

**BYM INTERIM MEETING
MARCH 23, 2024
AGENDA AND DOCUMENTS**

Agenda

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Agenda Item #2 - Nominating Committee Report

1. Nominating Committee reports the following resignations:
 - a. Erika Janifer, Alexandria, resigned as BYM rep to Prisoner Visitation and Support
 - b. Susan Russell Walters, Gary Sandman, Elisa Hansard and Tom Webb from Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee
 - c. Sarah Bur, Homewood, from Faith and Practice Committee

2. We bring the following item on behalf of Sandy Spring Friends School. BYM currently recommends four members from within its membership to the SSFS Board of Trustees. SSFS has discerned that it is more beneficial at this point in its life to recruit its own trustees. SSFS seeks approval from BYM to lay down the practice of recommending trustees to the SSFS Board.

Agenda Item #3 - Naming Committee Report to Spring Interim Meeting

In my role as Naming Committee I am mindful of the BYM anti-racist queries and I am making an attempt to bring diversity to Search Committee. I am a member of the SSMM Change Group, and I bring anti-racist readings and queries to SSMM's Finance Committee meetings.

I bring the name of Gene Throwe, Friends Meeting of Washington, to serve on Search Committee BYM Annual Session 2023 - 2026 (effective Spring Interim Meeting 2024).

The following are the current members of Search Committee:

Richard Broadbent (Frederick)	2018 -2024
Nate Arbor (Sandy Spring)	2020 - 2024
Meg Meyer (Stony Run)	2022 -2025 Clerk

Six years is the maximum length for service on this committee at one time. We thank Richard Broadbent for his years of service as he will "roll off" at Annual Session 2024. In addition, Nate Arbor will not continue on Search Committee effective Annual Session 2024.

In order to complete and discern the Search Committee's work the optimal number of members is 6. As you can see, as of today, beginning at Annual Session 2024 there will be just 2 members on Search Committee. It is invaluable that members of Search Committee have connections throughout Yearly Meeting. Search Committee assumes a vital role in the life, spirit, and community of BYM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gloria Victor-Dorr
Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting

Agenda Item #4 - Treasurer's Report

Today I am presenting and reporting on the unaudited financial statements of Baltimore Yearly Meeting for the year ended December 31, 2023. These are the statements we give to our auditors, bbd in Philadelphia, so they can prepare the final audited statements. These statements consist of a Statement of Financial Position (or Balance Sheet) which shows our account balances as of 12/31/23 and a Statement of Activities which shows our revenues and expenditures for the entire year.

These statements show a strong financial picture for the Yearly Meeting. Unrestricted contributions increased over 2022 amounts even though we didn't have a full time Development Director. Restricted contributions were up dramatically as Friends responded to the need for funds to move Camp Opequon to the Rolling Ridge property. Our investments also increased.

Balance Sheet

The balance sheet shows the unaudited balances in our various asset, liability, and net asset accounts as of December 31, 2023. In our asset accounts, BYM shows total cash of \$231,489. Because we are on the accrual basis of accounting, we show receivables which are amounts owed to us on December 31 but not yet collected. This included a \$50,000 donation which was owed but not received until January 2024. The property and equipment section includes a line item for "Projects in Progress." These are capital projects which were uncompleted at year end. They are mostly camp projects but also include upgrading our HVAC system at the office. Our investments total \$2,086,568. This is an increase of about 15% from the previous year. Total assets are about \$5.2 million.

The liabilities section only shows short-term liabilities. These are amounts owed within one\ year. BYM doesn't have any long-term liabilities.

Our unaudited total net assets (difference between total assets and total liabilities) on December 31, 2023, are \$5,055,467, which includes the 2023 surplus of \$186,306.

Statement of Activities

The statement of activities shows the total revenue and expenditures for the year ended December 31, 2023. It is presented in five columns. The first column shows the unrestricted activity. The next three columns show restricted activity, and the fifth column shows the total of all activities. Most of our revenues and expenditures fall into the unrestricted or operating column.

Under revenues, BYM collected \$504,170 in apportionment, down about \$10,000 from the previous year. Our income from programs was just over \$1.5 million. In 2022, this total was just over \$1.6 million. Our total contribution income was \$639,191. This total includes unrestricted contributions of \$357,324 and restricted contributions of \$281,553. The unrestricted contribution total includes about \$228,000 donated for the improvements to the Rolling Ridge property where Camp Opequon will be located this summer.

The released funds amount represents amounts taken from our restricted funds (such as camp capital, camp scholarship and education funds) and spent for their restricted purpose. This amount was just over \$205,000.

Total investment income was \$306,587 which includes unrealized gains of about \$174,000. Unrealized gains represent the increase in the market value of our investments for the year. In 2022, we had unrealized losses of over \$415,000 so this represents a dramatic swing from one year to the next. Total revenues were just under \$3 million.

The expenditures are listed next which total about \$2.8 million. Camp program expenditures total \$1,296,758. Camp property expenditures total \$553,623. The expenditures for the development program were about half of the 2022 amount since we did not have a full time Development Director.

The bottom line shows revenues exceeding expenditures by \$186,306. The unrestricted part of this was an excess of revenues over expenditures of \$110,333. This unrestricted number is preliminary due to the fact that the auditors always allocate a portion of our investment income to restricted activities. However, we had a strong year financially. Thanks to our staff for keeping track of all this and to our generous donors.

As a reminder, our 2022 audited financial statements show unrestricted net assets of \$1,116,872 on December 31, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,
James Riley
BYM Treasurer
Hopewell Centre Meeting

Baltimore Yearly Meeting
Balance Sheet
As of 12/31/2023

	Current Year	
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash & Cash Equivalents		
Operating Account	206,980.00	1001
Payroll Acct	15,533.08	1002
Camp Property Manager	1,864.83	1004
Catoctin Caretakers	1,051.18	1005
Shiloh Caretakers Account	1,342.40	1006
Catoctin Directors	353.96	1007
Shiloh Directors Account	246.19	1008
Opequon Directors	1,260.70	1009
TA Directors Account	2,756.89	1010
Petty Cash	<u>100.00</u>	1050
Total Cash & Cash	231,489.23	
Accounts Receivable		
Apportionment Receivable	15,478.25	1200
Student Loans Receivable	628.32	1300
Allowance for Doubtful	(32,948.15)	1302
Harford Friends School	40,000.00	1512
Staff Receivables	820.28	1590
Other Receivables	<u>50,837.88</u>	1599
Total Accounts Receivable	74,816.58	
Prepaid Expenses		
Other Prepaid Expenses	63,880.61	1710
Prepaid Rent	26,000.00	1711
Deposits	<u>3,065.00</u>	1715
Total Prepaid Expenses	<u>92,945.61</u>	
Total Current Assets	399,251.42	
Long-term Assets		
Property & Equipment		
Land	1,106,495.65	2010
Land Improvements	377,407.96	2011
Buildings	1,947,374.89	2020
Leasehold Improvements	285,601.15	2030
Accum. Depr. Buildings &	(1,338,616.31)	2039
Leasehold		
Furniture, Fixtures &	272,801.55	2050
Accum. Depr. FF&E	(227,795.66)	2059
Vehicles	265,480.20	2060
Accum. Depr. Vehicles	(205,305.81)	2069
Projects in Progress	<u>238,800.26</u>	2900
Total Property & Equipment	2,722,243.88	
Long-term Investments		
Friends Fiduciary	1,508,750.85	1110
Sandy Spring Bancorp	817.20	1111
Morgan Stanley Smith	<u>576,999.57</u>	1113
Total Long-term	<u>2,086,567.62</u>	
Total Long-term Assets	<u>4,808,811.50</u>	
Total Assets	<u>5,208,062.92</u>	

