

# FMW Newsletter, November 2017

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## **Friends Meeting of Washington**

### **Order of Worship**

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

**October 8, 2017**

The meeting for business began at 12:20 p.m. with 24 individuals present.

Clerk: Gene Throwe

Alternate Clerk: Grant Thompson

Interim Recording Secretary: Virginia Avanesyan

**Query for Worship Sharing:** *How can I be an instrument for justice in a divided community?*

The Clerk asked for and received approval of Virginia Avanesyan to be interim recording clerk.

### **Clerk's Report:**

- Members of the Sanctuary Taskforce are feeling a strong leading to provide housing to undocumented individuals at risk of deportation. They are holding a threshing session next Sunday to discuss this. All are welcome.

- Many thanks to Friends Committee on National Legislation for providing training and support to us regarding the struggle for immigrant rights. Four people from FMW used this training to lobby seven Senators, asking them to support a clean version of the Dream Act.
- Last week, the kids from First Day School made cookies for us to donate to the Grate Patrol, with the help of Steve Brooks and CJ Lewis from the Hunger & Homelessness Taskforce.
- On Saturday, October 21 from 1 to 4, we will hold the second workshop on Living with Grief and Loss, facilitated by Mary Ann Cook. A \$20 donation is suggested. All are welcome. RSVP to the office.
- On Saturday, October 28 from 9 am to 1 pm, we will receive a training given by the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal church on listening to immigrants and displaced persons. FMW is partnering with this historic church, along with AFSC-DC, to reach out to local communities from Africa to offer listening and responsive support. All are welcome.
- On November 2 through 5, there will be a Retreat for Friends of Color at Stony Point Center (Stony Point, NY.) Friends General Conference's Ministry on Racism Program is sponsoring an opportunity for Friends of Color and their families to come together to build multigenerational community. Friends of European descent are welcome provided they are attending with a family member (e.g. spouse, child) who is a Person of Color. For more information or to register, go to [www.fgcquaker.org/2017-retreat-friends-color](http://www.fgcquaker.org/2017-retreat-friends-color).
- The Shoebox Project will be held on December 9 and 10. Meeting for Business will be shifted to the third First Day (December 17).

## **Major Business:**

### **Proposal for Ad Hoc Workgroup, Personnel Committee** – Marsha Holliday and Jim Steen

Marsha Holliday presented a proposal from the Personnel Committee to create an Ad Hoc Workgroup to Review FMW Staffing Structure and Related Personnel Policies and Procedures, henceforth to be referred as the Staffing Workgroup. The purpose of the Staffing Workgroup will be to evaluate the overall structure of FMW Staffing as well as policies and procedures relating to the staff positions. The clerk of the Staffing Workgroup will come from the Personnel Committee, and they have selected Bill Strein. Most FMW committees that have a vested interest in the Staffing Workgroup have already signed onto the proposal, and the Personnel Committee is waiting to hear from the Religious Education Committee and Trustees. The proposal is included as an attachment. Friends approved the creation of the Staffing Workgroup.

### **Proposed changes to the storm water management plan** – Merry Pearlstein

Merry Pearlstein presented the FMW Renovation Project Status Update, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. She thanked Neil Froemming for putting the Update together. Since the development of the original storm water management plan (which called for building a cistern under the West Garden), a more cost efficient option has been developed that involves creating a bio-retention pond (rain garden system) in the East Garden. The Task Force is interviewing candidates for a Construction Manager position to help evaluate construction bids and options.

A Friend applauded the development of a rain garden plan, noting the possibility of obtaining a grant to cover part of the cost. Another Friend noted that such grants are not available to support projects that are required by law as in our case. A Friend recommended touring some of the existing rain gardens in the Washington region.

