

September Newsletter 2012

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FRIENDS MEETING OF WASHINGTON

MONTHLY MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH A CONCERN FOR BUSINESS

July 15, 2012

7/12- 1 Opening The Meeting opened at 12:20 pm with a period of silent worship. David Etheridge served as Clerk and Debby Churchman served as Recording Clerk. The clerks read Advices, Queries and Voices concerning Meeting for Worship.

Advices

The heart of the Religious Society of Friends is the Meeting for Worship. In worship we are called to seek God's will with our entire being: body, mind, and soul. Worship is the adoring response of the heart and mind to the influences of the Spirit of God.

It stands neither in forms nor in the formal disuse of forms. "For God is a spirit, and they who worship God must do so in Spirit and in Truth" (John 4:24). We treasure silence as a path towards inspiration and guidance that leads to communion with God. We are called to listen with prayerful obedience to God, with a willingness to give as well as to receive. In speech or in silence, each person contributes to the Meeting for Worship. Together we can strengthen one another, and our bodies and minds can be refreshed in the life of the Spirit.

Give adequate time for study, meditation, and prayer, and other ways of preparing for worship. Be mindful that worship is the fusion of individual and collective waiting to experience the love of God. Come regularly to Meeting for Worship, even when you are angry, depressed, tired, or spiritually cold. In the silence ask for and accept the prayerful support of others joined with you in worship.

During the Meeting for Worship, Friends may be led by the Spirit to testify, to share an insight, to pray, to praise. When speaking, we should do so clearly and simply, using as many words as necessary and as few as possible. When another speaks, listen with an open spirit, holding the speaker in love. Rest with the message, recognizing that even if it is not God's word for you, it may be so for others.

Queries

In what ways do I prepare my heart and mind to receive the power of God's presence and love?

How does worship deepen my relationship with the Divine?

How is this inspiration carried over into my daily life?

Are our Meetings for Worship held in expectant waiting for divine guidance?

How do activities of our Meeting find their inspiration in worship? In what ways does worship uphold Meeting activities?

Voices

Friends, meet together and know one another in that which is eternal, which was before the world was.

—George Fox

Let none think that because he comes to meeting dry and empty or in great perplexity or need of help, he has “nothing to offer.” He has not only his “outward testimony” to bear, but he has his weakness itself to lay before God in trust and love; and if the meeting is truly “gathered,” that offering may bring it to a deeper place than any surface happiness and praise could do.

–Beatrice Saxon Snell, 1965

Once I have centered down I try to open myself, to let the light in. I try to open myself to God’s power; I try to open myself to the other members of the meeting, to gain an awareness of them, to sense the spiritual state of the gathering. I try so to reform myself inwardly that, as a result of this meeting, I will thereafter be just a little less conformed to the unregenerate ways of the world; just a little more conformed to the dedicated way of love.

–Jean Toomer, 1947

On one never-to-be-forgotten Sunday morning, I found myself one of a small company of silent worshippers, who were content to sit down together without words, that each one might feel after and draw near to the Divine Presence, unhindered at least, if not helped, by any human utterance. Utterance I knew was free, should the words be given; and, before the meeting was over a sentence or two were uttered in great simplicity by an old and apparently untaught man, rising in his place amongst the rest of us. I did not pay much attention to the words he spoke, and I have no recollection of their purport. My whole soul was filled with the unutterable peace of the undisturbed opportunity for communion with God, with the sense that at last I had found a place where I might, without the faintest suspicion of insincerity, join with others in simply seeking His presence. To sit down in silence could at least pledge me to nothing; it might open to me (as it did that morning) the very gate of heaven. – Caroline Stephen, 1872

7/12 - 2 Welcome of Visitors - Approximately 37 Friends were present. Friends welcomed Louisa Levathes from New York City, James Wandera Ouma from Tanzania, who has come to visit Steve Brooks and attend the AIDS 2012 Conference, and Evan Lippincott, architect of the renovation and attender at Langley Hill Friends Meeting.

7/12 – 3 Clerks’ Report – The Meeting has learned that long-time member Larry Bott died on August 7, 2011 in Florida at age 88. Also, Yearly Meeting Sessions will be held from July 31 to August 5, in Frostburg, Maryland.

MAJOR ITEMS

7/12 – 4 Renovation plans – Neil Froemming, of the Capital Improvement Task Force, presented the latest architectural plans (see attached report). This is the Meeting's third attempt to bring forth a concept that Friends will approve. He detailed the main points of this current design and the ways in which it makes the bulk of the buildings and back garden accessible. He asked the Meeting to approve the major elements; the details will be considered at a future Meeting for Business.

He also presented three proposals for the Meeting's approval:

- That the Meeting approve a request (already approved by Trustees) that the CITF spending authorization for the current Concept Design effort be increased from \$24,000 to \$31,000 to pay for additional surveying and drafting costs, possible additional hydrology studies, and printing and copying charges.

