

A LANGUAGE OF LOVE

Mother of the Earth, Undying Love, God of Hope, Spirit of Truth, Inward Teacher, Light Within, Spirit, Living Christ, Jesus, Eternal Spirit, Voice Within, Spirit of Love in the Universe, Heavenly Father

Which words do we choose? Which words do others choose? How do I hear their words? How do they hear my words? Do I love to listen for “where the words come from?” Are we reluctant to talk about the words?

Many years ago, members of the BYM Epistle Committee compiled selected quotes from the epistles that the Yearly Meeting had received that year into a booklet called “A World of Concerns,” that we distributed at annual sessions. The next time I saw the committee member who compiled the booklet, he said, “I didn’t know you were a Christian.”

I replied, “I’m not.”

“But,” he said, “You sent me Christian quotes.”

I replied, “I sent you the most wonderful quotes I could find.”

Perhaps that’s when I began to change, when I began to feel that Christian language was a language of love. When I read those epistles from other yearly meetings, I felt the love the authors were trying to send, despite their use of Christian language and imagery, which was still a barrier for me.

Like many people, I came to Quakerism with unhealed wounds from my previous religious experiences. In my case, the Lutheran funeral service for my teenage sister and three other girls killed in a car accident on a church-sponsored ski trip left a deep scar on me. I heard the Lutheran minister and the program of service say, “be happy; these girls have gone to heaven.” Shortly thereafter I resigned my membership in the Lutheran Church because I wanted no part of a religion that denied the reality and value of human love and grief. Years later, when I reread the Lutheran funeral service, I saw no evidence of this emphasis on a happy hereafter. I now suspect my grief distorted what I was hearing. Nonetheless, I harbored deep wounds from my sister’s death that were inextricably tied in my heart to Christianity and Christian language.

I know I’m not alone in bringing a religiously wounded self to the Religious Society of Friends. For some among us, Christian language, used in vocal ministry, grates like fingernails on a chalkboard. Whether the discomfort comes from unresolved grief and deep emotional associations, from an unhappy Baptist or Roman Catholic childhood, or from theological or intellectual differences doesn’t matter. What does matter is our discomfort and its effect on our meetings.

What are our responsibilities to one another? Those of us who are wounded must take responsibility for our wounds and healing and not inflict or project them on to others. We can express our pain but not demand that others silence their voices. All of us can show sensitivity to others by using multiple words for the Divine, as Earlham College chaplain Trayce Peterson modeled for us a year ago when she addressed us at sessions. Each time she spoke of the Divine, she used three different words or phrases. But we probably can’t expect others to do that all the time.

We *can* all talk with one another about words – how we intend them and how we hear them.

“Is everyone comfortable with the word ‘God’?” was one of the first questions Renee Crauder asked participants in her prayer course last fall at State College meeting. “No,” one Friend honestly replied. Renee asked, “How about ‘Spirit’?” We agreed that we were all comfortable with Renee using the word “Spirit.”

How surprising, but typical of the work of the Spirit, that the Friend who was uncomfortable with the word “God,” should be the Friend whose words led me to “Jesus.” During a break in class, while we looked at the books Renee had assembled for us to borrow, this Friend returned a book she had borrowed the previous week. I asked her if she’d recommend the book – it had a tempting title. “Not really,” she said, “except the author makes one really interesting point – we need a name for the Divine.” At that moment, my final resistance lifted, almost like a block falling into place, “ker-plunk,” and I knew that I would henceforth be addressing my prayers to “Jesus.”

Seven months earlier, shortly before the Search Committee asked me to allow my name to be considered for presiding clerk, a message had come to me in Meeting for Worship: "Thank you, Jesus." It was a message for me alone, not meant to be shared. I remember thinking immediately, "Where did that come from?" Since then I frequently think, "The Spirit gives us what we need, often before we know we need it." I have needed Jesus often in these past months, calling on Him frequently to support me in my work for the Yearly Meeting. When I talk about Jesus, I do not mean a Jesus of Christian exclusivism nor do I wish in any way to limit the vocabulary of others. In my ongoing prayer group, for example, another member is inspired by Joyce Rupp's book, *Prayers to Sophia*, in which each prayer starts with a different beautiful name for a feminine Divine: "Comforting Mother," "Juicy Life-Giver," and "Holy Midwife," for example.

