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FMW Newsletter - October 2019

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Tenth Month Query: The Peace Testimony

Do you endeavor to live "in virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars"? Do you work to make your peace testimony a reality in your life and in your world? Do you weigh your day-to-day activities for their effect on peace-keeping, conflict resolution and the elimination of violence? Are you working toward eliminating aggression at all levels, from the personal to the international?

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

Events

Events of interest at FMW:

FCNL DC Advocacy team workshop at FMW, Sunday, October 6, 1:00 p.m. Our new DC team can play an important role in FCNL's national advocacy strategy while also working for DC statehood. The DC Advocacy Team can: Be an "on the ground" presence for distant Advocacy Teams. Walk the halls of Congress and talk with Congress members during key votes. Publish letters to the editor and op-eds. Lobby government agencies. **Register for the FCNL training at http://act.fcnl.org/event/advocacy-teams_attend/1093. For more info contact GalinaSergen@gmail.com or Emilie.Schmeidler@gmail.com.**

Pete Seeger 100th Birthday Celebration Concert with Magpie & Annie Patterson, at FMW Saturday, October 12, 7 pm. For more info & tickets click [HERE](#).
<https://www.riseupandsing.org/events/petes-100th-washington-dc>

FMW Open House, Saturday, October 19, noon to 3:00. We are inviting our neighbors to see our renovated spaces.

What is Polite White Supremacy? And how is it working—in our world, our lives, and our Meeting? Join us at noon on Sunday, October 20 to find out—and play White Fragility Bingo. Everyone may be a winner. For more information contact: FMW's Change Group for Racial Justice, dchurchm@yahoo.com.

Pastoral Care Working Group—All are Welcome, Sunday, October 27, 9:15-10:15am. Carriage Room. We will discuss Valerie Brown's Pendle Hill Pamphlet #446 *Coming to Light: Cultivating Spiritual Discernment through the Quaker Clearness Committee* (2017). Check FMW Library for copies of the pamphlet. Contact: Sabrina McCarthy, sabrina.mccarthy@verizon.net, 240.778.5234

Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Young Friends Conference. This conference for high school aged Friends will be hosted by FMW November 29-December 1st (including overnights). For more information, contact Jossie Dowling, youthprograms@bym-rsf.org, 301-774-7663.

Events elsewhere:

Hope at the Intersection of Climate, Race, Justice & Democracy, Pendle Hill lecture, October 7 A panel of climate justice activists will discuss the Green New Deal, the Sunrise Movement, and public banking in, in the **Barn, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.** Free and open to the public. Registration requested and required for livestream viewing. Info:
<https://pendlehill.org/events/hope-at-the-intersection-of-climate-race-justice-and-democracy/>

Pendle Hill Seminar: Mindfulness and White Privilege October 11-13. **Deborah Cooper** and **Pamela Freeman** will lead a seminar in blending mindfulness practices with an engaged exploration of racial conditioning to help white people practice anti-racism with intention and self-understanding. For more info: <https://pendlehill.org/events/mindfulness-and-white-privilege/>

Journal Harvesting Workshop at Pendle Hill with Jesse White, October 12. Bring your old journals and embark on a reflective and creative journey of self-discovery. **9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

For more info and to register: <https://pendlehill.org/events/journal-harvesting-2/>

News

FMW Reconstruction Completion, Celebrations

Our celebration of our newly renovated spaces happened in good order on Sunday, September 15th at Rise of Meeting with several hundred members, attenders, and friends in attendance.

Thinking About Race (October 2019)

“How To Be an Antiracist”

The common idea of claiming “color blindness” is akin to the notion of being “not racist” – as with the “not racist,” the colorblind individual, by ostensibly failing to see race, fails to see racism and falls into racist passivity. The language of color blindness—like the language of “not racist”—is a mask to hide racism. “Our Constitution is color-blind,” U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Harlan proclaimed in his dissent to *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the case that legalized Jim Crow segregation in 1896. “The White race deems itself to be the dominant race in this country,” Justice Harland went on. “I doubt not, it will continue to be for all time, if it remains true to its great heritage.” A color-blind Constitution for a White-supremacist America. (p. 10)

We know how to be racist. We know how to pretend to be not racist. Now let’s know how to be antiracist. (p. 11)

From *How To Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi, 2019. Some local Meetings are forming groups to read and discuss this book. This can be part of the Change Group process.

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. 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.

Composting at FMW

Did you know? FMW composts all our food waste – including table scraps and soiled paper products. The compost is picked up weekly by Veterans Compost, a veteran-run company, that brings it to a farm, where it is converted into high quality soil.

Food waste that goes into landfills is not just wasteful. It is also a significant producer of methane – a power greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. For example, in Maryland, nearly 25% of the state’s methane emissions come from rotting food in the state’s landfills. So, by composting, we are helping to fight climate change!