- That the Meeting affirm that it wishes the Capital Improvement Task Force to move forward with a project to design and construct an elevator addition, connections to existing buildings, an accessible back garden area, and related improvements as outlined in our recent updates to the Meeting, with an estimated total project cost of roughly \$1.8 million (which includes a cushion of \$370,000).

- That the Meeting authorize Trustees to approve future incremental spending of up to \$50,000 to support Schematic Design development under a proposed contract with the architects,

A Friend commented that the design is both beautiful and functional. She asked what will happen after the construction is finished if we have to get heavy equipment into the back yard. Doesn't this close the gap that currently opens to the street? Neil said that this does close the gap, and, although it does not render that kind of construction work impossible, it will make future renovations in that area more expensive.

A Friend asked if we have discussed this with our neighbors. Neil said we haven't given them warning of the scope of work; we have had brief conversations and will have more, especially around the issue of water drainage that comes from their property onto ours.

A Friend thanked the committee for its exceptional work. She noticed a heavy emphasis on drainage issues. Neil agrees that there was considerable attention to this, especially since changes to the back yard will completely change the drainage needs. We will need to be able to capture all of the water from an inch of rain and release it more slowly into the sewer system.

A Friend asked if there is concern for the historic preservation during construction. Neil said any modification that can be seen from the street has to go through the DC Historic Preservation Review Board. The HRPB staff has seen this concept and did not have a problem with it.

A Friend spoke of an overwhelming sense of gratitude he holds for the committee and this concept. In any given construction project there will be 10 million decisions, and he hopes that the committee will be in touch with their "inner Nazi" and just make those decisions as they are led rather than go through Quaker process for each one. Neil spoke in favor of Quaker process and in gratitude for all who have worked on this issue for the past 10 years. This committee, he pointed out, is simply the last one still standing.

A Friend asks if everyone is really in agreement about this? She noted that the renovation was just about an elevator at first, but now it seems to be about a lot of things, including lowering the garden and changing how people get in and out of the meeting.

A Friend spoke to the arduous work of Quaker process and his gratitude for all who have worked on this issue throughout the years. A lot of concerns that many of us had are relieved by this plan, which is spare and simple yet elegant. He asked how we are going to clean all that glass? It's beautiful, but how do we keep it clean? Neil said that those issues are being looked into, and the glass roof of the connector is one of many details that are still under discussion.

A Friend said this is not just about Quaker process; it's about the creative process of architecture. We've had to come through several iterations to make our way towards what we want. She believes we need to move on, in honor of Barbara Nnoka and all who have gone before us who wanted and needed this accessibility.

A Friend expressed a concern about grading the backyard area. Very little level space will be left for "running around" space for children. He asked what the angle of the grade will be? Neil said that the back yard near the Assembly Room is essentially flat. There are two different garden plans for the rest of the area, with different grades. The committee is discussing how to get a lot of flat area and will be working with Religious Education about making the backyard useful for children and others.

A Friend said that this plan makes her believe that "way will open." It is so different from what she ever imagined. She is happy.

Meeting APPROVED the request (already approved by Trustees) that the CITF spending authorization for the current Concept Design effort be increased from \$24,000 to \$31,000 to pay for additional surveying and drafting costs, possible additional hydrology studies, and printing and copying charges.

The Meeting AFFIRMED that it wishes the Capital Improvement Task Force to move forward with a project to design and construct an elevator addition, connections to existing buildings, an accessible back garden area, and related improvements as outlined in recent CITF updates to the Meeting, with an estimated total project cost of roughly \$1.8 million.

Neil spoke to the need to move forward quickly with this process, capturing current momentum and expertise and trying to stay ahead of regulatory change. The next design step will cost about \$50,000, an amount that will have to be approved first by Trustees. He asked the Meeting to approve trusting the Trustees to work with the CITF and, as they see fit, approve up to \$50,000 in design fees. Friend APPROVED.

A Friend spoke to her sadness over this decision, because it will change the Meeting House and gardens, as they are remembered.

7/12 – 5 Fundraising Drive Bill Foscett of Trustees presented the following recommendation: That the Meeting authorize the Capital Campaign Taskforce to use up to \$10,000 of the Building Campaign Fund to launch the capital fundraising drive. Friends APPROVED.

7/12- 6 Staffing Study Team recommendations (first reading) Michael Cronin of the Personnel Committee made the first presentation of the Staffing Study Team's recommendations. The Team was convened to evaluate current staffing patterns and make recommendations about what the new staffing should be for FY 2013. The primary changes they recommend are as follows:

The Administrative Secretary will be an administrative and clerical position and function at a level of effort of 24 hours per week. By September 9, 2012 the Personnel Committee will change the position description to exclude its current executive level duties, and to add clerical ones, such as data entry for financial transactions, as well as work with the IT Committee and contractors to update the Directory and maintain the FMW website.