Let us open our hearts to one another and to the Divine, by whatever words we know Him or Her. Let us open our hearts to the non-theists and others among us for whom the Light can't be reduced to pronouns. Let us love one another, as "He has loved us," and let us use *all* the names rather than none of the names, as we move, together, ever closer to the Light.

In Faith and Love,

Lauri Perman, presiding clerk

Our two Yearly Meetings have a wide, rich, and diverse heritage, chiefly from historic Christianity interpreted by Quakerism. We not only tolerate diversity, we encourage and cherish it ... we usually find ourselves richer for our differences. ... Friends in our two Yearly Meetings are clear on certain principles [that] are so basic and essential that we tend to take them for granted and forget that they are essential and probably the only essentials. We all are clear that religion is a matter of inward, immediate experience. We all acknowledge the guidance of the Inner Light – the Christ within – God's direct, continuing revelation.

From the Committee of Ten, 1964, as reported in *A History of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends* by Bliss Forbush (1972)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

STUDENT LOANS AVAILABLE

The Educational Funding Resources Committee of BYM has funds for educational loans to qualified college and secondary school students. Loans can be up to \$5000 per academic year, and no interest is charged while the student is in school. The application has several parts, so allow ample time to complete the form by the April 30, 2006 deadline. Application packages can be obtained from the Baltimore Yearly Meeting office, email: geneklinger@bym-rsf.org, or mail: 187100 Quaker Lane, Sandy Spring, MD 20860. The Committee will meet to evaluate applications in May.

PEACE AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

For 50 years conscientious objectors have not been required to serve in the U.S. military. However, they are still required to support the military through their taxes. In May, Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga) introduced the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund bill (H.R. 2631) which would uphold the religious freedom of taxpayers who are conscientiously opposed to participating in war by allowing their taxes to be used for nonmilitary purposes. The bill would create a Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund into which the taxes of such objectors would go. The bill currently has 37 cosponsors. In the states covered by BYM only Rep. Elijah Cummings (Md-7th) and Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) are cosponsors at this time. Similar legislation has been introduced for a number of years in the past

At Fall Interim Meeting Day, Oct. 22nd, the Peace and Social Concerns Committee will be drafting a minute in support of the legislation which it hopes to take to the business session for approval that day. It also will be discussing how to involve more Friends in passage of this important bill which supports a principle basic to Quakerism. Friends are encouraged to come to the P&SC meeting that day to discuss the bill and strategies for supporting it. More information about the bill can be found on the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund web site at www.peacetaxfund.org.

WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER FRIENDS HOUSE

Are you considering options for retirement living? Do you currently live in an apartment building or suburban neighborhood where no one knows anyone else? Do you have parents or loved ones who can no longer keep

up a large home? Have you always wanted to live in a Quaker community? Perhaps you should consider Friends House.

Friends House was founded by Friends as a non-profit retirement community in 1967 in Sandy Spring, Maryland on sixty-two partially wooded and gently rolling acres. Operating under the care of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Friends House has throughout its history maintained a deep and longstanding commitment to serving the elderly within the Religious Society of Friends. Today, it is a comprehensive community providing a continuum of retirement living options including 100 federally subsidized apartments for low and moderate income seniors, 32 spacious cottages for Friends of all income levels. In addition to the independent retirement community, there is Haviland Hall, a 20 room assisted living facility and Stabler Hall, a 62 bed skilled nursing home facility, including the new Thomas Hall, a 24-bed, skilled nursing unit for residents who are mobile and active, but who are suffering dementia and mental confusion caused by Alzheimer's, stroke, or other diseases.

Why should you consider Friends House? We recently asked residents why they came to Friends House. Elayne McClanen of Sandy Spring Friends Meeting said "A now deceased resident said to me, 'You'd better see this place.' The palatable commitment to peace permeates at Friends House. I was moved by the simple, yet gracious ambiance, from the homegrown flower arrangements to the pleasing art on the walls. The residents are strikingly "alive". Although they may be dealing with infirmities, they generously assist and care for one another, and in a larger sense, they assist and care for the planet through action."

