



Quick Links

- ▶ [About Us](#)
- [Announcements](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- ▶ [Care](#)
- [MJ Simpson Scholarships](#)
- [Committees](#)
- [Officers and Committee Members](#)
- [Meeting Directory](#)
- [Meeting for Business](#)
- [Newsletters](#)
- [Library, Handbook](#)
- [Our Renovation](#)
- [Social Justice Fund](#)
- [Event and Wedding Rentals](#)
- [Donate to FMW](#)

 [Printer-friendly version](#)

FMW Newsletter - May 2021

Published monthly – Issue #91 – 05
May 2021

Table of Contents:

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

5th Month Query: Personal Way of Life

News

-Re-Opening FMW for In-Person Meeting for Worship to begin in May

-WIN, FMW Stand Up for Affordable Housing at "Reservation 13"

-Elaine Wilson featured in Washingtonian

-In memoriam: Harry Massey

-Faithful Democracy: Action Needed to Protect Elections

Events

Thinking about Race, May 2021

Meeting for Business Minutes, April 2021

-Clerk's Report, April 2021

-Spiritual State of the Meeting

-Personal Aid Annual Report

-Nominating Committee

-BYM Interim Meeting

-Peace & Social Concerns Requests for FMW support

-Support for US Rejoining Iran Nuclear Deal

-Election Protection: Sign-on supporting the For the People Act

Other Business

-Membership Committee

-Finance & Stewardship Report to Meeting for Business - Giving Budget

-Should we hire Zoom technicians to set up and run our hybrid Meetings for Worship?

ADDENDA

-Spiritual State of the Meeting Report for the Year 2020 (3/5/21)

-Faithful Democracy call for organizational sign-ons

-Personal Aid Committee annual report

-Finance & Stewardship Committee: Giving Budget

Photos: FMW in new Spring Dress

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP ~ ALL ARE WELCOME

- **Sundays: 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. and 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.**
- **Tuesdays: 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.**
- **Fridays: 12:00 noon**
- **Monthly Meeting for Business: 12:15 p.m. May 9 (2nd Sunday)**

Sunday 10:30 am Meeting for Worship will resume in person on May 2

(Meeting Room attendance limited to 50, with masks and social distancing.)

All meetings for worship will continue to be held via Zoom,

For more information, email admin@QuakersDC.org.

5th Month Query: Personal Way of Life

Do you live in accordance with your spiritual convictions? Do you seek employment consistent with your beliefs and in service to society? Do you practice simplicity in speech, dress and manner of living, avoiding wasteful consumption? Are you watchful that your possessions do not rule you? Do you strive to be truthful at all times, avoiding judicial oaths?

Do you strive to develop your physical, emotional and mental capacities toward reaching your Divinely given potential? Do you cultivate healthful and moderate habits, avoiding the hazards of drugs, intoxicants, and over-indulgence generally? Do you try to direct such emotions as anger and fear in creative ways? (See: *Early Quaker Testimonies; The Practice of the Life of the Spirit Personal Life*) Source: *BYM Faith & Practice, Part II The Queries*

News

Re-Opening FMW for In-Person Meeting for Worship to begin in May

In addition to small out-door Meetings for Worship, which have been happening weather-permitting, FMW is preparing to resume 10:30 Meeting for Worship on May 2. Attendance in the Meeting Room will be limited to 50 people in order to maintain recommended social distance between individuals (& pods). Masks will be required to keep everyone safe. [Register here](#).

Meeting for Worship via Zoom will continue, and for the next three months we will experiment with a “hybrid” format combining in-person and Zoom (using a large monitor and the new very sophisticated hearing assistance system the Meeting invested in just before pandemic shutdown).

Washington Interfaith Network and FMW's WIN Team Stand Up for Affordable Housing at "Reservation 13" Redevelopment

On Saturday, April 24, members of FMW's WIN Team joined over 200 pastors and faith-based activists in-person and online at a WIN Rally at "Reservation 13." WIN's demand is that developers shaping proposals to build on the huge 67-acre site in Ward 7 commit to "**1/3rd, 1/3rd, 1/3rd**" --that is: one-third of the new homes must be "deeply affordable" (30% of area median income), one-third should be "affordable" (up to 60% of AMI) and the remaining third "market rate." WIN research teams of church members presented the results of their investigations on each of five developer groups: Are they local? Are they minority-led? How diverse is their workforce? Has the company focused on affordable housing--or luxury apartments? All five developer teams had been invited to the April 24 rally. The that two attended, NRP Group and Frontier publicly committed to "1/3rd, 1/3rd, 1/3rd" --and to working with WIN.