The Property Manager's hours are being reduced from full time to about 3/4ths time and could be reduced further as we catch up with items of deferred maintenance.

The Property Committee has also drafted preliminary information for an Events Planner who would focus on marketing and promoting the use of idle FMW space. A position description is being prepared for a person to function at a level of effort of 16 hours per week.

The Bookkeeper's hours are being negotiated with the Finance and Stewardship Committee.

A part-time Youth Programs Coordinator, functioning at a level of effort of 10 to 20 hours per week, is being recruited and selected by the Religious Education Committee.

The positions of the Child Care Staff, our Cleaning Crew, and Friendly Office Presences will continue with minor changes in duties and responsibilities.

A Friend asked how this will impact the FY 2013 Budget, which we have already passed. Michael said we will not go over budget.

A Friend asks if these job descriptions and staffing plan will be available for review before the next Meeting for Business. They will, but the descriptions will be very general. They will be available by Sept. 1.

Jean Meyer Capps, Co-Clerk of Membership, said there is a need to get their records in order, and she believes it will take more than an entry-level person to do so. She needs to see the position description and costs before she would feel comfortable approving it. She thinks September may be too soon for us to expect Meeting for Business to approve these changes.

A Friend who worked temporarily on the staff said it would be good to think about how reducing the Administrator's job will affect the committees and other Meeting volunteers, who will have to take up a lot of this work. Michael said that each committee has been consulted, and that the group has been careful to respond to stated needs of committees to be sure that the work can be done in 24 hours/week.

A Friend asked, with the reduction of time, how will the office be covered? When will it be open? Michael said the committee hasn't directly addressed this question. We are used to having someone here 8 hours/day, 5 days/week, but such staffing is expensive. Friends may have to get used to something different.

A Friend asks where to direct comments about this issue? Send them to fmw-staffing@googlegroups.com. This link will be sent to the listserv.

A Friend gave special thanks to the Staffing Study Group, and noted the number of hours and amount of care that has been put into this effort.

7/12 – 7 Arrival of Children and Latecomers to Meeting for Worship Debby Churchman, Clerk of Ministry & Worship, and Justin Connor, Clerk of Religious Education, presented two proposals regarding a change in the timing of the arrival of children and latecomers to the Meeting. The proposals are as follows:

The children and young people will start 1st day at 10:30 a.m. and join Meeting for Worship at 11:15 a.m., starting in 9th month. We will bring back this recommendation to Monthly Meeting for Business if further adjustments are needed.

Meeting for Worship will continue to start at 10:30 a.m. The door to the Meeting Room will remain open for an additional five minutes, after which latecomers are invited to worship in the parlor. At 11:15 a.m., children, and others who wish to, may join those worshipping in the Meeting Room.

Justin Connor, explained Religious Education's thinking in proposing this change. They believe the change will enhance intergenerational interactions by having the children enter a gathered meeting. As a large meeting, we often have visiting children, and delaying the entry of children to the Meeting Room will facilitate arrangements for these newcomers to attend First Day School.

A Friend commented that in meetings he has attended in which children join the group later, he has found that to be extremely disruptive, partly due to the prolonged interruption as the children trickled in.

Another Friend observed that he had found such arrangements beneficial.

A Friend asked for the numbers of children in each age group on a typical First Day. Justin said that typically about 10 to 15 children attend First Day School.

Another Friend said that her experience with the later arrival of children has been overwhelmingly positive.

Gray Handley, a member of the Ministry and Worship Committee, indicated the joint meeting of the two committees had considered asking that, during the period of announcements, a child who was interested in doing so to share with the Meeting his or her experiences in First Day School.

Another Friend suggested that First Day School teachers be sensitive to preparing children to enter the Meeting in as settled a manner as possible.

Another Friend spoke of her experiences with disruptive late entry of children to Meeting for Worship. She suggested that perhaps the children could be given a space and art supplies to keep them busy and distracted. Debby said that Religious Education had proposed this and Ministry & Worship had considered this idea, but Ministry & Worship is not currently in unity with the idea because they want the experience to be one of worship for everyone, including the children. She expressed faith in the children's ability to "figure it out."

Another member of Ministry & Worship spoke in support of giving children the experience of worship from as early an age as possible.

Another Friend spoke in support of children's ability to meet the expectations set for them in Meeting for Worship.

A Friend spoke in favor of the experiment; why are we more bothered by disruption from children than we are by sirens and the sounds of nature, for example, that bombard us?

A Friend noted that a "seating arrangement he observed to work effectively was one adult, one child, one adult, one child."

Justin said the joint committee was intending to try this for three months and revisit the issue to determine what did and didn't work and then make appropriate adjustments.

A Friend said she was not comfortable approving the later entry of children without also discussing the proposed changes to late entry of adults to the Meeting Room.