Baltimore Yearly Meeting
Statement of Activities
From 1/1/2023 Through 12/31/2023

	Unrestricted	Designated	Temp Restricted	Perm Restricted	Total
Operating Revenue					
Apportionment Income					
Apportionment	505,548.63	0.00	0.00	0.00	505,548.63
Apportionment Adjustments	(1,378.32)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(1,378.32)
Total Apportionment Income	504,170.31	0.00	0.00	0.00	504,170.31
Program Revenue	1,507,815.78	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,507,815.78
Contributions					
Contributions	357,313.65	0.00	10.00	0.00	357,323.65
In Kind Contributions	314.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	314.89
Bequests	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Restricted Contributions	0.00	0.00	264,582.63	16,970.00	281,552.63
Grants Received	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Contributions	357,628.54	0.00	264,592.63	16,970.00	639,191.17
Revenue Released from Restriction					
Released Funds	205,587.97	0.00	(205,587.97)	0.00	0.00
Total Revenue Released from Restriction	205,587.97	0.00	(205,587.97)	0.00	0.00
Investment Income					
Interest & Dividends	65,887.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	65,887.48
Unrealized Gain (Loss)	174,395.78	0.00	0.00	0.00	174,395.78
Realized Gains (Loss)	66,303.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	66,303.70
Change in value of CGA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Investment Income	306,586.96	0.00	0.00	0.00	306,586.96
Property & Vehicle Rental					
Property Rental Income	14,213.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	14,213.75
Program Rental of Property	(200.00)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(200.00)
Vehicle Rental Income	1,186.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,186.38
Total Property & Vehicle Rental	15,200.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	15,200.13
Gain(Loss) on Sale of Assets	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Revenue from Sale of Goods					
Book Sales	1,363.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,363.60
Clothing Sales	919.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	919.36
Other Sales	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Purchase for Resale	17.77	0.00	0.00	0.00	17.77
Total Revenue from Sale of Goods	2,300.73	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,300.73
Other Income	10,004.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,004.41
Total Operating Revenue	2,909,294.83	0.00	59,004.66	16,970.00	2,985,269.49

Baltimore Yearly Meeting
Statement of Activities
From 1/1/2023 Through 12/31/2023

		Temp		Perm		
		Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Restricted	Total
Expenditures						
100	Admin	539,505.17	0.00	1.75	0.00	539,506.92
200	Camp Program Administration	341,304.93	0.00	0.00	0.00	341,304.93
210	Catoctin Program	247,238.71	0.00	0.00	0.00	247,238.71
220	Shiloh Program	195,065.62	0.00	0.00	0.00	195,065.62
230	Opequon Program	248,140.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	248,140.57
240	Teen Adventure Program	264,993.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	264,993.34
241	TA Bike Program	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
250	Camp Alumni Program	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
260	Outreach & Inclusion	109,264.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	109,264.89
270	Rolling Ridge	14.47	0.00	0.00	0.00	14.47
300	Camp Property Administration	236,666.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	236,666.24
310	Catoctin Property	111,674.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	111,674.08
320	Shiloh Property	91,054.23	0.00	0.00	0.00	91,054.23
330	Opequon Property	73,332.81	0.00	0.00	0.00	73,332.81
370	Rolling Ridge Property	40,895.27	0.00	0.00	0.00	40,895.27
410	Young Friends	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
415	Young Friends Exec.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
420	Jr. Young Friends	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
430	Youth Programs Committee	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
440	Youth Secretary	92,615.72	0.00	0.00	0.00	92,615.72
501	Advancement & Outreach	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
502	Ministry & Pastoral Care	3,228.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,228.04
503	Peace & Social Concerns	507.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	507.00
504	Religious Education	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
505	Young Adult Friends	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
506	Unity With Nature	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
508	Interim Meeting	1,139.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,139.34
510	Stewardship & Finance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
511	Trustees	7,023.88	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,023.88
513	Indian Affairs	1,583.55	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,583.55
514	Racism WG	3,067.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,067.49
515	Intervisitation	1,630.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,630.13
517	Faith & Practice Revision	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
518	Growing Diverse Leadership	3,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00
519	Reparations Action Working Group	6,150.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,150.00
610	Annual Session	70,590.23	0.00	0.00	0.00	70,590.23
632	Spiritual Formation	22,674.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	22,674.10
633	Women's Retreat	3,008.58	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,008.58
635	Other BYM Programs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
920	Development	<u>83,593.42</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>83,593.42</u>
	Total Expenditures	<u>2,798,961.81</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>1.75</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>2,798,963.56</u>
	Net Revenue over Expenditures	<u>110,333.02</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>59,002.91</u>	<u>16,970.00</u>	<u>186,305.93</u>

Agenda Item #5 - Supervisory Committee Report

Supervisory Committee seeks to support our General Secretary, Sarah Gillooly, and advocate for the needs of staff, with the understanding that supporting our general secretary goes hand in hand with supporting our staff and making sure they're able to do their jobs effectively.

There have been a number of personal challenges for BYM's staff this year, and Supervisory has supported Sarah in working with staff to manage these. We have been deeply appreciative of Sarah's grace under pressure, their commitment to fair and transparent labor practices, and their consistent recognition that our staff are humans with specific needs. Sarah has continued to bring their skills of pastoral care to their job in a variety of ways, and we are grateful for their grounded presence.

Each year, members of Supervisory Committee interview members of BYM's staff about their work and their roles in the yearly meeting. This year we also asked them specifically, "What would you like the yearly meeting to know?" We heard from staff that they appreciate the help and support of the committees they work with, and that there are tasks that fall to staff that would be helped by greater volunteer support. Staff who have been with the organization for a while have noticed that there are fewer volunteers and less volunteer time available to do work that does not decrease.

If your committee works with BYM staff, please consider the limits of their time, understanding that all our staff are deeply committed to the work of the yearly meeting and may stretch themselves beyond the boundaries of their jobs to see things get done. If your committee has projects under its care that rely on an individual highly motivated Friend, consider whether these projects may place a burden on staff when that individual Friend puts them down; consider if this is already happening. If you have skills or time you could offer to the yearly meeting as a volunteer outside of committee work, keep in mind that there are many places, particularly in the camping program, where those might be deeply appreciated. Often the jobs of our staff are made easier by simply having someone to ask for backup. We all know that many hands make light work.

At each of our meetings, Supervisory begins by reading BYM's anti-racism queries, so that these inform our discernment. We are grateful to Sarah for regularly convening staff meetings about our commitments as an anti-racist organization, and we heard from staff that the reminders that the work of racial justice is constant and multi-faceted has been valuable. We also heard that this is an area where the yearly meeting as a whole can still grow, and that we should continue to consider how we support the work of making BYM "more Friendly and whole" through our programs and processes. All Friends are invited to consider the biases and assumptions that may prevent us from living into this work.

In 2024, as part of strengthening BYM's support for staff, Supervisory Committee will undertake a review and revision of our Staff Handbook, which has not been substantially updated in a decade. We are committed to ensuring that staff have the resources they need to understand our policies and advocate for themselves.