Reverend Bill Lamar, Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church: ***"To borrow from the great Duke Ellington: 'It don't mean a thing, if it ain't 1/3rd-1/3rd-1/3rd!"***

Reverend Ben Roberts, Foundry United Methodist Church: ***"We will not lay this work on the shoulders of a few pastors from Ward 7... You show up, with your privilege. Show up, with your access, Show up, with your votes. Show up with your voice!"***



FMW Member and artist Elaine Wilson featured in Washingtonian

For the last several months, Elaine Wilson has spend several hours a day painting powerful images of the security perimeter around the Capitol. Last week her work was featured in The Washingtonian, in an article titled “*This Intriguing Series of Paintings Depicts the Capitol Fence.*” You can see the full series along with Elaine’s other work at www.ElaineSWilson.com



In memoriam:

Former FMW member **Harry Massey** passed away in Greensboro, NC on April 2. Harry was a lifelong Quaker and active member of FMW until May 2018, when he transferred to Jamestown Friends Meeting in North Carolina. **Friends are asked to share their stories** about Harry Massey with Jamestown Friend Kathy Adams, kfadams53@gmail.com, who is writing a

memorial minute. **Friends are invited to join the virtual Memorial Service for Harry**, convened by Jamestown Friends Meeting, on **May 16, 2021 at 3:00 pm. Join on Zoom.**

Take Action!

Faithful Democracy: Action Needed to Protect Elections (For the People Act (HR1 / S1))

Faithful Democracy, a multi-faith coalition has issued a call to action to support the *For the People Act (HR1/S1)*. Friends Meeting of Washington has joined Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and many other faith organizations in endorsing this effort.

FMW members and attenders can provide critical support for this effort. **Here's how!**

The Act has been called "transformational" in supporting democratic rights, especially the right to vote. The *For the People Act* has been formally introduced as the top priority of the Senate. Now an uphill battle to passage begins. The "mark-up" and passage out of committee will likely happen before the end of April. Once S.1 moves out of committee, the path to passage will be challenging and could be blocked by filibuster. *Public awareness and support will be critical.*

A Faithful Democracy partner offers trainings on how to organize virtual lobby visits with Senators and in-district (socially distanced) visibility actions to gain media coverage and build momentum for the *For the People Act*. (One of these trainings had 50,000 participants!) **Watch the training on Facebook here.**

To learn more and take action go to: **FaithfulDemocracy.us/take-action/**

Events

Quaker Spiritual Development Programs sponsored by FMW's Ministry & Worship Committee: Full schedule May 2021. (Also on FMW's website, www.QuakersDC.org.)

Imagining a Just Green Future, Thursday, April 29, 6:30 pm

Washington Interfaith Network and Sierra Club members get to know each other and explore what future we hope to win through organizing in partnership. FMW is an active member of WIN and FMW's Peace & Social Concerns Committee is supporting Sierra Club's campaign to transition DC from burning fossil fuels to clean renewable energy. Join us as we begin to build this powerful new partnership! **Register here.** For more info contact Elaine Wilson, ElaineSWils@gmail.com or Barbara Briggs, BarbaraHBriggs@gmail.com

Friends Work in Africa, May 15, 1:00-2:30 pm ET

Join Zoom Meeting.

By phone dial: **(301) 715-8592**. Enter meeting ID on prompt: **8744 1817 683#**

Shawn and Katrina McConaughy will share an overview and photos of their work among Friends in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, and describe how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted life and ministry in their part of the world.

Shawn and Katrina are lifelong Friends from Oregon. Shawn has served in pastoral and yearly meeting leadership for the past 30 years. Katrina has been active in volunteer ministry within her Meeting and in the community, supporting refugees and immigrants, teaching ESL, and working on an organic vegetable farm. A few years ago, anticipating an empty nest, they began to look for opportunities to serve Friends overseas and were invited to work with Friends United Meeting in

East Africa. For the last 3 years they have been living in Kenya and working as Programme Officers in the Africa Ministries Office. Their work focuses on the Project Partners of FUM and facilitating communication and relationships between Friends in North America and in East Africa.

Thinking about Race, May 2021

Ibram X. Kendi on “not racist”

What’s the problem with being “not racist”? It is a claim that signifies neutrality. “I am not a racist, but neither am I aggressively against racism.” But there is no neutrality in the racism struggle. The opposite of “racist” isn’t “not racist.” It is “antiracist.” What’s the difference? One endorses either the idea of a racial hierarchy as a racist, or racial equality as an antiracist. One either believes problems are rooted in groups of people, as a racist, or locates the roots of problems in power and policies, as an antiracist. One either allows racial inequalities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an antiracist. There is no in-between safe space of “not racist.” The claim of “not racist” neutrality is a mask for racism...[The] only way to undo racism is to consistently identify and describe it—and then dismantle it. - **From *How to Be an Antiracist*, Ibram X. Kendi, p. 9**

This column is prepared by the BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR) and sent to the designated liaison at each local Meeting. The BYM WGR meets most months on the first Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, currently via Zoom. If you would like to attend, contact clerk David Etheridge, david.etheridge@verizon.net.

