recourse to the arbitration of law tends to be avoided because of the fear that the interpretations

of law will be biased on the side of the dominant group. The result is the dodging of all encounters. The effect is nothing short of disaster in the organism; for, studies show, fear actually causes chemical changes in the body, affecting the blood stream and the muscular reactions, preparing the body either for fight or for flight. If flight is resorted to, it merely serves as an incentive to one's opponent to track down and overpower. Furthermore, not to fight back at the moment of descending violence is to be a coward, and to be deeply and profoundly humiliated in one's own estimation and in that of one's friends and family."

*This column is prepared by the BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR) and sent to the designated liaison at each Monthly and Preparative Meeting. The BYM WGR meets most months on the third Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Locations vary to allow access to more Friends. If you would like to attend, on a regular or a drop-in basis, contact clerk David Etheridge, [david.etheridge@verizon.net](mailto:david.etheridge@verizon.net).*