Debby introduced the issue of adults who enter the Meeting Room after Meeting has begun. Ministry & Worship proposes letting people enter for the first 5 minutes after Meeting begins, but persons who arrive later would be encouraged to join the meeting in the parlor until 11:15 a.m.

A Friend said we have a large number of latecomers, and she feared they may leave rather than waiting for up to 40 minutes to join the Meeting in progress.

Another Friend said she always found the exit of children and entry of latecomers at 10:50 a.m. to be very disruptive; she would prefer that latecomers be permitted to enter the Meeting Room as they arrive.

A member of Ministry & Worship noted it was unlikely that a perfect solution would be found.

A Friend spoke of the appeal the "Parlor Meeting" had for him.

A Friend suggested that Friends attempt to change themselves.

A Friend commented on her surprise that the old 10 o'clock meeting permitted people to enter at any time. She became accustomed to that over time, and believes Friends can adjust to whatever policy we adopt.

Debby noted the Parlor Meeting is not purgatory. She noted that changes proposed will involve a steep learning curve, and urges us to climb onto it.

David asked for clarification of what the Meeting was being asked to approve being tried for 3 months.

A Friend suggested that the recommendation of the Religious Education Committee be given primary weight.

Another suggested that there be someone at the door to suggest that latecomers be directed to sit in a certain area to minimize disruption.

Another Friend suggested that the experiment be deferred until the fall since so many people are away through the summer to give people time to become aware of the proposal. She also asked whether parents had been consulted. Justin noted that the committees were suggesting the experiment begin in the fall, and he noted that parents had been consulted.

Gray noted that Ministry & Worship had spent a great deal of time discussing the issue of latecomers over the years, and believed that primary consideration should be given to RE's suggestions. He asked for a decision on the later arrival of children today.

Another Friend spoke in favor of giving the community time to consider the change. He also suggested that an announcement might be made each week for the next few weeks regarding the upcoming change.

Another Friend asked whether the possibility of people entering at any time was being considered.

A Friend suggested asking young adults what their experiences with late arrival had been as children growing up in the Meeting.

Friends APPROVED both recommendations for a trial of 3 months beginning this fall.

MILESTONE

7/12 – 8 Membership Committee - Gerri Williams, co-clerk of Membership, gave the committee's request for full membership of Jorge Sánchez (first presentation). Jorge is an Associate Member of FMW, and grew up in the Meeting. This will lie over until the next Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, as is our custom.

REPORT

7/12 – 9 Annual Report of the Religious Education Committee – Justin Connor, Clerk of Religious Education, presented RE's annual report (see attached). He urged Friends to consider teaching in the First Day School.

A Friend asks that all members of the committee be listed in this report.

OTHER BUSINESS

7/12 – 10 Property Manager contract - Steve Brooks, co-clerk of Property, presented the Property Committee's recommendation to revise the Property Manager's contract. The contract has been changed to have fewer hours and an increased hourly rate. They would like to make these new terms retroactive to July 1. Property, Personnel, and Finance & Stewardship have seasoned the recommendation, as has the Staffing Study Group, and approved. Friends APPROVED this proposal.

7/12 – 11 Minute from the Marriage and Family Relations Committee – Susan Griffin, Clerk of Marriage & Family Relations, presented a minute in support of all Friends’ desire both to nurture our children safely and to welcome all. The Minute is as follows:

We recognize our meeting community is unsettled and divided by our desire to care for our treasured children's safety and our wish to offer ministry to prisoners and ex-offenders. It is clear that all of us want the best for each member and attender, each child and adult. With that as our common ground, we move toward bringing each of us, and our meeting, to our fullest spiritual enlightenment.

Let us all work to let go of blame and judgment, listen to each other with open hearts, and continue to strengthen our spiritual community.

7/12 – 12 Nominating Committee – Merry Pearlstein of Nominating Committee made the following recommendations:

1. Nomination of Marsha Holliday as Co-Clerk of the Child Safety Committee. Friends APPROVED.
2. Giovanni Sella as Co-clerk of the Child Safety Committee. This recommendation will lie over for a month, as he is not a member of the Meeting.
3. Resignation of Steve Sawmelle from the Peace and Social Concerns Committee
4. Resignation of Carrie Mitchell from the Child Safety Committee

Friends ACCEPTED these resignations.

7/12 – 13 Adjournment - With approximately 17 Friends present, the meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m. to reconvene as way opens on Sunday, September 9, 2012 at noon.

Attachments:

Capital Improvements Task Force Request

Proposal from Religious Education and Ministry & Worship

Report of Religious Education Committee for 2012

Minute from Marriage and Family Committee

**FMW Capital Improvement Task Force
Request for Approval to Go Forward**

Four years ago, the Meeting approved a tightly focused proposal “to investigate and develop plans for building an extension west of the current main building consisting of an elevator and a new, more welcoming entrance from Decatur Place.”