A Friend asked how the substantial savings in natural gas use for heating the buildings would be achieved. A Friend from the Capital Improvements Task Force explained that heating and cooling would be fueled with electricity rather than gas; a portion of the electricity will be provided by solar panels on the Meeting House. Friend from CITF said that gas usage had declined because the new heat pump system is powered solely by electricity. It was also noted that the solar panels which will be installed on the meetinghouse roof next month are expected to generate about a third of the Meeting's total electrical energy needs.

### **Peace and Social Concerns Annual Report – Michael Duvall**

Michael Duvall presented the report of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, a copy of which is attached to these Minutes. The Committee has been energized this year as we have responded to the need for hospitality in the Meetinghouse for social activism in Washington, including the following notable efforts:

- Providing Hospitality and programs for marchers for the Women's March
- Hosting marchers for the Climate March
- The movement to support immigrants through the Sanctuary Task Force bringing groups interested in immigration action to the Meetinghouse.

The Peace and Social Concerns Committee is appreciative of the survey on racial inclusion on which members David Etheridge, Debby Churchman, Marcia Reecer, Jim Steen, and others have collaborated. The efforts of various other working groups have complemented the committee's mission.

The budget of the committee has been ample since Peace and Social Concerns Committee has benefited from donations for their many undertakings. Additionally, the committee received donations for the two weekends that we hosted marchers at FMW and other donations. The committee has made donations from their budget for the Shoebox Project and other works of the Meeting.

The Meeting accepted the report with gratitude for the hard work of those working on the many projects listed.

### **Hunger and Homelessness Task Force.**

The Meeting accepted the Hunger and Homelessness Task Force annual report.

### **Naming of Search Committee:**

The clerks noted that the Search Committee is a special committee whose members are suggested by the Clerk of the Meeting subject to approval of the Meeting for Business. The Search Committee is

responsible for suggesting individuals willing and capable to serve on the Nominating Committee. The names put forward by the Search Committee are subject to approval by the Meeting for Business. The meeting approved the nomination of Arne Paulsen and Michael Beer to serve on the Search Committee.

## **Climate of Meeting for Worship**

A Friend addressed the Meeting for Business with a concern that our Meetings for Worship should be places safe from hate speech. The disturbances to worship in Meeting for Worship were notable this First Day. The Friend suggested that we ask our Ministry and Worship Committee to devise recommendations for making our Meetings for Worship a safe space where vocal ministry that reflects the inner light is encouraged.

A Friend from the Ministry and Worship committee explained that the Ministry and Worship Committee is not of one mind about how to manage the impact of messages delivered by people expressing disruptive and hateful sentiments. The Friend said that he would take the concern back to the Ministry and Worship Committee. Other Friends commented on the ubiquitous presence of challenging participants, urging us to exhibit patience, recognizing that such challenges provide an opportunity for growth. A Friend commented that we can use our institutional and social resources to establish boundaries. A Friend questioned what we would do when the boundaries we establish are crossed by people who struggle to contain their ire during vocal ministry; he questioned whether we would read a Friend out of the meeting. A Friend on the Ministry and Worship Committee added that consequences might not necessarily include reading a member out of the Meeting, but we do need to set firm boundaries regarding vocal participation in Meeting functions. A Friend agreed to take the concern to Ministry and Worship Committee for further consideration.

The Meeting for Business concluded with 19 people in attendance at 2:00 p.m.

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## **PROPOSAL**

### **Ad Hoc Workgroup to Review FMW Staffing Structure and Related Personnel Policies and Procedures**

(Short Title: Staffing Workgroup)

#### Background

For decades prior to 2012 FMW had a staffing structure comprised of a full-time Administrative Secretary, a full-time or half-time Assistant Administrative Secretary, a part-time Bookkeeper, and a variety of very part-time employees, such as the child care workers or the Friendly Office Presences for weddings or other events. Under that structure the Administrative secretary was responsible for nearly everything not done directly by committees themselves, including all aspects of property management, and all employees<sup>[1]</sup> reported to the Administrative Secretary.