Now that our construction is complete, FMW is ready to take a new step in this process. We invite members and attenders to bring their compost to FMW to add to the weekly pickup.

Please contact Barbara Briggs for more information (202-483-3310 or <mailto:barbarahbriggs@gmail.com>). Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee will soon have starter kits and instructions available. Once you’re signed up, she’ll let you know when to start bringing compost to FMW on Sundays.

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Friends Meeting of Washington

Minutes - Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

September 8, 2019

Meeting began at 12:24 with 20 friends present. We welcomed Guy Martorana and Carla.Salgado

Query for Worship Sharing: What does it mean to build one's house on stone (not sand)? Friends spoke of hope, community, faith, and that of God as our foundation, and the need to keep building the community and discerning our way forward, following divine guidance.

Clerk's Report

- September 2019 In Memoriam - Sidney (Bix) Bixler - former member
- Deborah Howe - minute being written by Hayden Wetzel. Her memorial service will be held on October 20.
- Kathy Brandt's memorial service will be on October 26.

Upcoming Events

- September 15: Building Inauguration/Community Celebration
- September 29: Upcoming Committee of Clerks Meeting

Kudos & FMW Community Highlights

- First Day School has started!
- September 23 "Shut Down DC" climate protests has rented FMW's Meeting Room for 4 Wednesday evening organizing meetings, to plan the day and form affinity groups. Over 140 climate activists have attended. Peace & Social Concerns is offering hospitality to out-of-town climate strikers. A Quakers & Friends affinity group is forming. If you want to join, come at 6:30 on Wednesday, Sept 11. Tenant Updates- Activities at our Meeting House
- Long-time tenant, National Campaign for Peace Tax Fund has completed their long planned move.
- Renovation Update - Elevator is ready! Moving toward a solution to provide legal emergency exit from back garden.

Major Business

* **Marriage and Family Relations:** First presentation of marriage of Guy Martorana and Carla Salgado under the care of the Meeting -Jim Bell This couple has been attending for a couple of years. A clearness committee has been convened, and M&FR strongly recommends this marriage be taken under our care. This request will be held over for a month, as is our custom.

***Progress Report on Events Rentals (attached) -Brian Lutenegeger, Interim Event and Rental Manager – Reaction to the renovated space has been very positive. We are doing well for the current fiscal year – a bit ahead of where we were last year at this time. A Jewish congregation will be meeting here for the high holidays, an opera company is coming, and a variety of nonprofits are continuing to meet here. He is creating a new website; will let Friends know when it goes live. This is our program—not just the program of the Events Manager or the Property Committee.**

***Report back on Amanda Nadeau and Charles Mayer's wedding - Debby Churchman, M&FR It was held in good order.**

***Nominating Committee: presentation of David Miller (M) for FMW Treasurer. Friends APPROVED. Friends hope there will be alternate treasurers nominated as well.**

***Suggestion that Meeting for Business in the future be held in Quaker House Living Room, where acoustics are better. Friends APPROVED this suggestion.**

Other Business

- **Child Safety Committee** annual report for 2018 (attached) – Virginia Avanesyan This is actually the committee’s first annual report. The committee oversees the implementation of our child safety policies. We are in compliance with our insurance policy. Our full policy is 26 pages long, but the committee created a one-page summary so that teachers and child caretakers would know what is required. Also created a training slide show, which was shown to teachers and families. The committee supported the policy that no child be left alone and that at least two adult caregivers be present at any child activity. Many thanks to all in the community who have provided enthusiastic support for these policies. Friends expressed appreciation for how well this committee has helped us to change cultures toward child safety. One Friend asked how this should apply to a teen needing to use the restroom? The policy doesn’t make a distinction between children and teens. The committee is laboring with that section of the policy currently, trying to discern what is developmentally appropriate. Friends accepted the report.

- **September 15 Community Celebration** plan and outreach – Meg Greene The celebration will mark the Meeting’s decision to renovate and the large work that is coming to a close on that project. We will hold a single Meeting for Worship, followed by everyone meeting in our new entrance to listen to brief remarks. There will be celebratory music by our new youth choir. The elevator will be inaugurated. There will be a group photo, followed by a number of activities including an inauguration book, the creation of a time capsule, a tour of spaces (including the tenanted spaces), an explanation of finances, an explanation of our environmental work, etc. This will be followed by a potluck lunch. Unfortunately, this is the same weekend that families will be at Catoctin. A number of families will be returning early to attend. Other celebratory events will take place as well—October 19 will be the neighborhood open house. There will be a garden renewal day in November, and perhaps a date to celebrate everyone who has worked on this project (also in November). Event Planners will be invited for another event. - **New Welcomers Needed** - Marsha Holliday Committee currently has five volunteers who work so that at least one of them can serve as a welcomer each week. The welcomers greet new people and answer questions about Quakerism, and perhaps bring a five-minute topic to discuss. Marsha has a curriculum you can use, if needed. If you’re willing to volunteer, please contact Marsha.