A Planning Committee (since renamed the Capital Improvement Task Force) was formed and, after several iterations and long consideration, we published a concept design that appears to be favorably received by many FMW Friends.

We focused on a “minimum plan” that the Meeting might be willing to fund, while still seeking an addition that would provide accessibility, be useful, functional, and attractive and be approved by the DC Historical Preservation Review Board (HPRB). We laid aside other renovation possibilities that would have increased costs and caused further delay.

Early this year, the Meeting approved spending \$24,000 on architectural services to develop and cost a version of that concept, and we engaged Evan Lippincott (a Quaker architect with experience in Meeting House design and renovation) and Gauthier & Alvarado Associates (an architecture and engineering firm). They surveyed the

campus, and updated, corrected, and extended the drawings and plans of the existing buildings. They provided us with initial concept sketches and plans and hired a cost estimator to get a sense of the total project cost. The draft concept has been reviewed by HPRB staff and discussed with city permitting authorities. We have had preliminary discussions with a civil engineer regarding drainage and storm water issues.

We now ask that the Meeting approve moving forward with fund raising and further development of this project.

Concept Design

The essential features are:

- A two-story addition between the Meeting House and Carriage House, containing an elevator to provide ADA accessibility to the Meeting House, Carriage House and Quaker House.
- A new and accessible main entrance on Decatur Place, with an entrance foyer, a stairwell, a covered porch, and connections to both sides of the campus.
- Hallways on both levels across the back of Carriage House and Quaker House to provide internal connectivity to those buildings, with ramps to accommodate the various floor levels.
- A back garden area excavated down to the Assembly Room level, regraded, and paved to provide a wheelchair-accessible gathering space, with doors into the new addition and double French doors into the Assembly Room.
- Drainage improvements to address Meeting House water infiltration problems and reduce storm water runoff into the DC sewer system.

The Meeting Room would be unchanged, but HPRB and our architects have convinced us that we need to connect through the north end of the Parlor. Our current thought is to combine the rest of the Parlor with the Library to create a large Parlor serving both functions.

The connection to the Meeting House on the ground level would go through the existing main office. The remainder of the office would be used for FOP/reception, to monitor traffic through the new main entrance and greet visitors.

We included extensive back garden changes partly to accommodate the new construction, partly to provide accessibility, partly for drainage, and partly because the excavation, if not done now, would be very difficult to do once the new addition is in place.

Cost

Our initial cost estimate suggests that the total project cost will be around \$1.8 million, including about \$370 thousand in contingency allowances for unpredicted costs and \$200 thousand in architecture/engineering fees.

Comments and Concerns

Plans and sketches provided by our architects, and frequently updated, are posted on the Assembly Room wall and on the Meeting website CITF page.

The current design is an early draft, and many details will change as we go forward. We are not seeking Meeting approval of the details of the current design, but only asking if we should continue, based on a \$1.8 million total project cost, to work toward constructing an elevator foyer and connections to existing buildings with roughly the design envelope shown on these plans.

That doesn't mean that you should not comment on the details. If you see a feature you like or don't like, if you have a better idea, if you have a question or concern, let us know. The details are still tentative, so this is the time to let us know what you think.

Come and talk to us or write to us at FMW-CITF@googlegroups.com or post your concern to FMWForum@googlegroups.com.

Current Funding

Our new architects (LGA) agreed to complete the initial concept design work for the amount previously approved, with the assumption that existing drawings and measurements would be available and adequate to support this task.

Our previous architects cooperated fully in making this material available, but it was less detailed and accurate than anticipated and LGA had to do more surveying and updating work than they had bargained for.

This does not mean that there were major problems with the prior work, which presumably provided sufficient accuracy for the earlier design sketches. In the current work, we are asking LGA to connect the three buildings together, which requires closer attention to exact differences in levels and roof lines and to areas that QEA did not address. The cost of this additional 67 hours of work is \$3,952.

In addition, LGA may require some additional civil engineering consultation (not more than \$2,500) to properly address drainage and soil issues, and we expect printing, reproduction, and other incidental costs (not more than \$300).

In total, these additional costs should not be more than \$7,000. The Trustees have reviewed this request and approved the additional funding.

We ask the Meeting to increase authorized funding for the current renovation design effort from \$24,000 to \$31,000.

This funding will complete the current "Concept Design" stage.

Ongoing Funding

The next step in the process is to negotiate a contract with LGA for the rest of the design process:

- Schematic Design. This step (to some extent already under way) involves making firm decisions about major details, replacing the rough sketches with more detailed CAD drawings and other documents, refining the costing, and moving forward with the review and permitting process.
- Design Development. Development of structural, mechanical, and electrical decisions, drawings, and documents, and specifying materials. Detailed floor plans, sections, elevations, and more precise costing estimates. More detailed permit review.
- Construction Documents. Comprehensive drawings and specifications used to get building permits, solicit bids, and as the basis for the construction of the project.