Beginning in 2012 with the hiring of Debby Churchman as the Administrative Secretary and Event Manager, and Ken Orvis as the Property Manager, and a bit later, Windy Cooler as Religious

Education Coordinator, the staff structure changed in number of very significant ways. This includes at least the following changes: (1) creation of a dedicated Property Manager position .5 FTE or greater, thereby removing most of the property issues from the Administrative Secretary; (2) creation of a formal Event Manager function, combined presently in the same position as the Administrative Secretary[2]; (3) creation of a part-time, paid Religious Education Coordinator; (4) designated the Property Committee and the Religious Education Committee as the supervisors, respectively, of (a) the Property Manager, and (b) the Religious Education Coordinator and the child care workers[3]; and (5) as the result of designating committees as supervisors, conceptually redefined the Administrative Secretary position such that that individual is no longer the chief administrator of the Meeting, although retaining responsibility for supervising various part-time office staff workers.

### Reasons for Proposing Staffing Workgroup

- Although the performance of *individuals* holding the various positions have been evaluated a variety of ways, the *staffing structure, itself*, has not been reviewed since its inception five years ago.
- The recently approved plan to finance the renovations calls for substantially increased event rental income, particularly with regard to an increase in wedding bookings. All concerned recognize that this will require additional event management and promotion of our facilities as venues for weddings or other large events. This raises the question as to whether, post-construction, FMW will need more staff resources dedicated to event management.
- Our current personnel policies as documented in *FMW's Statement of Employment Policies and Procedures* have not kept pace in numerous ways with the changes in the staffing patterns described above. Any changes in the current staffing pattern post-construction might require additional revisions. In any case, FMW, i.e. paid and unpaid staff and all Meeting members and attenders need to have a clear written understanding of the current staffing pattern.

### Proposal

The Personnel Committee proposes that the Meeting form an Ad Hoc Workgroup to Review FMW Staffing Structure and Related Personnel Policies and Procedures (Short Title: Staffing Workgroup) to review, and make any resulting recommendations to, (1) the current staffing structure, and (2) current personnel policies and procedures, and present any such recommendations for changes, where required, to Meeting for Business no later than its April 2018 meeting. Major staffing changes, if any, would be recommended beginning with the FY19 year (July 1, 2018).

*Workgroup Structure.* The Staffing Workgroup would be composed of one representative from each of the following committees: Finance and Stewardship, Personnel, Property, Religious Education, and Trustees. The Workgroup would be clerked by the representative from Personnel, given that committee's current function of overseeing personnel policies and procedures.

[1] In principle, but often not in practice, even the Bookkeeper was jointly supervised by the Administrative Secretary and the Finance and Stewardship Committee.

[2] There is some uncertainty, and unclear documentation, as to whether the Meeting intended to create a combined position titled "Administrative Secretary and Event Manager" or intended to create two positions, but gave them combined to the same individual.

[3] In 2017 FMW's *Employment Policies* manual was revised to indicate that the Bookkeeper is supervised solely by the Finance and Stewardship Committee, but this revision was mostly simply documenting the practice that had been in place across several previous Administrative Secretaries.

## FMW Renovation Project Status Update

October 2017

### The Plans

The current plan is not much changed from that illustrated and explained in the project video. You can find the video on YouTube by searching for “FMW Renovation”.

There have been four significant changes since the video was made:

- **A new room.** Because the renovation already encloses most of the Carriage House deck (the open deck on the second floor between Carriage House and Quaker House) and because of some roofline issues, that space will be enclosed, creating a new room with a vaulted ceiling, echoing Quaker House Living Room, but a little smaller than our Library.

Together with the wide, new corridor, this will create a new space around Quaker House Living Room that is as large as the Living Room, giving that room much more flexibility and usefulness.

- **A smaller Parlor.** The video shows part of the Parlor space being taken to provide a new hallway, and the remainder of the Parlor being combined with the Library to create a larger room.