Ruth Stern is one of many Friends who moved here from New York Yearly Meeting. "My husband (Lee, now deceased) and I were very impressed by the friendly, informal atmosphere, and the very active participation of residents. It feels like a large family, rather than an institution. It's also affordable for people like ourselves who worked for non-profits all of our working years." Wendell and Gudren Williams, formerly members of Richmond Friends Meeting, explained that "we wanted to come while we were "young enough" to adjust and be active in the community. The small size and affordability of Friends House were both attractive as well as its Quaker auspices."

"I came for an overnight visit, and put my name on the waiting list immediately. At 65, I was aware that I would be one of the youngest residents, but when I saw a copy of *The Nation*, a progressive magazine, on the library table, I knew my neighbors would not be a bunch

of old fogies," said Pat Weiss, a former member of Friends Meeting of Washington, "I like the fact that Friends House is well maintained, and the long windows in each apartment, and a patio with an outside door was also appealing. I liked the people I met. It is a continuing pleasure to live at Friends House."

For someone looking at different retirement living options, what are the most important things to consider? Are all of the units on the ground floor with your own patio entrance? Can you still enjoy flower and vegetable gardening? Are there acres of grounds and places to take long walks? If your spouse needs special care can you easily walk to visit them each day in the assisted living center or have lunch with them in the nursing home? Is there a Friends Meeting in the community and are there spiritual formation groups, book discussion groups and social action groups to join? Is there inexpensive transportation to museums, art exhibits, and theatres? For Quaker Shirley Runde, "It's the caring attitude on the part of the staff, as well as a great friendliness. Do the residents seem happy and active? Is there a variety of kinds of opportunities for participation? Are they concerned for the environment, as well as for the incomes of the residents? Are all independent living apartments on one floor? Is there opportunity for continuing care?" Barbara Scott, Sandy Spring Friends Meeting added, "Of course, we must consider the price. For me, the architecture of the place is perfect—one story. No elevators, no noise or walkers above. Ability to walk to meals without going out in the rain, snow and ice!

What is the best part about living at Friends House? Lu Trundle of Sandy Spring Friends Meeting didn't hesitate, "For me the best part is the out-of-doors. I have a vegetable garden plot. Before and after dinner, I go sit on one of the many benches around the 65 acres of space. I face the woods and open lawn area. I watch birds, butterflies, geese and other wildlife." Then almost as an afterthought, "The staff are superb!" Presbyterian Rosemary Guthrie added, "I can find ways of being useful, such as driving for the free-ride program and shopping for the country store. It is important to me to feel useful. The programs; concerts and church services are great—even art exhibits and flowers."

In response to FCNL, Sierra Club, or MoveOn.Org requests, you can frequently observe a group of residents sitting in the dining room writing letters to Congress. For Clair Inglis of Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting, "the best part of living at Friends House is the feeling of community—like an extended family. Another is the volunteer work which makes you feel like you are needed

to help run the place. My children are impressed with the activism going on here among “old people”, like visiting our representatives and senators, or standing on the corner of Georgia Avenue and Rt. 108 with placards protesting the war.”

Like the old fashioned neighborhoods where friends would gather for spontaneous chat on the front porch, the community dining room coffee pot is an opportunity for residents to expound on the issues of the day, to share their joys and sorrows, and get to know another. You will often find Friends Jack and Peggy Fogerty there. “All the new and old friends, being able to socialize in the dining room around the free coffee pot any time during the day, walking immediately into the library upon arrival is very affirmative. You think of active people who read.” Also like the old fashioned neighborhoods, Friends House has wooded trails and paved walkways and roads. You will often observe Jack and Peggy on their daily walks. “The campus and the woods are beautiful and there are plenty of places to walk.”

Should you be considering Friends House for your parents, for someone in your Friends Meeting, or perhaps yourself? We welcome day visitors and have a guest apartment for overnight visitors. If you would like additional information or if you would like to have a tour of the community, please contact Mary Cozad, Resident Director, at 301.924.7523. If you would like to have a presentation on Friends House at your Friends Meeting, please contact Darryl Clemmer, Executive Director at 301.924.7528.