The rough cost of the remaining design stages is projected to be about \$200 thousand, with each of the first two accounting for about \$50,000.

This process may take well over a year and there are several reasons to continue to move forward quickly. Among other things, the cost of required storm water control measures is expected to greatly increase if we cannot acquire the necessary permits before new regulations take effect.

We expect to spend the next few weeks negotiating a design contract with LGA, obtaining Trustee approval for the contract, and seeking Trustee approval to fund the next stage of the work. The contract will not commit the Meeting to spending the entire \$200,000 estimated amount, but will instead give us the right to suspend work at

any point, with payment only for work already accomplished.

We ask the Meeting to authorize Trustees to approve incremental spending of up to \$50,000 to support Schematic Design development under the proposed contract.

Merry Pearlstein Steve Brooks
Robinne Gray CJ Lewis
Byron Sandford Neil Froemming

Capital Improvement Task Force, July 15, 2012

Proposal from Religion Education and Ministry and Worship:

The children and young people will start 1st day at 10:30 a.m., and join Meeting for Worship at 11:15, starting ninth month. We will bring back this recommendation to Monthly meeting for business if further adjustments are needed.

And here is an additional proposal from M & W to address certain ramifications concerning the above proposal:

Meeting for Worship will continue to start at 10:30 a.m. The door to the Meeting Room will remain open for an additional five minutes, after which latecomers are invited to worship in the parlor, At 11:15 a.m., children, and others who wish to, may join those worshipping in the Meeting Room.

Report of the Religious Education Committee for 2012

Presented at the July 2012 Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

Committee members: Kim Acquaviva (Recording Clerk), Jane Connor, Justin Connor (Clerk), Anita Drever, Rob Farr (Alternate Clerk), Lynsey Wood Jeffries, Chris Klemek, Patrick Lynam, Carrie Mitchell

The Religious Education committee feels deeply blessed to hold a joyful set of committee duties – we seek to lovingly care for the educational/spiritual/faith journey of each and every one of us who together make up Friends Meeting of Washington, from the smallest infant up through adults. The ministry that occupies the greatest share of our time, care and budget is oversight of the nursery and our treasured First Day School (FDS) program. We also have under our nurture and care the regular Sunday morning Adult Religious Education Study group that has been coordinated faithfully for many years by John Scales. This year we have also felt called to working closely with the Child Safety, Healing & Reconciliation and Personal Aid committees among others on various concerns affecting the FDS program, particularly our Child Safety policy.

Seeing a growing number of families with young children coming to the Meeting over the past several years, we are working closely with Finance & Stewardship and Personnel regarding the new proposed position of part-time Youth Program Coordinator, who would work with us to implement all of the various Quaker youth ministries which we currently undertake and envision for the future. We expect this person would also support the Child Safety committee in its work. We are blessed with many active and valued FMW community members who serve as volunteer FDS teachers, the pillars of our program. We are considering a proposal to work with the Ministry and Worship committee to start First Day School at 10:30 A.M. rather than 10:50 A.M. and invite children attending FDS to join worship at 11:10 A.M.

Working closely this year with the Child Safety committee has increased our awareness of issues such as the hand-off between parents and First Day School, safety concerns with dated playground equipment, and overall supervision of and responsibility for children outside of First Day School throughout our campus, especially during the coffee hour and committee meetings..

Nursery– Interim Coordinator: Tracy Hart

The Meeting offers child care to our little ones, from 6 months through 4 years each week during 10:30 Meeting for Worship and monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business. Average attendance is 8-10 children each week and over the past year we have nurtured approximately 40 children and families. We are blessed with a wonderful group of care providers on staff, all of whom hold university degrees and/or certificates in Early Child Education. Makai and Katorra have been with us for many years, providing the comfort of continuity to parents. We recently had several cherished providers, Anita, Aries & Ken, move on to new opportunities, allowing us to hire Thanh, Shannon and Tammy, our new providers.

We continue to upgrade the Decatur Place Room with new toys and supplies to create a cheerful and child-friendly environment for our youngest Friends. For example, we have recently received a number of gifts for the nursery, including books, play kitchen items and arts and crafts which help ensure the nursery runs smoothly. Being aware that paying our child care providers is by far the largest line item in our committee budget, we feel deep gratitude to the Meeting for its support of this important ministry. We note that we have recently formalized our commitment to provide child care for important called meetings such that these meetings now almost always offer child care. We are reminded us that this child care is only for nursery-age children, and we may need to address this gap.