Instead, the Library will be unchanged and the reduced Parlor will be kept as a sort of anteroom.

- **A bigger Assembly Room.** The plan now provides for replacing the wall that now separates the Assembly Room from the Children’s Library with a set of folding doors, allowing the two spaces to be combined into a larger Assembly Room. The floor will be upgraded, the ceiling raised and remodeled, and the fluorescent light panels replaced with new LED drop lights.
- **A rain garden.** The most affordable way to meet the requirements of the DC stormwater management rules involves putting a rain garden, about the size of the North Room, at the bottom of the East Garden, down near the Florida Avenue wall.

This “bioretention pond” will capture some of the stormwater that now flows off of our campus during heavy rains, reducing our contribution to the pollution of the Potomac River.

### The Permits

The site plan permit application was submitted in May and the building permit application in June. Processing of those permits is nearing completion with no major problems encountered so far.

We will have to submit revisions to the permit applications for the new Assembly Room and rain garden modifications, but we believe we will be able to go forward with construction in a few months.

### The Mortgage

Sandy Spring Bank has approved raising the limit on our construction mortgage from \$3 million to \$3.5 million to accommodate the increased cost estimates we have received. We hope we won't need all that, but at least we're prepared.

## **The Budget**

Recent preconstruction estimates suggest a construction contract of around \$3.8 million (but we think we can reduce this by \$200K or more). Add allowances of about \$600K for remaining design, permit, administration, and construction contingencies, and the remaining project spending is about \$4.4 million, of which \$900K will come from current reserves — mostly the Building Campaign Fund — and ongoing contributions.

## **The Schedule**

We hope to be ready to begin discussing bids and contracts in November and are in the process of hiring an experienced project manager to help us through that stage, to reduce risk and potential post-contract costs.

We now think we could begin work as early as January.

The proposed schedule calls for construction to be completed in 10 or 11 months, with demolition and site work (lots of noise and mud) the first 4 months, followed by construction of the new elevator tower, lobby, and corridors for four months, and interior finishing and cleanup for three months.

## **The Planet**

The Meeting continues to move in accordance with our desire to walk more gently upon the earth. We will have spent more than \$400,000 in recent years to be more environmentally responsible. Some of that is in the renovation plan, and some is the result of ongoing efforts by the Property Committee.

- **Stormwater Management.** The planned rain garden and a green roof on top of the new lobby and corridors will enable us to comply with the District's stringent 2013 Stormwater Management Guidelines. The cost has been high, in both time and money, but we can feel very good about helping to reduce sewage overflows into the Potomac River.
- **Heating and Cooling.** Partly in preparation for the renovation, Property Committee replaced the old boiler and 32 radiators in Quaker House and Carriage House with efficient new split system heat pumps, reducing Quaker House gas usage from more than \$8,000 per year to zero. That system will be extended to serve the new spaces created by the renovation.

In addition, the new construction will serve as a blanket, reducing heat loss through the old and uninsulated walls of those buildings.

The electricity to power those new heat pumps will partly come from:

- **A 27KW Solar Panel Array**, which the Property Committee is about to install on the west roof of the Meeting Room. We will be generating about a third of the electricity we use, and the new system is expected to pay for itself in about five years and generate additional savings of as much as \$200K in coming years to help pay the mortgage.

- **Our Busy Campus.** Few things are more environmentally wasteful than building and operating empty, unused building spaces. Thanks to Property Committee outreach, our spaces are being used more and more by other members of our community.

The new building revenue provided by this outreach helps to make it possible to maintain and renovate our buildings.

## **The Campaign**

Since the meeting approved the current design concept in 2012, the Campaign has taken in about \$700K. An additional \$100K remained from earlier contributions. About \$200K has been spent on the last five years of design work, leaving about \$600K in the fund.

We have pledges of more than \$600K in contributions during the next four years. FMW Friends have been very faithful in contributing pledged amounts, for which we are very grateful.