The Co-clerks meet with Sarah monthly or as needed, in addition to bi-monthly Supervisory Committee meetings. Betsy and Becka have also been honored this year to have a role as site supervisors for Sarah's work in their Supervised Ministry course at Earlham School of Religion, which is another lens through which we can understand Sarah's work as General Secretary.

As part of our annual report each year, Supervisory shares BYM human resources costs for the current budget year. These details are below.

2024 Budget and Human Resources Costs

Salaries \$787,234
FICA \$60,223
Benefits \$127,760
Retirement \$47,234
Total \$1,022,451

This is for 13 year-round staff. Of those 13 year-round staff: 10 are 1.0 FTE, 1 is 0.75 FTE, and 2 are 0.5 FTE. 45% of human resources costs are expended for 5 positions that support Yearly Meeting services and program and business administration. 55% is expended for 8 positions that administer the camping program and property, youth programs, and STRIDE.

Respectfully submitted,
Becka Haines Rosenberg and Betsy Tobin, co-clerks of Supervisory

Agenda Item #6 - Reproductive Justice Working Group Proposed Minutes

Approved by RJWG October 11, 2023

Revised December 13, 2023

Revised March 10, 2024

Friends believe that God, or the Inner Light, dwells within each of us, and that by centering into stillness, we can individually and collectively listen to that inner voice and become clear about next steps to take. We support each person's right to seek and follow this inner voice and hold such leadings with loving concern for the individual.

The decision to have, or not have, children is an intimate, personal one, to be held lovingly in the presence of the Inner light. Baltimore Yearly Meeting is neither for or against abortion, but supports each person's right to choose, following the leadings of the Inner Light as they apply to their particular life situation.

Through our process of discernment, The Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends opposes laws that restrict access to contraception and abortion. We support the right of all persons to make decisions involving their own reproductive health. The legacy of chattel slavery, in which women who were enslaved had no agency over their bodies, has in some ways persisted. Currently, many who have reproductive capacity still have little agency over their bodies due to cultural expectations, vulnerability in society, and in relationships, and laws that make access to reproductive healthcare difficult, and for some, impossible to obtain.

We recognize that decisions regarding reproductive healthcare are personal and may be difficult due to the person's life circumstances. These include decisions to prevent pregnancy, to become pregnant, to abort a pregnancy, or carry a pregnancy to term. We oppose those who spread false medical information regarding abortion and contraception.

We believe in supporting those who make reproductive healthcare decisions that we might have made differently due to our own spiritual leadings, health and family circumstances. We respect those who hold religious views different from ours, and whose practice of religion differs from our own, as well as those who choose not to practice any religion. However, we oppose efforts to impose religious views on others.

We are aware that, in the United States, persons who are in the global majority are adversely affected more than others when laws are enacted that restrict access to contraception and abortion, and that they have higher rates of complications and death from pregnancy and delivery. Our Testimony of Equality, and our leading to become an antiracist body urges us to address and heal these inequities.

We seek and advocate for a just society that allows access to the full range of reproductive healthcare, and for a society in which children are protected from abuse and oppression, and have adequate food, housing, healthcare and education.

We believe that BYM Friends have discerned these beliefs through our process of seeking discernment in our Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business.

Agenda Item #7 - General Secretary's Report

Friends –

Greetings from the desk of the General Secretary. I look forward to gathering with you, in body and in Spirit, at our Winter Interim Meeting on 23 3mo 2024. My report to you today is organized within the categories of responsibilities included in the job description for the General Secretary. As always, my door is open, and I look forward to hearing from you.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE STAFF

2023 Staff Annual Reviews will be complete next Friday. Annual Feedback Sessions with Supervisory Committee are already complete and reflected in the Supervisory Committee Annual Report.

The staff met for our annual retreat in December. We used our time together to revisit our shared agreements for the ways we would like to function as a team, to explore habits of white culture in the context of both Quakerism and non-profit organizations, and to explore some of the systemic challenges of our Yearly Meeting and how experience those as staff. We also enjoyed fellowship and worship sharing, and Friends noted that this time “all together” is invaluable.

The payroll system transition is complete. We were notified in the fall that our payroll provider was existing the payroll business, and we were forcibly transitioned to a new provider in October. The transition is now complete and has, delightfully, created administrative efficiencies in the employee-facing tools such as timesheets and paystub access. However, this will be our first summer season on the new system – adding 150+ individuals into payroll each year is a big task. I am relieved to be able to delegate this to the new Camping Program Associate in 2024. Payroll, Benefits, and all HR functions came under the General Secretary after the elimination of the Associate General Secretary position.

Three vacancies have been successfully filled since our Fall Interim Meeting in November:

1. Nikki Holland has started as our new Development Manager, replacing Mary Braun who left BYM in February 2023.
2. Randy Mattern will begin as the Camping Program Associate the first week of May. This position was approved in 2023
3. We have extended an offer to a candidate for the Opequon Caretaker, a half-time role, which we expect to be accepted. We expect the new hire to begin in the role immediately.

Supervisory Committee and I have made significant progress on Undoing Racism [Items of Redress](#). These items for redress were developed by Khalila Lomax, former STRIDE Coordinator, and myself in response to the racism Khalila experienced while working for BYM.

WORKING WITH COMPONENTS OF BYM

2023 Community Statistics will be collected over the new few months using the old form. Work to revise the form and create an online submission form have been delayed by other pressing priorities. The Administrative Associate, Lucy Azenga, will be working toward a new form for the collection of 2024 statistics in early 2025 .

The BYM 2023 Yearbook will go to the printer by the end of March. As reported to you the same time last year, the Yearbook – and its ambitious scope - is extremely difficult to produce without the assistance of an Associate General Secretary.

The updated Faith & Practice is available as a PDF on the BYM website and will be available on Kindle and paper copy by mid-April. Meetings will receive printed copies by mail. Additional copies will be available to order through Amazon PrintOnDemand.

The End of Life Working Group book, *A Tender Time*, is nearing publication. In collaboration with Patti Nesbitt, Lucy and I will be distributing 2 free copies to all BYM Meetings. Additional copies will be available through Pendle Hill, Kindle, Amazon, and additional Quaker booksellers. Sarah, Nikki, and Patti will be writing an additional grant in April to support further printing and distribution costs beyond the original grant received from Friends Foundation for the Aging.

The post-holidays Committee Season is in full-swing. The busiest season for Committees is late winter through Annual Session in August. I am attending and supporting the following Committees:

1. Supervisory Committee, bi-monthly
2. Supervisory Clerks Check-In, bi-monthly
3. Presiding & Interim Clerks Check-In, bi-weekly
4. Stewardship & Finance Committee, monthly
5. Trustees Committee, bi-monthly
6. Program Committee, bi-monthly (new GenSec responsibility in 2021)
7. Development Committee, monthly (new GenSec responsibility 2023)
8. Other Committees as Requested (aprx. 1-2/month)

The database transition will be complete by the end of April. We began working on this in the winter of 2023. The transition was required learning our existing database, which is more than a decade old, was no longer being supported by its parent company. The new database will make it much easier to maintain Monthly Meeting committee clerking information, a task formerly done by the Associate General Secretary, and to maintain accurate donor records. In 2025, the new database will integrate with our bookkeeping software, creating efficiencies for Administration, Development, and Finance.