Meeting for Business Minutes & Attachments

Friends Meeting of Washington

Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business Minutes - April 11, 2021

Serving as recording clerk: Amanda Mayer

- Friends approved Amanda Mayer as this month’s acting recording clerk.

Query for Worship Sharing: How do we celebrate the presence of vaccines in our community with mindfulness for many people near and far who do not yet have access?

A Friend shared that vaccine distribution has systemic inequalities as with all parts of our society, and that it is our duty as Quakers to acknowledge and push back on injustice.

Clerk’s Report, April 2021

In Memoriam

- Former member Harry Massey died in early April. Friends shared memories of Harry as a kind soul and expressed sorrow at his passing. The memorial service for former attender Pablo Sanchez will be held via Zoom on Saturday, April 24 at 2:00 pm on Zoom. **Join on Zoom.** For more information, contact Jean Capps, jean_capps@hotmail.com

Upcoming Events

- **Alternatives to Violence Full Basic Training, April 10, 11, 14, 17, 18 (afternoons)**
The Alternatives to Violence Project has a long and proud Quaker-based history of promoting effective methods of conflict reduction/prevention/resolution through a series of

training workshops with prisoners, community groups, schools, and others. FMW's AVP-DC Taskforce (DC's first AVP Chapter) invites you to this upcoming (free) opportunity to receive AVP's full basic training. [Register here!](#) Learn more at avpusa.org. Contact AVP-DC coordinator Zephyr Williams, seuilceleste@gmail.com

- **Prayer Series #2: Rex Ambler's Experiments with Light, Sat, April 24, 3-4:30 pm.**
Join Zoom Meeting. By phone dial: (301) 715 8592. On prompt enter Meeting ID: 893 6559 4910# "Experiments with Light" is a Quaker practice based on early Friends' discoveries and devised in 1996 by Quaker and theologian Rex Ambler, who discovered a process by which the Light can be accessed. This workshop will teach you this process and enhance your ability to find greater inner peace in the stillness. Presenter: FMW member Joseph Izzo, email: jizzo4102@gmail.com, cell: (202) 425-0496.
- **Join WIN to hold DC accountable on promises of affordable housing! Sat, April 24, 10-11:00 am (Virtual and in-person).** Join the Washington Interfaith Network and FMW's WIN team, in-person or via zoom, for an action at **Reservation 13** to let the Deputy Mayor's office know that we will hold them accountable to developing affordable housing at this site. This will be a joyous and spirit-led event including giant kites to be flown on this huge area of open land. (Reservation 13 is bounded by Independence Ave, 18th St, and Massachusetts Ave SE). Parking at St Coletta's School. **Register here to participate on Zoom or in-person.** For more info, contact Elaine Wilson elaineswils@gmail.com, tel: (734) 276-2191.
- **DC Hosts needed for youth immigrant rights protesters, April 29-May 1** Movimiento Cosecha, led by undocumented immigrants, is planning a large May Day protest in D.C. to press for permanent protection and dignity for all 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. Their message is urgent. But given the continued risk of COVID-19, their lodgings must not be in large group settings (like FMW's Meeting House). Cosecha is seeking hosts who can put up out-of-town protesters (all of whom will have been tested for COVID) on April 29, 30 and May 1. If you might be able to host folks, please fill out [this Form](#). Peace & Social Concerns supports this effort, referred by FMW member Katie Breslin. For more information, contact: Natalie Thielen Helper, email: nataliethielenhelper@gmail.com

FMW Community Highlights & Kudos

- An excellent workshop sponsored by Ministry & Worship was held last week to help Friends reach productively across political differences and find common ground.
- Alternatives to Violence (AVP-DC) held a mini-training earlier this month, and its first Full basic workshop is now underway! Contact: Zephyr Williams, seuilceleste@gmail.com
- Easter Sunday: first outdoor worship and First Day School Easter egg hunt! Outdoor worship will be an option from now on as weather permits.