Any additional giving during the next year will reduce the size of our mortgage and cut our financing costs. \$100 donated now will save the Meeting more than \$200 in future mortgage payments.

## **Hunger & Homelessness Taskforce Annual Report**

### **October 2017**

The HHTF has four ongoing monthly service projects as well as the annual Shoebox Project. The four monthly projects are:

Preparing breakfast at So Others Might Eat on the first Saturday of each month.

Preparing and delivering an evening meal consisting of a bag lunch and soup through the Salvation Army's Grate Patrol on the first Wednesday evening of each month.

Preparing and serving lunch at Church of the Pilgrims on the first Sunday of each month.

Preparing and serving dinner at Christ House on the fourth Sunday of each month.

All these activities are well supported by volunteers and provide an opportunity to socialize and meet new people while helping vulnerable people in DC. The First Day School has begun preparing homemade cookies for Grate Patrol. We look forward to this ongoing collaboration. The Shoebox Project continues, thanks to the generosity of the employees of the World Bank. The Community Connections Program at the World Bank is our primary source of funding although due to a switch to electronic solicitation, the amount of funding is significantly less than peak. However, we're on track to produce the same number of boxes as last year. Shoebox Project weekend is scheduled for December 9 & 10, 2017. If renovation has started, we're prepared to make creative on-the-fly adjustments.

The HHTF would like to thank the volunteers, First Day School participants, well wishers and the meeting as a whole for their support.



## **Peace and Social Concerns,**

### **Annual Report**

**2017**

Along with the many pressing social concerns this year has been regular reflection and action by Friends. Friends took initiative in leading the way in addressing many issues as well as joining in and supported existing efforts. The committee seeks to support the concerns of Friends and has done so in a range of areas this year.

#### **Hospitality:**

Shortly after the 2017 Presidential election, an energy and desire to become more active and civically engaged emerged with in the Meeting and throughout the country. Seeking to harness and support this energy within the Meeting, PSC sponsored opening the Meeting to offer hospitality to people coming for the Women's March. The Meeting came together with a truly collective effort, with nearly forty-percent of the active members/attenders involved in the efforts to put on a series of events and offer overnight hospitality to Marchers.

In addition to hosting and feeding the Marchers that weekend, the committee sponsored and Meeting hosted:

- Bystander nonviolence and Active Bystander Training
- Nonviolent Rapid Response Network Kickoff
- Womens March sign making
- Rise Up singing with the Magpies
- Turning on the Light and Being the Change we want to See: FCNL, Standing Rock, Quaker Uprising and others
- Turning on the Light in Washington, How to Speak Truth to Power with Congressman Jamie Raskin

In addition to making it feasible and affordable for many to attend the Women's March, the activities brought together the Meeting community and had the Meeting house buzzing with activity. The meeting has a long history of offering hospitality. The ability to support protesters during the Vietnam war was one of the motivations for acquiring Quaker House. Friends commented on being glad to see the Meeting used in this way again.

The Committee sponsored hospitality again the last weekend of April, hosting participants in the People's Climate March during the last weekend of April. Guests were primarily part of groups from

Warren Wilson College and a Native American tribe in New York.

As word has spread of our offering hospitality, we anticipate further requests for hospitality and appreciate the team efforts that made these events possible and successful.

### **Connecting Friends:**

In the Fall of 2016, PSC created and circulated a survey to determine the skills and causes of interests of Friends. The responses are a useful tool to connect Friends with others with similar interests, relevant expertise, and guiding decisions about what to focus our efforts on . We hope to use this more and build on these efforts.

We also sponsored events to connect Friends with opportunities and other work such as hosting a presentation/program report (Feb 19th) of AFSC and DC Juvenile Center.

In September, P&SC began putting out a newsletter to inform the community of P&SC related efforts among members and within the Meeting, and to bring people together who might realize they share concerns. This effort is spearheaded by Beth Cogswell. We welcome your contributions.