- **Report on Art Work** (Mobile) for new Lobby: - Merry Pearlstein, Mark Haskell and Elise Storck have volunteered to sponsor the creation of a new mobile, to be created by the First Day School students under the supervision of an artist with experience in doing this kind of thing. Fully supported by Property Committee and Religious Education.

- **Report on BYM** Annual Meeting, including the Anti-Racism Declaration -Debby Churchman - Discussed how BYM came up with a set of queries that help us to be intentional about how our decisions support or tear down the structures of racism within our community. This had an impact on the BYM budget. A Friend asked that we be mindful of this, going forward, and that we not do such work at the expense of our anti-racism work outside of BYM.

Another Friend discussed one of workshops he attended on the Guttenberg Project and the 20 books on Quakerism that have already been scanned in.

Annual Sessions are still free for children up to grade eight. BYM is considering a “pay what you can” policy.

A Friend urged us to read the Spiritual State of the Meeting report from BYM. It focused on worship as a strong support to Friends during these difficult times.

Meeting closed at 1:59 with 18 Friends present, to reconvene on 10.13.2019 in Quaker House Living Room, as way opens.

ADDENDA: ATTACHED COMMITTEE REPORTS

WELCOME TO THE QUAKER EXPERIENCE

Friends Meeting of Washington

September 2019, Marsha Holliday

This fall, the Ministry and Worship Committee is continuing its “Welcome to the Quaker Experience” program as a weekly event, except for First Days when all-meeting programs, such as the Shoe Box Project or the Mary Jane Simpson Scholarship Fund luncheon, are held, to which all newcomers are invited.

We currently have five volunteers for this program, and ask if there are others who might like to participate? Each month, volunteers would be sent a sign-up request, and each volunteer would designate his or her availability for a particular First Day that month. If the volunteer is not available, he or she just does not need to respond.

The purpose of this program is to help visitors to our meeting feel welcomed, learn something about Quakerism, have an opportunity to ask questions, and meet other members, attenders, and visitors. Marsha Holliday has prepared a curriculum for this purpose. Each session in this curriculum is self-contained. The presenter could use the information in this curriculum or develop a talk of her or his own making about an aspect of Quakerism—such as Quaker simplicity, the history of early Friends, the Peace Testimony, social activism, and so forth.

Experience suggests that offering a 4- or 5-minute topic seems to help visitors assemble. The presenter’s presentation should be brief and informative, so as not to overwhelm visitors; although, of course, the presenter can continue to talk with individual attenders afterwards. Announcing a topic seems to attract newcomers, who may not feel comfortable about asking questions concerning a religion of which they may feel they know little about.

During announcements following meeting for worship, the presenter would announce the topic for that day. A typical announcement could be: “Good morning! My name is _____. Today at rise of meeting, I will speak for 4-5 minutes about _____ and then answer questions about Quakerism. Please get a snack and a cup of tea or coffee from the Assembly Room, which is downstairs, and then go to North Room, which is just on the other side of the Assembly Room. All are welcome!”

Immediately after rise of meeting, the presenter sets up about 5 chairs in a circle in the North Room. When few come, a big circle of chairs feels empty. If more chairs are needed, attenders can grab one and join the circle. To help attenders find you, the presenter might sit in a chair where he or she can be seen from the Assembly Room, leaving the door open.

In the past, we have had from 1 to 14 attenders. As attenders leave, the presenter can give them a handout with info about meeting activities, which we will provide, and copies of the session from the curriculum could also be passed out.

FMW Child Safety Committee Annual Report, 2018

In 2018, The Child Safety Committee continued to oversee the implementation of the Child Safety Policy at FMW by disseminating information and ensuring practices to maintain an environment for children at FMW that accords with both Quaker practice and the Guide One insurance policy recommendations, conveyed through their ‘Safechurc.org’ website. To do that, we provided liaison with the Religious Education Committee and the Youth Programs Coordinator, and we provided resources for training and information for First Day Program teachers and Meeting attenders and members about the FMW Child Safety Policy.

As the Religious Education Clerk changed hands, we found that the 26 page-long child safety document was cumbersome, so we created two alternate ways of disseminating information:

- a. A one-page summary of the Child Safety Policy that could be easily read by parents and First Day teachers and,
- b. A slide presentation that summarizes the Child Safety principles to be viewed by First Day Program teachers.

We communicated with the RE Clerk about getting teachers together for child safety training. The focus of the Religious Education committee seemed to be maintaining coverage in First Day classrooms, so fulfill our mandate to inform teachers about the Child Safety principles, we then disseminated the slide presentation via email and worked with the Youth Programs Coordinator to show that presentation at First Day Program potluck gatherings, which were held at the home of the Youth Program Coordinator.