UPCOMING WORK WEEKENDS AT OUR CAMP PROPERTIES

Fall is here again and it is time for us to put our camps to bed for the winter. Come visit camp this fall and enjoy some meaningful work, our beautiful Camp properties and some time with good Friends. Work weekends are a great way to reconnect with old friends, make some new ones or to spend some time with your family at camp. ALL are welcome! For more information visit <http://www.bym-rsf.org/camping/work.html> or call David Hunter at the Yearly Meeting Office (301-774-7663). If you plan to attend a work weekend please e-mail David at davidhunter@bym-rsf.org or call the Yearly Meeting Office. See you at camp.

Shiloh Quaker Camp

Shiloh is beautiful in the fall and we have a few things to take care of there. We have a spectacular new cabin that needs to be stained and Ruby’s cabin needs some

attention. The Retreat (in the cellar of the blue house) is almost finished. Come on down and help us put the finishing touches on a few things and we’ll be sure that then is some time to wade in the river, romp in the fields and sing around a campfire. We will be at Shiloh the weekend of September 16 – 18, 2005

Opequon Quaker Camp

Screens are great for the summertime but we need a way to close up the staff cabins in the winter so we will be installing some storm windows this fall. We also have some painting and other odd jobs to do this fall. Some and see the beauty of the Shenandoah in the fall for yourself and see if the Great Horned Owl still comes around on quiet nights.

Opequon needs us on the weekend of September 30 – October 2, 2005

Catoctin Quaker Camp

We will be building another Post and Beam Camper Shelter at Catoctin this fall. If you missed the fun last fall you won’t want to miss it again. Peter Bugler is returning to guide us in the craft of post and beam construction. This is a unique opportunity you will not want to miss. Join us for some good food, great company and a peek at the plans for the Catoctin Pond Water Quality Improvement Project. Work weekends at Catoctin will be October 14 – 16, October 28 – 30 and November 4 – 6 (for truly hearty folks)

For those of you who really like to plan in advance, here are the work weekend dates for 2006:

Spring 2006

Shiloh Quaker Camp

April 21–23

Catoctin Quaker Camp

April 28–30

May 12–14

May 19–21

Opequon Quaker Camp

June 2–4

Fall 2006

Catoctin Quaker Camp

September 15–17

Shiloh Quaker Camp

September 22–24

Opequon Quaker Camp

September 29–October 1

October 13–15

October 27–29, 2005

David Hunter, Camp Property Manager

SO HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN CALLED, "THE INTERCHANGE?"

From *The Story of Baltimore Yearly Meeting from 1672 to 1938* by Anna B. Thomas:

"The first number of the *Interchange* bears the date of December 1884. The first editorial says: 'The position of our Yearly meeting is unique. Geographically one of the largest east of the Alleghenies, it is numerically one of the smallest. As a consequence the particular meetings are, as a rule, too far apart for helpful and free interchange of visits, so that those from these – shall we call them islands of Quakerism? seldom see those from another except at Quarterly and Yearly Meetings.' ...

'This little paper is designed to strengthen still further the bonds of love that bind together the whole of our scattered membership, by enabling all to maintain an intelligent interest in the affairs of every part, serving as a true *Interchange* of news and thought.' 'Our object does not stop here. *The Interchange* will not only contain reports of the latest news ... but also articles on Christian living in the fullest sense, and on the grounds for holding those spiritual convictions which have distinguished us as a Society.'" (p. 101)

NATIONAL PEACE TAX FUND AND TAX RESISTANCE

Marian Franz and Frank Massey will speak about the **National Peace Tax Fund and tax resistance** on Saturday 10/29 from 3:00–5:00 p.m. at the Sandy Spring Community House. A potluck dinner will follow at 5:30 with a request for donations to the National Peace Tax Fund organization. Musical entertainment may follow the meal.

NEW ON THE WEB:

A Quaker Response to Christian Fundamentalism by Sallie B. King

The objective of this curriculum is to help our Quaker youth understand Christian fundamentalism and our differences from it, so that they will not be intimidated, overpowered or confused in their interactions with their Christian fundamentalist peers.

<http://www.bym-rsf.org/quakers/pubs/Response.pdf>

2005 Carey Memorial Lecture: The Quality of Mercy by Vicki Cooley.

As I considered the theme, "Called to be merciful,"

interest in restoring right relationship or justice in our communities, and interest in AVP, I realized that an account of what has called me and how would be the most relevant sharing I could do with you.