### **Racial Justice/Inclusion:**

At the July 2016 Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business the Peace and Social Concerns Committee recommended, and the Meeting approved, the creation of a Task Force on Race under the care of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee with David Etheridge and Debby Churchman in leadership. Jim Steen and Marcia Reecer later joined the Taskforce.

Earlier this year the Taskforce developed a questionnaire entitled “Assessing Racial Inclusion and Justice at the Friends. Meeting of Washington. Taskforce members have begun meeting with FMW committees and other groups to seek their thoughts on responding to the questionnaire and possibly making revisions to it. Taskforce members are also exploring with those committees and other groups how those entities might contribute to the Meeting’s effort to lower existing barriers to the participation of people of color in our Meeting. Those visits will probably continue into early 2018. Once the visits are done the Taskforce will report to the Meeting what it has learned from those visits and make recommendations for next steps.

### **Sanctuary**

Friends began meeting in January discussing their concerns over the immigrant ban and considering involvement in sanctuary efforts. In February, PSC took on the group as a task force under our care, which was presented to Business meeting in March. Elaine Wilson and Jim Bell are co-chairing the task force that presently has around 15 active members and holds meetings once a month.

### *Informed Engagment:*

The Task Force has thoroughly researched the issues, possibilities and risks surrounding various actions. They have taken numerous steps to be involved and informed:.

- Attending a number of sessions organized by DMV Sanctuary Congregations and Sanctuary DMV on how to accompany an immigrant to an ICE interview and Know your Rights Trainings.
- Organized and hosted session on legal issues of Sanctuary by Washington Lawyers Committee Director of Litigation---34 persons attended
- Joined BYM Working Group on Refugees, Immigration, and Sanctuary
- One member has enrolled in a 40 hr. course in Atlanta, GA to eventually be qualified to be a “non-attorney representative” on legal aspects of immigration cases to be able to represent immigrants in the courts after certification by the Dept. of Justice

### *Taking action*

- 4 members lobbied Senators Kaine, Cardin and Van Hollen, Sen. Sasse of Nebraska and Sen. Toomey of PA on passing a “clean” DACA bill
- Organized and hosted one Accompaniment session given by Sanctuary DMV
- Several members have joined the DC Detention Visitation network and have visited detainees in detention centers on 3 occasions
- Assisted a LGBT activist with renewing his work permit for 2 yrs. by contribution \$300 toward the cost of the permit

### *Several additional steps and actions being planned:*

- an orientation/training session facilitated by the DC Detention Visitation Network to qualify members of the Meeting and area Meetings to be able to visit immigrants in the Detention centers in MD and VA
- organizing a strategy planning with AFSC-DC Peace and Economic Justice and Metropolitan African Methodist Church and a training on listening skills to be able to meet with African Immigrants to assess their needs, ambitions, problems, etc. This will take place on Oct., 28 and all area Friends Meeting have been invited to attend.
- Planning a session in January to be facilitated by the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) on issues such as Islamophobia
- seeking greater coordination and collaboration with the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church on immigration issues and hopefully visitation activities between FMW and Metro AME

### *Further Discernment:*

The Task Force is in the process of discernment regarding hosting an immigrant facing deportation on FMW campus and is preparing a draft proposal regarding the same. To further this process with the Meeting, Task Force will be meeting with Property Committee this coming week, will hold threshing sessions, and has requested to present to Trustees during Oct. Meeting. The Task Force has begun putting together funds to support such an effort if it were to go forward and currently has \$1000 in a fund (\$500 from PSC and \$500 from fundraising).

### **Other Efforts**

The committee made donations to the Shoebox project (\$200) and the Quaker presence at Pride Parade. We spent \$350.44 on providing hospitality but generated an income of [around \$2000 which was donated to Capital Campaign](figure and transfer need to be confirmed).