While our spaces changed during construction, we worked with the RE Committee to ensure access classroom spaces and pathways that supported the concept that no child would be left alone or with only one adult at Friends Meeting of Washington. When there were challenges to implementing the Child Safety Policy, they usually related to the number of adults available to teach and presence of support teachers in First Day Programs. In particular, the attendance patterns of our teens creates uncertainty about staffing a teen program, we supported provision of adult supervision and programs for the teens.

Due to the enthusiasm and effort of the Youth programs coordinators, volunteer teachers and the clerk of Religious Education, these challenges were met with the health and safety of the children of FMW in mind. A strong First Day Program is always a work in progress, and the members of the Child Safety Committee applaud the tireless efforts of the parents, children, teachers and FMW employees who create an environment where children can grow up in a community of Friends.

Declaration by Baltimore Yearly Meeting as an Anti-Racist Faith Community

(Adopted on August 6, 2019)

In struggling with how to ensure that our Yearly Meeting is an anti-racist faith community, we have come to some convictions.

WE ASPIRE TO RECOGNIZE AND AFFIRM DIVERSITY AS A MEANS TO TRUTH We Friends are of many skin colors, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, stages of life, and socially constructed racial identities. We are all seeking the Spirit's presence in our lives, and in our life together. We recognize that some of us have experienced oppression and marginalization in ways that others have not. We aspire to live as members of the blessed community, which is one of liberation, equity, and great diversity across all differences.[1]

WE APPROACH RACISM AS A VIRUS TO BE HEALED Simply "addressing" racism is too weak. Believing that we can simply end racism is too optimistic. Our response to racism must be to challenge it, to confront it, to correct it, and to heal this societal infection.[2]

WE ARE COMMITTED TO BECOMING MORE INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING TO ALL We are committed to discerning how our Meetings at all levels can be more inclusive and welcoming to all, can encourage participation and leadership among all Friends, and can build an anti-racist, multicultural community.[3]

WE STRIVE TO DO MORE TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN TRUST We will focus upon being more authentic (sharing the real me), logical (being rigorous in my thinking), and empathic (my being

in it for others).[4]

1. WE SEEK TO ENSURE THAT WE DO NOT BENEFIT SOME AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHERS We are encouraged by a practice that was adopted by the Board of Trustees at Pendle Hill Conference and Retreat Center several years ago to vet each decision using the following queries:

1. How might this decision affect people from other cultures or those within the same culture who have different experiences, perceptions, belief systems, and perspectives from our own?
2. To what degree have privilege, class, stereotypes, assumptions, and our ability to include other perspectives affected this decision? Will this decision promote inclusiveness, allow equal access, and welcome those we perceive as different from ourselves
3. How might this decision advance Pendle Hill's goals of promoting diversity, fostering justice, and creating the Beloved Community for all people?

A MAJOR STEP TOWARD BECOMING MORE ANTI-RACIST IS TO TEST DECISIONS WE MAKE Using queries to examine how our decisions may promote inclusiveness, allow equal access, and welcome those we perceive as different from ourselves could, we believe, guide us in our deliberations. It will also make us more accountable for our actions and less likely to be satisfied with a statement that sounds laudatory, but proves empty or even harmful. In that regard, we seek to always be able to answer the following queries: 1. How could this decision affect those who have been harmed by racist behavior? 2. To what degree have privilege, class, stereotypes, assumptions, and our ability to include other perspectives affected this decision? Will this decision promote equity, diversity, and inclusiveness? Will it enable us to be more friendly and whole? 3. How will we provide opportunities for those most likely to be directly affected by our decision to influence that decision? 4. How does this decision support the declaration of our Yearly Meeting that we are an anti-racist faith community?

IN LOVE AND PEACE, WE CAN LIVE AS FRIENDS We will reach out to and welcome others we do not yet know, but who are God's children, as we are. This must be done with warmth, compassion, love, and truth so it is rightly ordered (has integrity) and reciprocated in love and peace. Further, we will include friends-to-be in our activities and welcome their questions and differences in understanding and action so as to develop friendships and become a whole community, richer due both to our more diverse composition, perspectives, and strengths and to the truth and love we have grown and used in the process

[1] Baltimore Yearly Meeting Statement of Vision (2016, adopted as revised)

[2] Baltimore Yearly Meeting Epistle (2017 Annual Session) Baltimore Yearly Meeting Epistle (2018 Annual Session)

[4] Pettus, C. (2018). A Descriptive Analysis of the Views of People of Color Regarding Building a Bigger and Better Worship Community (A report submitted to the Growing Diverse Leadership Committee of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting)