Tenant Updates- Activities at our Meeting House

- **Update on events and rentals (Brian Lutenege)** FMW has seen an increase in rentals during March. We -- and particularly the library and Quaker House Living Room -- have found a niche as a venue for film shoots, primarily for documentaries and educational projects. We have been attracting major media outlets from New York, London, and elsewhere. This includes several repeat clients who seem to come to us first whenever they have a film shoot in DC. During March, film crews were onsite a total of 8 days. In March, we also held our first wedding of 2021 -- a small ceremony and reception in the upper west gardens with 20 guests on a beautiful Saturday afternoon.

Our listings for our garden spaces on Peerspace generate so many inquiries that it has been hard to keep up. We'll be hosting events on just about every weekend this spring, particularly celebratory events such as baby and bridal showers, bar / bat mitzvahs, and memorial services.

Our office spaces are still completely full and there are no clear signs that any vacancies will occur this spring.

Major Business

- **Spiritual State of the Meeting**, second presentation -Sabrina McCarthy
Last month, Ministry and Worship presented the first draft of the Spiritual State of the Meeting for approval to be sent to Baltimore Yearly Meeting. No changes were suggested to Ministry and Worship after last month's Meeting for Business. Friends approved the Spiritual State of the Meeting with thanks to the subcommittee who drafted this [report](#), especially during this difficult time
- **Personal Aid Annual Report** (see [below](#)) - Mary Melchior and Greg Robb
Mary shared that meeting virtually has been difficult, and that needs for Personal Aid often come through more informal networks and meeting face-to-face. She wanted to reiterate that members of the community who need assistance should feel free to reach out, and resources are available for them. A Friend offered help finding vaccine opportunities. Personal Aid Committee could use additional members. Friends accepted this report.
- **Nominating Committee** - Virginia Avanesyan
 - Bobby Trice, Membership. Friends approved this nomination.
 - Elaine Wilson, Membership. Friends approved this nomination.
- **BYM Interim Meeting**-took place virtually on March 6 - Susan Griffin
BYM Interim Meeting had deep but heavy conversations. The former director of the BYM camp Opequon resigned due to unaddressed racial incidents. A Friend asked if the director's resignation letter was publicly available, and it is available on the BYM website. All documents from the BYM Interim Meeting are available here:
<https://t.e2ma.net/message/gzj6ti/omv27fq>
- **Peace & Social Concerns double-header Requests for full FMW support**
 - **Support for US Rejoining Iran Nuclear Deal** (Zephyr Williams) The **National Iranian-American Council (NIAC)** (of which Zephyr is a member) is asking for organizational signons in support of the US rejoining the Iran Nuclear Deal (**Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action-JCPOA**). NIAC held a #ResealtheDeal week of Action March 29-April 2 and continues to seek organizational sign-ons. Peace and Social Concerns supports this effort and requests full Meeting support for this effort, which we believe is well aligned with the Quaker peace testimony. **More info.**
 - A Friend asked if other Meetings in BYM and beyond are signing on to this. Helena answered that while that is an excellent idea, the priority is demonstrating support for rejoining the Iranian-Nuclear Deal. A Friend asked if the statement included asking for withdrawal of sanctions imposed by the Trump administration, and it does. A Friend asked for more details about sanction withdrawal. Helena said the document asks for "compliance for compliance", and Zephyr explained the document focuses on additional sanctions rather than all sanctions. Another Friend urged the Meeting to sign on to this resolution without delay. Friends approved signing on to the National Iranian-American Council's Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.
 - **Election Protection: Sign-on supporting the *For the People Act* (HR1 / SB1)** (Helena Cobban)

The multi-faith network Faithful Democracy Coalition is issuing a call to action to support the *For the People Act (HR1/S1)* through faith organization endorsements and individual actions. The Act supports democratic rights, especially the right to vote. It has been formally introduced in both the House and Senate. Mark-up and passage out of Committee may happen as soon as late April--so now is a very important time to lend support for this bill. FCNL is on the organization's steering committee, and AFSC is a national endorser. Peace and Social Concerns supports this effort and recommends full FMW support. We are asking for Meeting for Business agreement.

A Faithful Democracy partner is offering training on how to organize virtual constituent lobby visits with Senators and in-district (socially distanced) actions to build momentum for the *For the People Act*. (One of these trainings had 50,000 participants!) **Watch the training on Facebook here**. Engage during the Senate recess, and beyond. More information at **FaithfulDemocracy.us/take-action/**

- A Friend shared that this bill is very non-partisan and has been endorsed by a variety of organizations. Another Friend fully endorsed supporting this bill. A Friend asked about the status of the For the People Act. It has currently passed the House of Representatives and is in the Senate. Friends approved.

Other Business

- **Membership Committee** - Rob Farr

Rob Farr encouraged Friends to reach out to anyone associated with the Meeting who might be considering membership to encourage them.