We brought before the Meeting a Minute in support of Standing Rock Sioux against the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline, which was adopted.

*The committee* expanded our 'fence ministry' with a new banner in December on the front fence saying Love Thy Neighbor (No exceptions). In July, our Black Lives Matter banner was vandalized and we replaced it with a duplicate.

Numerous other small events were sponsored by the Peace and Social Concerns committee and several other efforts are currently in progress. This includes support for "returning citizens", a series of talks on race by local scholars, interfaith efforts.

We seek to be responsive to Friends leadings. We welcome your questions, requests, and ideas.

(This ends the Minutes & Reports from the October 2017 Meeting for Business)

## **UPCOMING EVENTS – November 2017**

**November 1: Reception for new head of Ramallah Friends School**, Adrian Moody, from 6:30 to 8:30 at Sidwell Friends Lower School in Bethesda. Refreshments will be served. For details: Jane Meleney Coe, [bethesdafm@jgc.org](mailto:bethesdafm@jgc.org), 301.320.5083.

**November 2-3: FCNL Quaker Public Policy Institute and Lobby Days** Friends Committee on National Legislation will offer training and a toolbox for advocacy. For details, see: <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/annual-meeting-quaker-public-policy-institute-2017-27>

**November 2 – 5: Retreat for Friends of Color** FGC's Ministry on Racism Program is sponsoring a fall gathering for Friends of Color and their immediate family members at Stony Point Center in New York. This is an opportunity for Friends of Color and their families to come together to build multi-generational community through:

- Mutual Support and Sharing

- Worship & Exploring our Faith
- Sharing ways to heal ourselves in these turbulent times
- Spend time tightening our bonds

Friends of European descent are welcome if they attend with a family member who is a Person of Color. For details: <https://www.fgcquaker.org/2017-retreat-friends-color>

**November 4 - 5 – Junior Young Friends Conference, Adelphi Friends Meeting (Hyattsville, MD)** Junior Young Friends should plan to begin arriving at 10:00am on Saturday. 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 [Jossie Dowling](#). (301-774-7663) Please remember that the deadline to register and be guaranteed a slot is one week before the conference (October 27). Any one registering after that date will be placed on a waiting list and may not be able to attend.

**November 5 – A White Historian Explores Black Voting Rights, Friends Meeting of Washington (Washington, DC)** In response to continuing police shootings, to #BlackLivesMatter, and to the 2015 murders at Charleston’s Emanuel AME Church, historian Susan Strasser seeks to serve people grappling with contemporary issues of race and racism. Her series of illustrated talks, “A White Historian Reads Black History,” has already discussed slavery and lynching. This new talk offers an overview of African American voting rights, from the promise of Reconstruction through Jim Crow and the Civil Rights movement to the issues in today’s news. Dr. Strasser, Richards Professor of American History Emerita at the University of Delaware ([www.susanstrasser.net](http://www.susanstrasser.net)), is a prize-winning historian. Her work on the history of consumer culture has been praised by the New Yorker for “retrieving what history discards: the taken-for-granted minutiae of everyday life.” The program starts at 1:00pm. For more information, contact David Etheridge. ([david.etheridge@verizon.net](mailto:david.etheridge@verizon.net))

**November 11: BYM Called Interim Meeting** There will be a special Yearly Meeting Interim Meeting from 1 to 4 at Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting, 17715 Meeting House Rd., to consider two items: the budget and the Growing a Diverse Leadership Committee For details: [susan.kaul@gmail.com](mailto:susan.kaul@gmail.com)

**November 11: Friends Historical Panel on Lucretia Mott** Friends Historical Association invites us to its annual meeting at Arch Street Meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> and Arch Streets, in Philadelphia, PA to hear a panel discussion of Lucretia Mott: Taking a Stand. The panel will be at 1:30 pm, but you may enjoy lunch beforehand, if you register as soon as possible: [pha@haverford.edu](mailto:pha@haverford.edu) The presentation is free and open to the public; free parking is available on the Meeting House grounds.