Quakes – Coordinator: Glenn Parkinson

The Quakes (ages 4-6) is the first FDS class for children aging out of the nursery. At the beginning of the Quakes' year, they focused on introducing children to the basic concepts in the Quaker Faith and Practice and Quaker values. They discussed themes such as simplicity, equality and explored silent worship. Next they focused on building a sense of community within the meeting and were supported in this by volunteer teachers from the Meeting. Modalities of learning used by the Quakes included art, Godly Play (part of the Quaker Faith and Play curriculum), Friendly play and interactive exercises.

Junior Friends – Coordinator: Virginia Avanesyan

The Junior Friends (ages 7 to 9) is the middle FDS class and this year they studied the Biblical parables of the Great Pearl, the Good Shepherd, the Mustard Seed and other parables using dramatic and creative movement extensions. The Junior Friends also regularly conduct community service projects to engage in experiential learning, including going to the Church of the Pilgrims where the children make sandwiches for distribution to the homeless.

Young Friends – Coordinators: Kim Acquaviva and Silvia Dinale

The Young Friends (ages 10 to 13) this year focused on an immersive, experiential exploration of five of the Testimonies – Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, and Equality which they explored through discussions, creative activities, and service. The Young Friends felt the presence of the spirit most deeply when our young learners made short videos about what the Quaker Testimonies meant to them individually. Our Quaker youth spoke simply yet powerfully about their lived experiences as Quakers as asked one another insightful questions on camera using iPad technology and recorded their answers. Over the coming year, the Young Friends will be reaching out to FMW members and attenders to engage all of us in similar on-camera dialogues about their lived experience of Quakerism as the group further explores the Testimonies. The Coordinators are also reaching out to the FMW community seeking more ideas for the future from people who have worked with this age group in past years as we know there is a wealth of experience of working with children in our community.

Teens Group – Coordinated by Young Adult Friends (YAF)

The challenge for our Teens group this year has been one of discernment, and in particular, discerning the path forward for the Teens group. The Young Adult Friends took the Teens group under its care and tried out several different ideas over the year: regular Sunday morning meetings during Meeting for Worship, Saturday evening events including a film screening and pizza party, and facilitating FMW youth to get to events organized by the Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) Youth Program. Of these, only the third turned out to be successful due to lack of interest in the other options.

Our Yearly Meeting has a very active youth program that includes regular weekend retreats at Monthly Meetings throughout BYM for those in 6th through 8th grade – Junior Young Friends – (see <http://jyf.bym-rsf.net>) and those aged 14-20 – Young Friends – (see: <http://yf.bym-rsf.net/>). Parents of FMW teens report to us that the BYM programs are just wonderful and enable the teens to get to know other younger Friends from all over the area and they have the time of their lives together while practicing lived Quakerism through the regular retreats they have. This program is also always seeking Friendly Adult Presences to be watchful guides at retreats.

Therefore, after several months of YAF members trying to entuse the few teens with whom they had made contact, YAF came to the conclusion that the BYM Youth Program and other local meetings are already in fact providing exciting and engaging events for FMW Teens and we should not try to duplicate or replace these. So while it may be unfortunate that FMW itself does not currently have any specific organized teen events we feel it is the right course for the time being because we send this need is very much being met by the Yearly Meeting's truly outstanding youth programs.

Adult Religious Education Study Group – Coordinated by John Scales

During the past year the study group met generally twice a month on Sundays before the Meeting for Worship. It benefited by the contributions of new, as well as long-standing members, as they shared in their readings and led discussions. The group continued its focus on the lives and contributions of leaders in American society who had Quaker backgrounds. William Penn's life was studied. Lucretia Mott and Susan B. Anthony became better known biographically as well as in their key roles in leading advances in women's rights and suffrage. A biography of President Herbert Hoover elaborated on his early years as an orphan, his career in mining globally and his leadership in Europe in attending the needs of those affected by the First World War, as well as the depression years.

A study of the lives and contributions of well-known American writers revealed the influence of their Quaker backgrounds: The poet John Greenleaf Whittier wrote many poems about Quaker meetings and principles. An autobiography of James Michener gave the group background in how he became a writer, his journeys in the South Pacific, the nature of his faith, and his testimony to racial harmony. How these were expressed in the musical play, "South Pacific" and his book "Chesapeake" were considered. Joan Baez's life and songs were appreciated in relationship to her Quaker background.

The group also studied the poetry of Walt Whitman, whose mother was a Quaker, as influenced by that background and his role in caring for the wounded during the Civil War. Members then learned more about how Friends dealt with the Civil War, and how many were conflicted between their peace and anti-slavery testimony. First-hand journals and other writings by Quakers during and just after the Civil War, including one written by an ancestor of a member of the study group, gave a sense of that period from the Quaker perspective.

The group also benefited greatly from the initiative of one member in reading and sharing writings by other religious figures, and subjects. Other works studied included the Kabbalah/Jewish mysticism and The Way of Perfection by St. Teresa of Avila, 16th century Spanish mystic. The book, Amazing Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us (by Robert Putnam and David Campbell), was also discussed. The book contains a very thorough survey of different religious groups and their attitudes toward other groups, politics in the various groups and charitable activities.