- **Finance & Stewardship Report to Meeting for Business - Giving Budget** (attached) - Dan Dozier

- Dan shared proposed donations for other organizations. These donations are the same as previous years. Friends House is funded from the Senior Center Fund. A Friend asked about the donations to Mary Jane Simpson Scholarship fund which provides scholarships and mentorship for low income DC college students. The funds listed are from our budget and do not include additional funds raised. A Friend suggested additional donations for the William Penn House. Finance and Stewardship will return to next month's Meeting for Business with suggestions for William Penn House donations.
- Friends asked about the tax implications of donating to FCNL. FCNL has a lobbying arm (not tax deductible) and an education arm (tax deductible). A Friend shared that nonprofit organizations like FMW are permitted to donate to lobbying organizations as long as the donation does not represent a significant portion of the nonprofit's budget, which is now and has always been the case for FMW's donations to FCNL. A Friend suggested that each of the recipients give a presentation to Business Meeting or the Meeting at large to tell us about themselves. Another Friend suggested a small committee to synthesize the data from the giving budget as well as Peace & Social Concerns to create a section of the website that lists the entities that have benefitted from our philanthropy. A Friend shared that the donation to SOME is from the Hunger & Homelessness Taskforce.
- Friends approved this budget.

- **Should we hire Zoom technicians to set up and run our hybrid Meetings for Worship?** Implementing a hybrid Meeting for Worship (in person at FMW and online via Zoom) has more technical difficulties. Neil Froemming shared that the new sound system will integrate into a digital conferencing system. A Friend shared that setting this up will also be appealing for event rentals. Another Friend shared that combined Zoom and in-person Meeting can feel disjointed. A Friend shared that they don't feel spiritually centered during their experience as a Zoom Tech and recommended compensation for technical help. Many Friends shared their agreement. It is yet to be determined which committee would be responsible for staffing. Suggestions so far include Ministry and Worship, Personnel, and IT Committee. Additional suggestions can be sent to the clerks. A Friend suggested we have a trial of hybrid Meeting for Worship before making a decision, and recommended Ministry & Worship's input.

ADDENDA: ATTACHED COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ministry & Worship

Draft of the Spiritual State of the Meeting Report for the Year 2020 (3/5/21)

Introduction

Friends Meeting of Washington (FMW) has evolved in 2020 to meet the challenges of the pandemic and provide spiritual comfort and access to our members and attenders. After all the work and expense of renovating our Meeting House in 2018 and 2019, we were only able to enjoy the renovated building for a short time before the pandemic. This report addresses the spiritual health of our Meeting.

Meetings for Worship

FMW is a very diverse religious community with five Meetings for Worship held throughout the week. At the start of the year, FMW had four First Day Meetings for Worship (one at 9:00 a.m., two Meetings at 10:30 a.m., and one at 6:00 p.m.) and a Third Day Meeting for Worship at 6:00 p.m. Since COVID-19 precautions began last spring, FMW has had two First Day Online Meetings for Worship (at 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.); a Third Day Online Meeting for Worship at 6:00 p.m.; and a new Sixth Day Online Meeting for Worship at 12:00 p.m. Two of the First Day Meetings for Worship (one of the 10:30 a.m. Meetings and the 6:00 p.m. Meeting) did not convert to an online platform, with the one 10:30 a.m. Meeting being discontinued and the 6:00 p.m. Meeting being conducted in person with limited attendance. Online meetings are conducted on ZOOM, with volunteers facilitating the technical tasks as "ZOOM technicians." FMW's Administrative Secretary was able to quickly set up ZOOM accounts for Meetings for Worship, and the ZOOM links are published on FMW's website to welcome attenders.

FMW has also held First Day Meetings for Worship in its garden; at Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, D.C.; and at the U.S. Supreme Court, weather permitting, with participants remaining at least six feet apart. When permitted by FMW's Presiding Co-Clerks, FMW has had a First Day Meeting for Worship at 6:00 p.m. in the Meeting House, with participants remaining at least six feet apart.

First Day School

First Day school has persisted online, with occasional outdoor family outings.

Reviving Quaker Adult Religious Education Program

Although FMW has hosted many different presentations and book discussion groups for adults, a formal Quaker Adult Religious Education Program has not been offered for many years. Several Friends have identified a need for a common understanding among Friends of Quaker history, beliefs, traditions and practices. FMW has placed Adult Religious Education under the care of its Ministry and Worship Committee.