FUNDRAISING & MANAGING RESOURCES

Implementation of a new BYM Approved Driver Protocol is complete. After a change in our institutional insurance provider last year, BYM must now maintain our own list of approved drivers in compliance with the insurance requirements. Previously, the list was maintained for us by the insurance provider. Anyone who drives a BYM-owned vehicle or drives youth as part of a BYM program will be required to complete an annual background check and annual driving record screening with the General Secretary, in addition to complying with the Trustees Driving Policy. If you have previously been an approved driver for BYM, you must complete a new screening before you can drive a BYM vehicle or program participants. Please contact me.

We have begun a quarterly Safety Committee Meeting to review safety and risk management across BYM programs. This committee is required by our new institutional insurance provider. In addition to discussing seasonal safety topics, the meeting is a place to review safety incidents to identify improvements to policies and process and to prevent similar incidents in the future. This is currently a staff-based meeting, with reports made to Supervisory Committee and other respective committees as incidents come up.

I have been a close partner in the Special Campaign for Opequon Quaker Camp. With assistance from Barbara Wille, Development Consultant, and the fabulous Special Campaign Committee, we have secured \$400,000 the \$700,000 goal to date. The campaign will officially launch – and make the push toward the final goal - at Annual Session.

Year End Financials look good – ending the year with a positive balance of over \$150,000 for 2 of my 3 years of tenure. BYM did pay out two staff severances in 2023 with the departure of the Development Director and STRIDE Coordinator, which pushed personnel costs over budget. A few other budget lines were over budget, which the General Secretary will explore with Stewardship & Finance as we build the 2025 budget.

The Clerk of Trustees and I are in the very early stages of exploring the possibility of relocating the BYM Office to a building on the property of one of our Quaker neighbors. The BYM Office is now 60 years old and will need some major maintenance over the next 5-10 years including a new roof, repair of dry rot, and drainage issues that are impacting the foundation. In addition, staff have continued to work a hybrid schedule since the pandemic, which leaves most of the office spaces unused for more days than they are occupied. In addition, Supervisory Committee has been unable to staff a volunteer Building Maintenance Committee, which leaves the General Secretary responsible for all maintenance and repairs of the building and for arranging grounds care for the 2.8 acres. If either party is interested, selling the building and land to either of our neighbors – Friends House or Sandy Spring Friends School – would create income-generating revenue for BYM, maintain the donor intent for the land, and relocate staff to a smaller but more manageable space on the grounds of Sandy Spring Meeting, the school, or the retirement community. No decisions are on the immediate horizon, but the consideration feels worthwhile.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Early this month, I fell at home, resulting in a mild-concussion. The doctor recommended complete rest for a minimum of 3 days, preferably a week – which simply wasn't possible given my responsibilities. I was able to take half-days for 3 days and stay off screens during that time and many Friends expressed their care and concern. However, the inability to take full, emergency time off was a wakeup call to me about the unsustainability of my service to BYM. I love my work and this community, and I hope to serve you for years to come. I worry that will not be possible unless we commit ourselves to Long-Term Planning that clarifies the priorities (and non-priorities) of the Yearly Meeting and reduces the complexity of our structures. Obviously, I cannot lead a strategic planning process when I cannot even find time to rest after a head injury. As many of our Committees, Monthly Meetings, and our Clerks similarly labor under a shortage of human capacity, I find myself wondering **how might we, as a beloved body, free up the time and space to step back and consider what we want to do for one another and the world with the resources we have?**

Yours in joyful service,
Sarah G.

Agenda Item #8 - Procedure Change Concerning BYM Nominations to Sandy Spring Friends School Board of Trustees

Procedure Change Concerning BYM Nominations to SSFS Board of Trustees (Background)

The Sandy Spring Friends School's (SSFS) Committee on Trustees (COT) is responsible for nominating at-large members of the Board and for training and nurturing Board members. In September 2023 the General Secretary of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting, in an email exchange, asked Frank Massey (co-clerk of COT), "Why is BYM nominating SSFS Board members?" The General Secretary noted that BYM is the only North America Yearly Meeting nominating school board members. After that inquiry, and in consultation with the COT co-clerk, Frank had a Zoom conversation with the BYM Nominating Committee co-clerks. The co-clerks acknowledged that the committee has had difficulty finding nominees for the Board. The most likely source of nominees is the Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting, which itself is having a difficult time nominating SSFS Board members. The BYM Nominating co-clerks express support of the SSFS Board taking the responsibility of nominating four Quakers to the Board. After a review of the SSFS bylaws, it was determined that with a small revision of the bylaws, these nominees could come from yearly meetings beyond the BYM.

The COT co-clerks discussed this change, then spoke with the SSFS Board co-clerks, and after a time of discussion and discernment, it was agreed that the full COT would review and discern if the Committee would forward this to the Board. All acknowledged that this would allow the Board to nominate Board members from beyond BYM, including alumni and Quaker educators from across the United States. This would also free up a few spots on the Board for nominations to increase the Board's diversity. COT approved forwarding the proposal to the Board.

A written proposal for the change in the nomination process was emailed to the SSFS Board several days before the February Board meeting. The Board considered this during the executive session on 13 February 2024. After considering the potential advantages and disadvantages of this change, the Board approved forwarding this request to the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Interim Meeting.

Mary Nishioka
Co-Clerks Committee on Trustees
Sandy Spring Friends School Trustees

Frank Massey

Agenda Item #9 - Stewardship & Finance Draft Policy on BYM Representative Travel

Updated March 6, 2024

The BYM Nominating Committee nominates persons to serve as BYM representatives to a number of organizations. BYM policy is to pay as funds allow for travel costs of BYM representatives for these purposes:

- To serve on Friends General Conference's governing body, the FGC Central Committee
- To participate as a BYM representative at meetings of Friend United Meeting (FUM)
- To participate as a BYM representative at meetings of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)
- To serve as nominated representatives to other outside organizations

There is a line item in the Operating Budget for Representative Travel. This line item is funded every year based on expected travel costs for the year. The Nominating Committee will advise the Stewardship & Finance Committee when a year's total travel costs for all representatives are expected to exceed \$5,000, such as in a year where BYM representatives will participate in an overseas meeting.

When BYM representatives plan travel for the above purposes:

- Representatives should submit their travel budgets as soon as possible to the General Secretary. This will allow for adequate planning and budgeting for the travel fund.
- Funds will be given based on several factors, including cost of travel, applicant's financial need, type of gathering and access to non-BYM funding.
- Pilot this approach and re-evaluate the policy in 2 years. It is not certain how much travel will cost each year and travel costs will vary year-to-year.
- For planning purposes, Friends are asked to report their expenses, whether they claim reimbursement or not.

Payment of travel costs should not be an obstacle for service. The goal is to cover the full cost of representative travel as the budget allows. Here are the policies for reimbursement from the Yearly Meeting:

- Representative Travel expenses include registration, lodging, transportation, and food. Representatives are invited to seek modest arrangements. Conferences often offer housing options or suggestions that could serve as a guide for reasonable costs.
- Friends are also encouraged to ask for support from their local meetings and other sources.
- Application procedure for reimbursement (Need suggestions from the General Secretary)

Agenda Item #10 - Development Committee Report

BYM Development Committee report to BYM Interim Meeting March 23, 2024

Development Committee is pleased to report that BYM exceeded our 2023 goals for unrestricted contributed income. Total contributed income \$748,359 as follows:

General Fund (from individuals, meetings, and grants):	\$352,620	(goal: \$302,360)
Camp Property Capital:	\$ 34,109	
Barry Morley Scholarship:	\$ 5,200	
Special Campaign for Rolling Ridge (gifts and pledges)	<u>\$356,430</u>	
	\$748,359	

We are thrilled with these results, and very grateful to all who donated last year. Our 2024 income goal for the General Fund is \$350,000. This year we hope to inspire even more individuals to donate to BYM, as well as to increase the level of foundation support.