In summary, it has been a busy yet fruitful year for the Religious Education committee, and we have keenly felt the divine working amongst us and enjoyed the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our midst. We are deeply grateful to the many people in the Meeting who support and uplift the work of Religious Education within the Meeting, regardless of whether they have children enrolled in the program and we welcome you to join us in nurturing the children of our village.

I would like to close by reading, in a spirit of reverence and appreciation, the names of those in our community who have taught First Day School at some point over the past year:

David Abergel

Meg Greene

Kim Acquaviva

Tracy Hart

Virginia Avanesyan

Giovanni Sella

Kathy Brandt

Rob Lipp-Far

Justin Connor

Eileen Hanlon

Silvia Dinale

Minute from Marriage & Family Relations Committee in support of all Friends' desire to both nurture our children safely and welcome all.

We recognize our meeting community is unsettled and divided by our desire to care for our treasured children safely and our wish to offer ministry to prisoners and ex-offenders, It is clear that all of us want the best for each member and attender, each child and adult. With that as our common ground, we move toward bringing each of us, and our meeting to our fullest spiritual enlightenment.

Let us all work to let go of blame and judgment, listen to each other with open hearts and continue to strengthen our spiritual community.

FMW NEWSLETTER

September 2012

Fall Events

William Penn House

You are invited to attend a potluck and Quaker dialogue at 6:30pm on September 9, 2012. Our program on this First Day will be presented by Jean-Louis Ikambana, American Friends Service Committee, DC Peace and Economic Justice Program. This is an opportunity for fellowship among Quakers, attenders and fellow seekers. Bring a dish to share; family members, neighbors and friends are always welcome.

FMW Adult Study Group

The FMW Adult Study Group will begin the school year by meeting September 9, 2012. At that meeting, John Scales will provide an overview of the coming year. For further information, contact John Scales at johnkscales@aol.com.

From the Meeting Historian, Hayden Wetzel:

FMW has a rather minor new attraction: a modest display of some of our historical materials, several volumes of binders with FMW documents for browsing, and even a 'free-take-it' shelf of excess copies of old stuff. The Library Committee has generously given up two shelves in the Parlor (near the Library end) and one shelf has some samples of our materials and the few objects we have.

Upcoming Talks

Kimberly Acquaviva will speak in the North Room on Sunday, September 16, about "Talking to your child about child sexual abuse." From 9:00am to 10:15am, she will speak about talking with children younger than third grade. From Noon to 1:30pm, she will speak about talking with children in third grade and older. **Mary Campbell will speak** on Sunday, November 4 in the North Room about "Strategies for prevention of child sexual abuse." She will provide her talk both before and after Meeting for Worship (9:00-10:15am, and noon-1:30pm). Childcare will be available for all four talks.

Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Invitation:

FCNL invites you to an inspirational dialogue with **Robert Levering**, the Quaker behind Fortune Magazine's "100 Best Companies to Work For in America". **Sunday, September 30, 4pm at Sidwell Friends School Meetinghouse** An author of eight books about the workplace, Levering is co-founder of the Great Place to Work Institute, a global research, training and consulting company that produces Best Workplaces lists in more than 40 countries. Levering's work promotes the Friends' testimonies of community and equality as they apply to workplaces. FCNL, a Quaker lobby in the public interest, is sponsoring this dialogue as part of our effort to seek a society with equality and justice for all and communities in which each person's potential may be fulfilled. Diane Randall, Executive Secretary of FCNL and Sidwell Friends parent, will moderate. The Meetinghouse is at 3825 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington, DC. Contact Sandy Robson, sandy@fcnl.org or (202) 903-2522 for more information.

Second Tuesday Evening Worship Reminder

Friends are reminded of our next ***second Tuesday evening worship and potluck***, for further community fellowship, will be held **September 11**. Worship will be in the Meeting Room, at 6:30pm, and potluck follows at 7:00pm.

Camp Catoctin Weekend

Friends are reminded that our annual fall Camp Catoctin weekend is scheduled for September 21-23. All are welcome; contact Tracy Hart at thart@worldbank.org for more information.

Revised *Faith and Practice*

Printed copies of the newly revised ***Faith and Practice*** (as well as electronic versions suitable for Kindle, Nook, and other e-readers) are available for purchase from the Baltimore Yearly Meeting website. You will also find a downloadable PDF file of the new text, for free.

Thinking About Race- September 2012

The Baltimore Yearly Meeting Working Group on Racism meets most months on the third Saturday from 10:00am to 1:00pm, at Bethesda Friends Meeting or Friends Meeting of Washington. If you would like to attend, on a regular or a drop-in basis, contact clerk, David Etheridge.