The last Quaker Inquirer's class for newcomers and attenders was held over three years ago and was poorly attended. The Meeting has purchased pamphlets from Friends General Conference and other sources that can be sent to newcomers and others by mail. FMW's website is undergoing significant revision to a new host platform. Once the transition has been made, Adult Religious education materials will be uploaded to a new Adult Religious Education page. The Inquirer's class will be revived, but whether it will be presented in person or on ZOOM is still to be determined. Curriculum and materials for the new Inquirer's Class will be distributed to attendees and also uploaded onto the new Adult Religious Education webpage.

Quaker Spiritual Development Programs

In July, a review of FMW's spiritual development programs was conducted. The report concluded that FMW had a variety of programs to offer; however, there was limited communication about the programs or easy access to the offerings and timing. As a result, the Ministry & Worship Committee is developing the Quaker Spiritual Development Programs that incorporate the recurring programs at FMW, as well as developing new programs as needed.

In order to make the programs more accessible to Friends, a monthly calendar was started in November for the Quaker Spiritual Development Programs and is included on the website and the weekly announcements. New programs will continue to be developed in 2021, as needed, and the new website will be a welcomed improvement by providing more visibility and better access to information.

Report

This report was written using feedback from a survey that was sent out to Friends and a ZOOM meeting held with Friends to get input on the following questions:

- How does Spirit prosper at FMW? How has FMW protected Spirit this year?
- *What are Friends in our Meeting doing to support one another? How has our Meeting addressed the conflicts that have arisen this year?*
- *What does spirituality mean to you and to our Meeting? How does our Meeting reflect that? Has it been different or the same during 2020, with the coronavirus pandemic and concern over racial equality, climate change, and the presidential election?*
- Would you like to add anything else?
- Which Meeting for Worship do you principally attend?

1. How does Spirit prosper at FMW? How has FMW protected Spirit this year?

Friends feel Spirit moving through online fellowship. Friends appreciate online meetings for worship; online breakout rooms following the First Day 10:30 a.m. Meeting for Worship; online committee meetings; online spiritual enrichment opportunities; online weekly announcements; and the online monthly newsletter as ways to foster community. Friends note that online activities allow our community to expand outside our geographic area. And Friends see Spirit moving us into witness and service in the Washington, D.C. community, even as we follow physical distancing protocols.

Friends note, though, that, at this time, FMW spiritually nourishes only those who can accommodate to ZOOM. Friends also note that the online platform for meetings for worship and First Day School keeps children and teens separated from the adult worshipping community on First Day. Young Adult Friends have requested ZOOM eldering for the First Day 10:30 a.m. Online Meeting for Worship.

FMW's First Day 9:00 a.m. Online Meeting for Worship attracts Friends who are nourished by silence. In that Meeting, messages are infrequent. Sharing about personal lives occurs after meeting for worship. Political issues are "left outside." Friends who attend that Meeting have formed strong bonds of community.

2. What are Friends in our Meeting doing to support one another? How has our Meeting addressed the conflicts that have arisen this year?

Friends repeatedly expressed that Meeting for Worship continues to nurture the Spirit, providing a profound experience transcending ZOOM. Friends hold the space for what is present in each other and offer support by holding others in the Light when difficulties are shared. The overall experience was that Meeting for Worship provides a beautiful, nurturing and loving time and experience and shows the strong mutual caring and support present at FMW.

Friends in the FMW community provide help and support to fellow Friends who have experienced illness and losses during the isolation. Bringing back a space for sharing joys and sorrows has been extremely helpful in strengthening the bonds of Friends and providing comfort and connection to those suffering an illness or loss.

There is appreciation for the proactive approach the Co-Clerks used early on in the pandemic to address the needs of Friends by providing virtual support allowing continual engagement with FMW. Friends have found support in a wide range of workshops, gatherings via ZOOM which have enabled Friends to come together to coordinate good works in the world. One Friend expressed appreciation for the programming provided by the Peace and Social Concerns Committee that addresses interests of concern, including the Polar Bear Plunge for the Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN). The Zimmers (*i.e.*, dinners by ZOOM) and breakout rooms after the First Day 10:30 Meeting for Worship were mentioned frequently as functions that provide enjoyment and an opportunity to meet in small groups. Sharing after the First Day 9:00 a.m. Meeting was expressed as a time of community and support.

Friends have found support through FMW committee participation. Participation in Meeting for Business has resulted in check-in e-mails and calls from Friends who have reached out to support others who are going through difficult times. Young Adult Friends meet weekly, which also provides an opportunity for staying connected.

We have been addressing the issue of racism through workshops and we continue to learn from each other. As a result of Black Lives Matter protests this year, FMW has been working at becoming an anti-racist faith community. We use these queries in Meeting for Business and all of our decision processes in order to become aware of the racism that is built into our culture and our Meeting and work to heal it:

How will we provide opportunities for those most likely to be directly affected by the choices we are contemplating to influence the decision making process?