Barbara Wille of Capacity Partners served as Interim Development Director in 2023, and is continuing in that role this year. She is also providing staff support for the Special Campaign for Rolling Ridge. Barbara works 2 days a week in these combined roles, and we are very grateful for her service. Nikki Holland is our new Development Manager who will be working full time to support all aspects of the Development Program. Welcome, Nikki!!

The committee is delighted that BYM has invested in a new database which has far greater fundraising capacity than the old one. To say the prior database was “a thorn in our side” is generous. We now expect easier and more robust reporting to support the analysis which drives fundraising strategy.

The Special Campaign for Rolling Ridge burst out of the gates last summer and took on a life of its own. A handful of Friends expressed their enthusiasm for this project by immediately donating or pledging gifts which brought us halfway to our campaign goal of \$700,000 by the end of 2023. To raise \$356,430 in less than five months is an extraordinary level of support, and confirms for us the importance of this project. That growing sum will allow work at camp to continue without drawing on yearly meeting reserves in the short term. The campaign committee is up and running under the leadership of Arthur Boyd (Stony Run) and all Friends will be hearing more about the campaign this year.

Our committee remains small but active, with 4 appointed members, 3 active liaison members, and one co-opted member. 3 committee members are doing “double-duty” by serving simultaneously on the Rolling Ridge campaign committee. Meetings are well-attended and productive. We would welcome additional appointed members and are always glad to tell you about what’s involved in Development Committee work.

Barb Platt, clerk

Agenda Item #11 - Presiding Clerk's Report

Verbal report only.

Agenda Item #12 - Peace & Social Concerns Proposed Minute on Peace in Israel and Palestine

The Peace & Social Concerns Committee of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), approved the following Minute on December 12, 2023. We commend it for consideration by Monthly Meetings throughout BYM. Rev. 2/27/24.

As Quakers we believe in the sacred worth of each person and stand against violence in all its forms. We grieve for the loss of each life, and with those in Israel and Palestine who are losing loved ones. We pray with those waiting for the return of loved ones and those living under siege and bombardment. We condemn the violence unleashed by Hamas, and we denounce the retribution of the Israeli Defense Force on Gaza.

We join with many millions across the world to call for an immediate ceasefire and humanitarian access, an end to the catastrophic bombing of civilian Gaza, and action to address the inequalities underlying this situation so as to create the conditions for a lasting peace.

We urge our government to halt the US enabling Israel's extraordinary violence against the people in Gaza, through the supply of weapons and by the shameful veto of the UN call for ceasefire. Our participation not only escalates the build-up of hatred, it also escalates the potential for a wider war in the Middle East. We believe our government must call for an immediate ceasefire, immediate and adequate humanitarian aid, and immediate negotiations for a long-term peace.

Further military action will not bring peace. History shows us that retaliatory violence is a failure (witness the wars of retribution in Iraq and Afghanistan). Violence only begets more violence. There are no winners.

Violence such as this is never justifiable, and we insist that a ceasefire must be realized along with the return of all hostages. The Hamas attack on Israel on October 7 killed over 1,300 Israelis, and civilian hostages were taken by Hamas into Gaza. The subsequent Israeli military attack on Gaza had by mid-December killed more than 18,000 Palestinians, primarily women and children, displaced more than one million Palestinians in Gaza, destroyed homes and hospitals. Today the number of Gazans killed is 30,000, no hospital is functioning, and the people are starving. The ongoing siege of Gaza blocks access to water, food, fuel, electricity, and medicine to all people in Gaza. People are going hungry and thirsty, thousands are injured, and overwhelmed medical facilities cannot help those in need. People are dying as a preventable humanitarian crisis deepens.

The many faith traditions represented in the region share a religious obligation to feed the hungry, care for the sick and wounded, and protect the most vulnerable from violence. This fundamental human obligation undergirds the moral authority of International Humanitarian Law. **We urge the combatants, our government, and the entire international community to respect the 4th Geneva Convention for the Protection of Civilians in War.**

We also call on all of us – from national and international leaders to religious bodies, media and people in their communities whether impacted or removed from this war -- to firmly disavow dehumanizing anti-Palestinian and anti-Semitic rhetoric and approaches that deepen painful divisions and politicize the current crisis. Our conviction that peace will prevail on earth, as the scriptures of the great religions of the world have promised, requires this of each of us, for humanity to regain its footing amid such incredible violence and suffering. This is a time for strong moral resolve, spiritual fortitude, and immediate action.

Written Report: Working Group on Racism Update on Racial Justice Change Group Work in Monthly Meetings

Note: This and all previous Change Group updates are available at this [link](#).

Adelphi

Since our last report in October 2023, we have undertaken a four-part series of readings and discussions on reparations, continued our monthly series of films and discussions focusing on members of oppressed communities, reached out to our local neighborhood community, and continued to offer anti-racism resources through our twice-weekly Silent Announcements. Finally, in January, we convened our first annual review of our anti-racism work, inviting the whole meeting to a second-hour discussion.

Reparations series:

October, session 1: What was broken?

November, session 2: Embracing the joy of reparations

January, session 3: What's the difference between reparations and charity?

February, session 4: Reparations and relationships

Though some of the reparations discussions were thought-provoking and significant, these sessions consistently drew a small number of Friends.

Films and Discussions:

October – *Salt of the Earth* – Mexican American Miners in Northern New Mexico

November – *Medicine Woman* – Native healers and the first Native American woman to become a doctor in 1865, Susan La Flesche Picotte

December – *The Mask You Live In* – challenging America's narrow definition of masculinity

January – *Union Maids* – the story of three women who lived through the sit-downs, scabs, unemployment, hunger marches, and violence of the beginning of unionizing in the 1930s in Chicago.

February – a special in-person showing of *Rustin* at the Meetinghouse

March – (coming up soon) – *Not Done: Women Remaking America*

These films are almost always available for free on Kanopy. Friends are encouraged to watch the film before gathering for the discussion – but to come anyway if they haven't seen it. The film discussions seem to draw in people who haven't otherwise been participating in small groups or other Meeting-sponsored anti-racism activities.

Anti-Racism Resources:

In our twice weekly Silent Announcements, we continue to offer resources (both events and readings) for adults and children.

Anti-Racism Assessment:

During Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business in December 2022, Adelphi Friends Meeting approved and minuted its commitment to anti-racism. The minute concludes with a promise:

Adelphi Friends Meeting will set annual goals for our anti-racist work – both within our Meeting and in the wider world – and hold ourselves accountable for their accomplishment, including reflection in our annual Spiritual State of the Meeting report.

Above all, we will listen to the Spirit and embrace the messages of universal love and care that we hear. We want to witness change in ourselves and in our community. We will hold ourselves and one another to these commitments with firmness, tenderness, and love. We move forward with truth as we understand it right now, knowing that continuing revelation, deep listening, and lived experience will change who we are. We will revisit this statement every year as our understanding grows.