<http://www.bym-rsf.org/quakers/pubs/qualityofmercy.shtml>

Milk for Babes: and Meat for Strong Men by James Naylor, edited by Evamaria Hawkins

During the latter part of his imprisonment Naylor wrote *Milk for Babes*, which is an instructional piece, giving spiritual guidance and advice that is still relevant today.

<http://www.bym-rsf.org/quakers/pubs/MilkForBabes.pdf>

THE QUAKER INITIATIVE TO END TORTURE'S CONFERENCE ON TORTURE

will take place June 2-4, 2006 at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina. The conference has the dual intentions of education and action for the long term. Speakers will discuss the basics of current legislation, international law, treatment of survivors and perpetrators, and the recent history of torture. The focus will be on creating and choosing actions to end torture. The Planning Committee hopes to draw on the work of many groups and will have legislative updates from Friends Committee on National Legislation and reports on the torture in United States prisons from American Friends Service Committee staff. Friends are encouraged to send ideas for workshop topics, and names of potential presenters. *John Calvi*

CONFERENCE COORDINATOR, FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE FOR ANNUAL GATHERING OF FRIENDS.

Works with several committees, many volunteers, and university staff, requiring some weekend work, travel. Manages \$1 million budget; supervises two regular plus seasonal staff. Administers complex operations and logistics, solves problems, manages crises, consulting extensively with volunteer leadership. Should be active in Friends' meeting. Send resume to General Secretary, FGC, 1216 Arch Street, 2B, Philadelphia, PA, 19107, or <bruceb@fgcquaker.org>. Deadline 1/20/06

OPENING FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT AT BALTIMORE, HOMEWOOD

Primary duties for this position include facilitating the effective operation of the Meeting office and assisting in the effective functioning of the Meeting. This is a part-time day position. Position requirements include an associate degree or higher (or equivalent); two years documented secretarial skills/administrative experience and skills; excellent communication skills; appropriate computer skills for office work; effective work habits; ability to maintain confidentiality; and ability to work independently in a solitary work environment. The successful candidate will demonstrate interest in working for an organization that is guided by the principles of truth, simplicity, peace, and justice. Compensation package is negotiable according to experience and qualifications. Please submit applications to Clerk of Personnel Committee, Homewood Friends Meeting, 3107 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218

WILLIAM PENN HOUSE MONTHLY POTLUCK AND QUAKER DIALOGUE:

6:30 PM, Sunday, October 2. Philip Schrefer, of Capitol Hill Worship Group, an international consultant, will share observations on the Republic of Georgia, the "Rose Revolution," and how Georgia is transitioning peacefully in the post Soviet world. Bring a dish to share; family members, neighbors and friends are always welcome.

Byron Sandford

OUTREACH NOTES

New Growth at Pipe Creek

We appear to be in danger of violating a possible Friends testimony on refraining from boastfulness. Our usual number of worshipers has nearly doubled recently: two new members, one prospective transfer from another meeting, and six faithful new attenders. All strive to be present also at meetings for business. However, we do not yet describe ourselves as a megameeting. This substantial gain in attendance is largely attributable to an invitational "Yule get-together" on 5th 12th month, conceived and arranged through divine leading by one of our seasoned attenders.

Some observations offered by various members and attenders are:

The Pipe Creek Meeting has always been welcoming to newcomers. Both the meeting house and those who worship in it have always made new people feel accepted. When one sits down for meeting for worship

one can feel the spirit, the peace and the light flowing through the room and everyone present. It has always been that way for the seven years I have attended. However, over the past year the Spirit has moved us to be more open to new ideas and ways of doing things. This has been very exciting for our meeting. It has helped us to acquire some new attenders whose energy and enthusiasm more than make up for lack of knowledge of the Quaker Process. We are very fortunate that the Spirit moved among us and led us to seek these people out. We will have to be careful not to overwhelm them with responsibility too rapidly. This has become virtually a new meeting, divinely led.