How could the choices we are contemplating affect those who have been harmed by systemic, institutional, interpersonal and/or internal racism?

To what degree have privilege, class, stereotypes, assumptions, and our ability to include other perspectives affected this decision making process?

How will the choices we are contemplating promote equity, diversity, and inclusiveness? Will they enable us to be more friendly and whole, engaging across racial divisions?

How do the choices we are contemplating support the declaration of our Yearly Meeting that we aspire to be an anti-racist faith community?

3. What does spirituality mean to you and to our Meeting? How does our Meeting reflect that? Has it been different or the same during 2020, with the coronavirus pandemic and concern over racial equality, climate change, and the presidential election?

Friends describe their spirituality with beauty and depth:

- Spirituality is a strong bond that connects me to others who want to explore and share in the mystery of an energy/God force that binds us together.

- Spirituality is bringing the Divine into each moment of Human Life.
- Seeking, being among other seekers who are not bound by dogma but by a belief in continuing revelation. We are tolerant of many ways of experiencing the Divine, which is an expression of the welcome we seek to provide to others.
- Spirituality is a way to transcend the difficult moments and find some peace and maybe even joy with connecting to reality at a deeper level.
- Spirituality means connection to each other and within myself. Staying faithful to community and being present for others is how I reflect that.
- Spirituality is the search for and reflection on the true values that lead our moral and ethical lives and inform our responses to the highs and lows of life.
- Daily practice has never been more important, to me -- love hearing from members about where they are drawing strength, be it podcasts, or watching nests or new growth or rain etc....it means being watered by all these things and more and trusting that in "wintering," that growth is happening, whether we can see it or not. It is this rich and varied landscape of FMW that keeps me and holds me, as rigidity and chaos abound; it is a renewal of knowing that there is this expanse within us, together, that is alive and well.
- A Friend appreciates the intense focus provided by the Thursday Spiritual Formation group and other spiritually-focused retreats provided by the Meeting.
- A Friend is still exploring the source of Spirituality, whether it resides in our brains rather than being drawn to us through a mystical process.

For many Friends, spirituality manifests through action for social justice:

- participating in silent vigils to support racial justice, in union with other faith communities along 16th Street, N.W.
- participating in "Choose Democracy" trainings and planning actions in the event of an attempted political coup.
- The Meeting has stepped up with staying faithful to being of this world and in this world by continuing to witness in safe but an outward manner on issues of justice and equality. It's in being adaptable that the Spirit moves us.
- There is momentum from our community to stand up to systemic racism, connect to organizations that worked to ensure full participation in the election and raised money for and awareness of issues surrounding the deterioration of our environment.

Community Support

- Friends held each other in the Light as the pandemic affected & infected members and by doing personal aid by shopping for infected members under quarantine. We lovingly supported those who experienced deaths in their families. The virtual community gave us a sense of stability and cohesion during the truly chaotic political atmosphere leading up to and beyond the November national elections.
- The multiple challenges we are facing makes FMW more important as a spiritual home where I can share with like minded Friends. Even though there has been less physical contact because of the pandemic, I think the spiritual link is stronger and feel that I can rely on the Meeting for emotional and spiritual support if needed.
- I feel a deeper connection to the community, and thus the spirit, since the events of 2020.
- I believe that our Meeting strove harder to maintain connection in our community once the coronavirus was upon us.

- I am no longer in DC and meeting virtually makes me feel like part of the whole.
- Like everyone, I miss our coming together for in-person worship and the ease for connection during fellowship afterward. I think that especially for new people, people not in a committee, and people less comfortable with sharing online, it must be much harder to feel connected and in community. I think that it is important that we keep working at that.
- It's been a mixed bag for 2020. Dealing with isolation and depression since March has been hard. I miss being together in person.
- My spirituality has not changed during [the] coronavirus pandemic or the election. I have found that Meeting has been also unchanged fundamentally: there is a continued concern for equality, stewardship of the earth, the peace testimony and a yearning for and striving towards simplicity. The form of our worship has changed, but I don't think we have changed who we are.
- Our virtual experience obviously has made our religious experience different this year, but we've done a good job of "keeping the faith" at the same time that we've experienced the many stressors and challenges referenced in the question. And we are grateful for our FMW community.
- When the pandemic hit, we were concerned that the depth of personal connection and sharing would decline when the meeting became virtual. If anything, just the opposite has happened. Interpersonal sharing and a feeling of group cohesion seem to have deepened.