In January 2024, we held our first annual accountability session, attended by approximately 30 Friends. The session was framed in terms of the *Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Institution* by Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training. (<https://crossroadsantiracism.org/>) That document presents columns of characteristics that might describe the actions and attitudes of a community, business, or organization on a path toward becoming anti-racist.

Column 3, for example, titled "Symbolic Change," describes a meeting that sees itself as non-racist and has made official pronouncements to that effect, and is taking steps to be more inclusive in participation, leadership, and committees. But a "column 3" Meeting is still mostly unaware about how the systemic facts of power and privilege play out in day-to-day interactions and in "policies and procedures."

Column 4, titled "Identity Change," on the other hand, describes a Meeting that is beginning to take on institutional structures and systems that sustain racism. The Meeting sponsors anti-racism training, begins to be accountable to racially oppressed communities, and moves toward identifying itself as anti-racist rather than merely "non-racist." But the structures of power in a "column 4" Meeting still haven't changed much.

Last year, the Change Group estimated that Adelphi Meeting was in column 3 (Symbolic Change) – which was a step or two away, we thought, from where we started. In our first annual assessment, we asked Friends to look at these characteristics and share their thoughts about where we are now as a Meeting. Our discussion was rich and encouraging. We heard reflections on many aspects of our work together:

- There was acknowledgment and appreciation of a cultural shift – that we are beginning to embrace a community-wide identity as an anti-racist institution, including being more aware of and "anti" our own individual racism.
- The work of preparing for and adopting our Anti-Racism statement last December helped us come to see a unity of vision that had not been clear to us before.

- Some Friends saw a measurable change in our policies and decision-making and the “twinkling” of an awareness that we ought to be examining “continuing patterns, privilege, paternalism, and control.”
- We have had anti-racism trainings – at the “101” level but not the “201” level. The “201” level would be oriented toward action and change.
- The small groups organized in 2020 – many of which continue now – have been the locus of personal change, and many people now feel invested in seeing the Meeting make systemic changes.
- Making use of the BYM Anti-Racism queries - in Meetings for business and in committee work - can help us to focus on the need for systemic changes in our discernment and actions. Perhaps embedding these queries in the language of the testimonies they carry out would help us to see more clearly how integral they are to our faith.
- We have a longish history of being visibly and vocally inclusive of LGBTQ+ folks and these Friends are well incorporated into the Meeting’s activities and “governance structure” such as it is. Likewise, people in the Global Majority need to see others from Global Majority communities here, in order to feel welcomed and comfortable in Meeting.
- It would be helpful to know more about the work that people in our Meeting are doing in the community, to get to know each other better and to learn more about the ties we may already have with our surrounding community.
- The level of participation in this anti-racism journey is mixed. Some have not started their own journey yet but keep participating in a Meeting that has taken on this journey as a core value.

One member of the Change Group reports that, in their small group discussion on anti-racism assessment, the group felt that there was *actual, palpable change in the AFM community*—feeling a growing identity as an antiracist community. The group talked about their greater comfort with talking about race (vs when the anti-racism small groups first began in the fall of 2020) and a greater willingness to sit with discomfort as we are challenged to become more and more aware of our own entanglement with White supremacy culture. The group felt that this sense of forward movement doesn’t lead to resting on our laurels; instead, it engenders hope that change can actually occur – and *that* fact spurs more action. We are finding more Light.

Alexandria

Alexandria Friends Change group is in abeyance while we participate in Trust Circles. We were trained by Kathryn and Clinton Pettus in April of 2023 and we began meeting in a Trust Circle over the summer. In September, we welcomed more people into the group, and we were able to form a second Trust Circle. Each Trust Circle has 6-10 members and meets once a month. These Trust Circles continue in 2024.

Bethesda

Bethesda Friends Meeting completed the first formal stage of its Collective Journey of Inward/Outward Healing as it pertains to Systemic Racism in June.

The desired outcome of the process was a declaration of BFM’s identity and shared defined commitments re systemic racism. BFM is committed to confronting and healing from systemic racism, using practices learned, and adopting one or more Meeting-wide projects to help repair

past and present injustices. Overall, participants rated their experience of the journey at 4.48 out of 5 in a survey conducted at the end of the process.

Next steps include incorporating anti-racism into existing processes and committee work; building a repository of resources for discussions and education; and forming three action groups, one focusing on community nurturing and education, one on reparative work, and one on working with other organizations.

Dunnings Creek

Since last November, we planned for and had our fourth *Still Listening* speaker event. We hosted Michael Corle, a museum designer who helps local museums reimagine their sites. He spoke of the new information that has come to light regarding the people who first inhabited Pennsylvania and surrounding states. This information has helped to reframe narratives involving stories often told here and what really happened and why.

We are planning to have our fifth event on May 19th when Dr Garnell Washington will speak on the topic of:

“Reckoning with Our Understandings and Misunderstandings of History: The Lone Ranger was Black and Who was Tonto?”

Gunpowder

As noted in our last report we have continued working as a Meeting with our “One Book,” *Healing Resistance: A Radically Different Response to Harm* by Kazu Haga, which we agreed to read, share, and discuss this year. In October and November, we held forums in which we further explored the concepts and principles in our “One Book” as our community has been drawn to the capacity of principles of nonviolence to work toward the building of beloved community among us and beyond our Meeting House.

At this time the Working Group on Racial Reconciliation is planning to offer further work with *Healing Resistance* in the form of a book discussion later this Spring.

We continue to support the McKim Community Center in Baltimore in their work to strengthen their community. Gunpowder’s McKim Partnership Working Group follows the lead of staff and volunteers at McKim to coordinate a variety of activities, including several days when we host the McKim summer camp at Gunpowder. We host an annual McKim youth and adult leadership retreat at our Meeting House in which some Gunpowder Friends participate. This year Garfield Thompson, Executive Director of the McKim Center, and Miss tree turtle, co-director of the Baltimore Wisdom Project (a partner of the McKim Center) presented a forum on the work and philosophy of the McKim program in strengthening community to support young people to become leaders and peacemakers. Gunpowder Friends will again participate in the regional McKim Community Games held at Frederick Douglass High School this April in Baltimore.

Longtime Baltimore resident and co-founder of The Baltimore Peace Movement (formerly known as Baltimore Cease Fire), Letrice Gant, met with the Gunpowder Community at a forum in February to share the story of the Baltimore Peace Movement, how it came to be, how it

operates, the work it does and its importance in the work of reducing violence, creating peace, and building community.

Gunpowder continues to offer financial support to the BYM Camping/STRIDE program to help diversify our camps.

Herndon

The Antiracism Working Group at Herndon Friends Meeting planned and hosted a dinner/movie event at Herndon Friends Meeting House on February 17th. A group of about 18 members and attenders watched the movie, *Rustin*. Afterwards, everyone ate dinner provided by the ARWG (with a couple of desserts brought by others) while discussing the movie. Queries previously planned by the ARWG had been written on index cards and placed on all the dinner tables; these were used to guide the discussions.

A member of the ARWG History Committee/subgroup (which works on researching and addressing the local legacy and racist history of the HFM Meeting House) reported in January that the Planning Operations Manager of the Town of Herndon contacted him regarding their efforts to change the wording of a historical sign (near the HFM Meeting House) to include accurate information about segregation. The Planning Operations Manager stated that personnel from his office had talked to persons who had been affected by segregation of the Fortnightly Library (which eventually became the Herndon Friends Meeting House) and the Planning Operations Office is working on the language for the new historical sign; they are trying to complete this process by the end of March.