**November 12 – Nurturing the Light in Times of Darkness: Difficult Conversations (for Difficult Times), Baltimore Monthly Meeting, Stony Run (Baltimore, MD)** Winter is approaching. The days grow shorter. It can also feel like a time of political darkness, one that can trigger dark feelings. How important it is to nurture and share our light! Please come to this conversation, beginning at 9:00am, as we love and enlighten one another. Each will begin at 9:00am. A child says to a parent that she feels threatened by things happening in the world. How to respond? And how to talk (or not talk) to a co-worker or family member on the opposite end of the political spectrum? What to say to a worried immigrant? How to skillfully and lovingly handle these and other hard conversations? —we’ll put our minds and hearts together.

**November 17 – 19: Clerking Workshop at Pendle Hill** – Arthur Larrabee teaches Clerking: Serving the Community with Joy and Confidence. This excellent workshop will teach you to listen and guide Quaker meetings for worship with attention to business toward a sense of the meeting, and teach

nuts and bolts skills and techniques for herding Quakers. For details about the program, go to <https://pendlehill.org/events/clerking-serving-community-joy-confidence-2/>

**November 24 – 26 – Young Friends Conference, Sandy Spring Friends Meeting (Sandy Spring, MD)** 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@bym-rsf.org). (301-774-7663) Please remember that the deadline to register and be guaranteed a slot is two weeks before the conference (November 10). Any one registering after that date will be placed on a waiting list and may not be able to attend.

**November 29: Detention Visitor Training** – You are invited to a training at FMW from 6:30 to 9:00 pm, led by Erin Hustings, network coordinator for the DC Detention Visitation Network. You will learn how to go with members of the network to visit people who are detained by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Maryland and Virginia. On any given night as many as 1000 or more people may be held in ICE custody in at least three detention facilities in these two states. Many immigrants in detention do not have family or friends who can visit them. It is common for people in immigration custody to be held in a location distant from where they lived or worked. Visits from community members give detainees a break, boost their morale, and help individuals refocus their emotions on positive relationships while in detention. RSVP Jim Bell ([kellybell21@comcast.net](mailto:kellybell21@comcast.net), 240.413.1229).

### **Thinking About Race** (November 2017) – Stirring Words

The one-year mark of the presidential election is a good time to recall words from 2015 that may help us feel inspired and, perhaps, even hopeful: **Remarks by the President at the 50th Anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery Marches**, Edmund Pettus Bridge, March 7, 2015. (It also reflects today's emotional issues around taking a knee.)



“What greater expression of faith in the American experiment than this, what greater form of patriotism is there than the belief that America is not yet finished, that we are strong enough to be self-critical, that each successive generation can look upon our imperfections and decide that it is in our power to remake this nation to more closely align with our highest ideals?

....

“It’s the idea held by generations of citizens who believed that America is a constant work in progress; who believed that loving this country requires more than singing its praises or avoiding uncomfortable truths. It requires the occasional disruption, the willingness to speak out for what is right, to shake up the status quo. That’s America.

....

“Because Selma shows us that America is not the project of any one person. Because the single-most powerful word in our democracy is the word “We.” “We The People.” “We Shall Overcome.” “Yes We Can.” That word is owned by no one. It belongs to everyone. Oh, what a glorious task we are given, to continually try to improve this great nation of ours.”

- President Barack Obama

*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).*

### **Poem about Sanctuary**

- By Rebecca Harris

In waiting emptiness hollowed out  
I came to sit in old glass rippled rays  
that clear and gentle filled my birdbone frame  
my spine with new hope lifted straight  
I stretched to ease the upward tug of God  
and entered fall or its arrival taste  
of loss and change that swept the leaves rustling  
so terrified could only stand retreat  
to blankness sinking chest a brittle shell  
called up and to the world at once in light.