In spite of the success of the transition to ZOOM, Ministry & Worship Committee acknowledges the unavoidable loss of our in-person gatherings and we feel sorrowful about not meeting the need for in-person worship.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic, political upheavals, the constraints put upon our lives, and the losses Friends experienced, affected every aspect of our life in the Meeting. Friends affirmed that neither the pandemic nor the sociopolitical stresses nor the move to online worship shook our core spirituality. We look forward with hope that, given the trajectory of the disease and the availability of vaccines, we may soon get back to a more normal community experience. Friends realize that the Meeting is not the building, but it is, in fact, the community of people, where the Spirit is alive.

Addendum: Friends' Responses to Survey Questions

#####

Faithful Democracy call for organizational sign-ons and individual action to support Election Protection (For the People Act (HR1 / S1))

The multi-faith network Faithful Democracy Coalition is issuing a call to action to support the *For the People Act (HR1/S1)* through individual actions and faith organization endorsements. (FCNL is on the organization's steering committee, and AFSC is a national endorser.)

The Act has been called "transformational" in supporting democratic rights, especially the right to vote. "With the *For the People Act* formally introduced as the top priority of the Senate, an uphill battle to passage begins in earnest. We expect the next steps to follow shortly after Senate recess (March 29 - April 9). The "mark-up" and passage out of committee will likely happen before the end of April. Once S.1 moves out of committee, the path to passage becomes murky and the timeline is unclear. However, there's no doubt that passage will be difficult and could be blocked by the filibuster.

A Faithful Democracy partner offers trainings on how to organize virtual constituent lobby visits with Senators and in-district (socially distanced) visibility actions to earn media coverage and build momentum for the *For the People Act*. (One of these trainings had 50,000 participants!) **Watch the training on FaceBook here.** Engage during the Senate recess, and beyond. More information at FaithfulDemocracy.us/take-action/

REPORT TO BUSINESS MEETING FROM PERSONAL AID COMMITTEE

Dear Friends

Pre-pandemic the Personal Aid committee did most of its work at the meeting house and adjusting to the new reality was hard. We are gaining new momentum in 2021.

The Clerks of the meeting asked us if we wanted to merge into the Membership Committee. We decided to meet together with Membership over the course of 2021 to see if there is a way forward together. Those meetings started in January and have continued. We are examining how other meetings are organized.

The committee has obtained copies of a resource guide from Iona Social Services. We have contacted local places of worship and agencies to ascertain what resources are available to help Friends and attenders. We have had a lovely correspondence with the pastor of St. Margarets, located up the hill on Connecticut Ave.

We are here to directly support Friends and attenders in need. This year we have connected some Friends with community resources. We do have limited funds to help as well. There are also funds for scholarships to attend in-person Quaker conferences and retreats. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

We are also working with other Friends at the meeting on repeating a telephone tree put in place early in the pandemic to see if we are meeting the needs of the community..

We could use more Friends on our committee.

Yours in the Light.

Mary Melchior, Clerk, Personal Aid

Finance & Stewardship Committee

Report to Meeting for Business re Giving Budget

April 11, 2021

Friends, Here is the Finance & Stewardship Committee's FY 2022 Giving Budget recommendations for consideration at the April Meeting for Business:

	FY 2022
	Draft Budget
Friends House	\$1,000
Mary Jane Simpson Scholarships	5,000
American Friends Service Committee	1,000
Council of Churches of Greater Washington	150
Friends Historical Library	300

Friends Wilderness Center 500

Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camping Program 2,000

Friends Committee on National Legislation 2,000

Total \$11,950

In addition to the Giving Budget, FMW gives \$6,175 to pay for food that SOME uses to pay for food they distribute to people experiencing homelessness. This contribution is reflected in the budget allocation for the Peace & Social Concerns Committee.

#####

END APRIL MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES

FMW in new Spring Dress

In FMW's new West Gardens (the courtyard), the Coral Honeysuckle vines and Crossvines are bursting into bloom along with the Dwarf Chokeberries; the new White Redbuds were blooming as they went into the soil. Moss Phlox is out; and even a few of the baby Hardy Geraniums are offering a blossom or two. The Prairie Dropseed grass and Creek Sedge are growing, and most other plants are doing well. It's starting to look like a garden out there! Upstairs in the back we have new Woodvamp (climbing hydrangea) vines against the tall Embassy retaining wall, and ferns and Pachysandra and other stuff starting to fill in in front. ALL OF THESE are native perennials.



One of two white Redbud trees planted in April.



New hardy geranium.

In the East Garden the peony and lilac are in full bloom, and the first roses are beginning to appear.