A member of the ARWG Racial Justice Subgroup (which works on social/racial justice issues,) plans to continue her work on the Political Action Committee of the Fairfax NAACP.

In addition, Herndon Friends Meeting continues its monthly vigils for peace, justice, and equality at the Meeting House.

Homewood

After previously being laid down, the Homewood Change Group efforts restarted in 2023 with three people. Soon after, two of us attended the Crossroads Anti-Racism Training sponsored by the BYM Working Group on Racism. In December 2023, our Monthly Meeting for Business approved our re-formation as the HFM Dismantling Racism Change Group under the care of the Meeting as a whole. In early January 2024, we sponsored a viewing of the film "Rustin". Later that month, we co-sponsored, along with Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) and Interfaith Action for Human Rights (IAHR), a Criminal Justice Reform Community Forum. It was attended by over 100 people, some at Homewood and some virtual. At Meeting for Business in February we brought forward and the Meeting minuted approval of support for the Correctional Ombudsman Bill and the Mandela Act (to severely limit solitary confinement), two items before the Maryland legislature in this session. In the last few weeks, several more members and attenders of Homewood have joined the DRCG. This larger group recently shared what draws us to this work and brainstormed how we want to move forward. A film and discussion event, actions in support of the two bills mentioned above, and a field trip were prominent ideas.

Langley Hill

Our Anti-racism Working Group is smaller and meets less often than 1-2 years ago. Several members have left the Meeting and one died. We have scaled down activities and did the following since Fall 2022:

- led the Meeting to adopt a Declaration on inclusiveness and diversifying our faith community and working to identify patterns of racism and pursue peaceful solutions to counteract these patterns. These Queries are stated at the start of each business meeting and posted in the Meetinghouse.
- wrote short articles for the monthly newsletter on race-related issues and new books
- encouraged all to watch the film *Backs against the Wall* on the life of Howard Thurman and followed this with a second hour discussion led by Michael Conklin who studied under him. Howard Thurman was a mentor to Martin Luther King Jr.
- we also encouraged folks to watch the powerful new feature-film movie *Rustin* about the life of Quaker Civil Rights leader Bayard Rustin.
- some members attend a regular Saturday vigil on racism at the Falls Church Presbyterian Church and join the monthly Allyship discussions on Zoom led by the Loudoun Co (Va) NAACP Religious Affairs Committee.

Mattaponi

Ours is a very small Meeting with members and participants from five rural Virginia counties and two European countries, therefore, it is difficult to participate as a group in any one effort. With that in mind, the kinds of efforts individuals have made in their own communities include:

- One participant is on the Executive Meeting of a local NAACP Branch producing communications in support of its programming and attended a special Sunday service at a local Black Baptist Church honoring trailblazers in the local African American community
 - Through their roles as political committee chairs, and election workers and observers along with efforts for voter registration, securing signatures on ballot petitions, and canvassing; individuals in our meeting are supporting voter participation and fair elections, as well as local, state, and national candidates—including African American, Hispanic, and White— whose platforms address the needs and concerns of minority communities.
- One couple regularly contributes ecologically sustainably grown produce to their local food bank and so has a part in providing equal access to nutritious and chemical free food that normally is only available in restaurants and high-end grocery stores.
- Our meeting joined the West Point Minister's Association which is an Interfaith Ministerial organization made up of all of the churches—both black and white—in the local community which supports interfaith dialogue and efforts in the community like a food bank.

Maury River

The joyful, diverse MLK parade happened in Lexington on Jan. 15th. It was reported that hundreds with much diversity participated. A few from MRFM were there with a simple MRFM sign.

MRFM as a whole supports and has members supporting and doing activities with the Rockbridge NAACP. There are many activities such as the education committee working to hire more educators of color in the school system locally. They are working to get professional people of color to do a simple program to translate their professional experience into teaching young students.

They have a large, beautiful, full of diversity welcoming billboard with Martin Luther King to answer the large confederate flag recently planted in the area.

MRFM is a member of our local Racial Equity Coalition. They are supportive of the MRFM efforts to help with the flooding problem in Glasgow. At our January 22nd meeting it was reported that there was more hunger and homelessness of Blacks and Whites than we were aware of. We are making efforts to facilitate such new programs that are providing meals weekly in communities throughout the area.

We are planning to do a “Walk, Eat, and Talk block party in April, in honor of MLK’s dream of “mutual acceptance, interpersonal living, and shared power”.

Some of our peace and justice committee have spent time supporting local Glasgow VA with their persistent flooding in a sector of the community in which the population is predominately African American. We are making progress with contact with people in the community with direct damage from the flooding, holding public office, working with official programs, and working on a grant which could donate significant funding.

Midlothian

Midlothian Friends’ Racial Justice Study Group continues to meet monthly.

At each meeting we discuss reading selections made the previous month. Over the past year we’ve completed:

- *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You*, Ibram X Kendi
- *Letter From Birmingham Jail, I Have a Dream*, Martin Luther King
- *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Malcolm X
- *Richmond’s Unhealed History*, Benjamin Campbell

We’ve become more active in our community during the past six months:

- We supported Run Richmond 16.19, an educational/sporting event hosted in September by the Djimon Hounsou Foundation. The Foundation’s goal is to reconnect the African Diaspora and combat modern slavery. The Run passes sites important in Richmond’s Black history and explains them through a phone app available to runners. As one of many Community Partners, Midlothian Friends:
 - Promoted the Run by posting signs at MFM, Thrifty Quaker, and Richmond Friends Meeting and recording announcements for a local radio station.

- o Raised funds to cover entry fees for 11 low-income youths.
- o Fielded three runners/walkers from our Meeting.
- o Set up, staffed, and took down a race water station.
- o Initiated new connections with various social justice groups in Richmond.
- We encouraged voter participation in the 2023 November elections:
 - o Involved Meeting members beyond our Group to mail postcards to registered but infrequent voters in African American neighborhoods around Richmond, encouraging them to vote in the general elections.
 - o We posted signs at our Meetinghouse and Thrift Store with information about voter registration.

We've already started planning our 2024 activities. We expect to :

- Lead a field trip for the Meeting in late March to:
 - o Richmond's Valentine Museum's newest exhibit: *Sculpting History at the Valentine Studio: Art, Power and the "Lost Cause" American Myth*
 - o The Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site. Maggie Walker was a Richmond-based civil rights activist and entrepreneur who chartered a bank, a newspaper, and a store during the Jim Crow era and 7 years before American women had the right to vote.
- Convene a presentation for our Meeting in June by Benjamin Campbell author of *Richmond's Unhealed History*. Partnering with Richmond Friends Meeting in a series of presentations on systemic racism.
- Repeat our participation in Run Richmond 16.19 in September.
- Mail voter encouragement cards before the November 2024 general election.

Richmond

Our ad hoc Committee on Race and Racism wrote a minute describing our commitment to antiracism through a careful process of discernment described by our previous Clerk Lynda Perry, in her report last year. Richmond Friends Meeting approved this minute (attached) enthusiastically and earnestly.

- The ad hoc committee will now engage in education as a bridge toward action. The first educational program will be led by Ana Edwards on the evolution and purposes of anti-Black racism and White supremacy in the United States.
- The second will consider the historical Quaker response to race and racism, both nationally (internationally) and in our Meeting. The committee would like to include indigenous people who lived on the land we now occupy, as part of their investigation.
- And the third will link spirituality and the focus on race and racism. This will probably involve working with our Ministry & Worship Committee for our Fall Retreat program.
- Our intention is to coordinate a fourth program with Midlothian Friends Meeting which is planning a talk in June with author Ben Campbell ("Richmond's Unhealed History").

The committee is now trying to determine the best way to implement Meeting-wide action. As a start, committee clerks have all been sent copies of the minute and lists of the actions gleaned from last year's sessions to get them started or encourage them to move forward.

In addition to the work of the ad hoc committee, Richmond Friends Meeting continues to publish the Thinking About Race column prepared by the BYM Working Group in each monthly newsletter.

Our People of Color Fiction Book Group continues to be very popular, lively, and quite meaningful to those who participate.

We are planning on partnering with Midlothian Friends Meeting in support of Run Richmond 16.19, a race/walk through Richmond's Black history, which will be held on September 21, 2024.

Our Peace & Social Concerns Committee is involved in education and advocacy with and for the Global Majority. Some examples are:

- Providing dinners to Circles RVA, an anti-poverty program
- Watching and discussing the movie *Rustin*
- Marching for Peace on International Day of Peace,
- Sending a large amount of medical and hygiene supplies to Cuba.
- Selling olive oil and soap in support of the people of Palestine in Israel controlled territories
- Supporting Quaker House, VICPP, Grace Inside, and World Central Kitchen.

Richmond Friends Meeting
Minute on Race and Racism
(revised 28 January 2024)

As Friends, our belief that there is "that of God" in everyone grounds our practice of upholding the worth of each human being. Each person is guided by an Inward Teacher toward truth; each has the capacity to experience and be transformed by Spirit. The fullness of our lives – as individuals and as a community – unfolds as we live into these spiritual truths. Just as we value each person, these core beliefs lead us to value the diversity of culture, race, and ethnicity that enrich the human family. Richmond Friends Meeting commits to being a faith community of deep hospitality for and inclusion of all people.

We recognize that inequality and injustice based on race are deeply rooted in our society. Richmond Friends Meeting commits to challenging and repairing racism and racial bias in ourselves as individuals, within our Meeting, and in our Meeting's relationships with the wider world.

We embrace these commitments as guides for our personal lives, our life as a community, and our Meeting's engagement in the wider world. Living more fully into our commitments will require listening, humility, and a willingness to be transformed. It will require holding the creative tension between discernment and the urgency to right action. We hold this minute as a guide as the Meeting seeks to live into our commitments in these ways:

- RFM will make it a clear, strong priority to understand and act on issues related to race and racism.
- We will be undergirded by our Quaker faith as we embark on this work, seeking to reflect and strengthen our relationship with Spirit.
- As expressions of our faith, our commitment to justice, love, and compassion — and our testimonies of equality, community, peace, integrity, simplicity, and stewardship — will guide our work.
- We seek to be in community among different races to provide positive opportunities for mutual learning and spiritual growth.
- Living with integrity means consistency between our actions and our deeply held beliefs. The actions we take will make clear RFM's stand against racism and will uphold our commitment to nurturing a community inclusive of all people.
- RFM will research and reflect on our history as a meeting in order to discern right response to any past harm and injustices, as well as to be emboldened by previous Quaker efforts at racial progress and healing.
- We will seek to understand the history – and we lament the ongoing realities – of systemic racism. This understanding will be fundamental in discerning action.
- RFM will collaborate with groups and organizations that promote racial healing and seek to dismantle some aspect of structural racism.
- We will seek to support and learn from the initiatives of people of color and those of Quaker organizations that are addressing issues of race and racism.
- We recognize that this is an ongoing process, and we will hold each other in the Light and accompany one another as we seek to learn, to be transformed, and to be of service.

Roanoke

As individuals we're involved in the Roanoke Branch NAACP, the Roanoke Reparations Group, and the Reparations Book Group. Now we are asking if our Meeting should do more. If we want our Meeting to establish our own anti-racism working group. We are asking questions like "Where do we start?" "What is BYM doing as well as other Quaker meetings?" "How do we raise awareness in our Meeting?"

One approach we are thinking about is perhaps planning four events over the next year to help Roanoke Friends get involved and raise awareness. The first of these might be to have someone from the WGR or others from BYM talk with Roanoke Friends perhaps in a Zoom meeting.

York

We have been reading the book *Just Mercy* in the months of January and February with lively discussions third First Day before Meeting. Bryan Stevenson's powerful writing and dedication to justice have been inspiring to us all and provide an example of passion and dedication to the Truth.

Written Report: The Reparations Action Working Group (RAWG)

The Reparations Action Working Group (RAWG) offers this report for IM so that Friends can hold us in the Light as we seek greater clarity and invite other Friends to join in some part of this work:

At November Interim Meeting, Friends approved a \$2,000 donation on behalf of BYM to the organization that supports the museum that memorializes our history of lynching in the US, the Memorial for Peace and Justice. This is the first time that we know of that BYM has acted as a faith community to support an aspect of retrospective justice and reparations. We are very glad to have taken this important step.

Other steps: 1) Please look at the RAWG webpage on the BYM website! We have added resources and other information that we hope Monthly Meetings will find useful. If you have found good resources, have questions, or would like RAWG to help with something at your Meeting, please let us know at reparations@bym-rsf.org

2) We have worked with other BYM committees on common issues. A) Co-clerks of our Working Group and the co-clerks of BYM's Development Committee met to talk through different perspectives about both groups' work. B) BYM's Ministry and Pastoral Care Co-Clerks invited the three groups that are focused on antiracism work - the Working Group on Racism, the Growing Diverse Leadership Committee, and RAWG - to meet with them in a coordinating group, so that we can better keep up with each other's work. We have met with them several times. C) The Faith and Practice Committee also reached out to our three groups and asked us to help them revise the section of F and P focused on Prejudice and Discrimination. We have had two planning meetings and a meeting with members of all three antiracism groups to discuss possible updates in perspectives, language, and ideas that we would recommend that the Faith and Practice Committee consider.

3) RAWG is planning a workshop for Annual Session. We are also considering other workshops and speakers we might bring to the BYM community to help us all grow in our knowledge about and understanding of Reparations and other forms of Retrospective Justice.

4) One of our major goals is to establish a fund for Retrospective Justice. There is a lot to consider when planning to a new fund on a topic that all Friends are comfortable with. We seek to create a fund that will be truly a positive thing, not unintentionally replicating oppressive practices. Here are some aspects of a fund that we are clear about:

- We should begin, as soon as possible, to share our resources to address harms of racism in specific ways that empower those who receive our funds.
- We may have an initial fund that allows us to raise funds and give funds while we are working out the logistics for a long-term and larger fund that may take another year to develop.
- By beginning to share funds, Friends can show that our intentions are genuine and that we seek to promote economic and social equity among communities who have been harmed by racism.
- And, by sharing as a faith community and as Quakers, we can let our commitment be known to the wider world and so inspire others to do the same.
- A fund lets BYM work for economic justice in a way that is equitable for BYM, too – when we give as a community, the focus is not on individual giving, but on the gift that we can create and give together as a faith community. Doing so may strengthen our shared identity and commitment to social and economic justice.

Our meetings each month are rich in discussion as we seek and create a path forward. Again, we invite others who have an interest in this work to join us.