I can say that our spiritual state is "On Fire". By that I mean there is an energy anyone should be able to perceive. In my time here I have found the people welcoming and kind and the worship invigorating and powerful, oft times in a smoldering way, but powerful none the less. Coming here each week can be compared to attending an annual retreat, which often can be both a time to escape the world and delve deep into the spirit. Worship and even meeting for business or fellowship at Pipe Creek provide me with a place to communicate deeply and reconnect with what I believe is the Spirit of God in a more personal way that would be impossible or only occasional in other communities.

Excerpted from Pipe Creek Spiritual State Of The Meeting Report - 2004

The BYM Advancement and Outreach Committee is looking for stories of meeting growth and outreach ideas to share. What's happening in your meeting? Let us know, c/o Deborah Haines, clerk of A&O, at deborah.haines@gmail.com.



Don Gann and Maria Bradley holding the business meeting in the Light

MONTHLY MEETING NEWS

ADELPHI

We held our yearly Strawberry Festival in June with an amazing turnout of both new and old members and attenders helping this year. It is our major fundraiser of the year, but it is also a wonderful community event. This year we were able, once again, to sell white elephants, clothing, books, plants, strawberries and baked goods. We also had a café for lunch and snacks and a silent auction of goods and services. And after two years straight of Strawberry Festivals in the pouring rain, we had a lovely sunny day.

And just prior to the Strawberry Festival, a revitalized camping weekend was held at Camp Catoctin, with over 40 folks – mostly families – coming for a mostly unstructured weekend of relaxation and community.

Over the summer Adelphi joined an amicus brief for the lawsuit encouraging Maryland to permit same-gender marriage. Also, a decision was made to change the fiscal year for Adelphi to December 1 through November 30, hoping that this will make tasks easier for our hard-working Finance Committee.

Religious Education teachers are gearing up for another active year and are starting off with an opening retreat for teachers. The Outreach and Fellowship committee is working to organize Friendly Eights potluck dinners for the fall.

Young Friends worked on letters declaring their conscientious objection to military service, then had this opposition recorded both at their Meeting and at Yearly Meeting.

Two high school graduates left for Earlham College: Lizzie Seitel and Anna Lee Horne!

ANNAPOLIS

Annapolis Friends Meeting is a busy place. Our young Friends are participating in the upcoming CROP walk to raise money for hunger. They are sponsoring an all Meeting weekend at Catoctin Quaker Camp. We have a new family play area complete with a bench made of recycled plastic. The young people have collected school supplies for an inner city school in Philadelphia again this year. During the year the children correspond with some of the Philadelphia students. We now have reliable child care for infants and toddlers so parents can go to worship, as well as an active First Day School program.

Each year the meeting includes in its annual budget funds to pay for members to attend the clerking work-

shop at Pendle Hill. Our committees and business meeting have reaped the benefits.

The Outreach Committee is sponsoring a once-a-month Saturday night potluck, many of which are open to the public. Chris Foley and Jennifer Collins-Foley spoke at one potluck about their democracy building experience in Palestine and Russia. Another evening we had a family game night. Yet another time we invited our member Don Lamb-Minor and his musical group to entertain us. We invited members of the mostly African-American St. Phillips Episcopal Church, church of several of the musicians, to join us. We had a lovely dinner theater.

Outreach also sponsors a Friday night dinner once a month at a local restaurant for Friends to socialize. In October we will have our second annual potluck reception for new attenders. Clerks of committees will explain their work, and newcomers will be introduced to the intricacies of the acronym organizations.

We are corporate members of Churches Without boundaries, an interfaith group working to solve problems of local poverty. We also support the Lighthouse Shelter and the county Conflict Resolution Center.

CARLISLE

Carlisle Monthly Meeting welcomes Fred Baldwin as our new Clerk of the Meeting and wishes to express its thanks to Andy Hoover, outgoing Clerk, for his years of service. Continuing to serve as Treasurer will be Joan Anderson. Recording Clerks are John Brubaker, Don Kovacs, and Ed Sonnenberg.

Under the care of Martha Slotten, the Meetinghouse was blessed this summer with beautiful seat cushions for the benches of the Meetinghouse. Jeremiah Cox of Carlisle Meeting was moved to pen the following poem in honor of the occasion:

The Little Quaker Miracle of Carlisle

I'm early for the meeting (not quite ten)
 But soon the time arrives, and in they file
 To fan the inner fire of God again,
 The unpretentious Quakers of Carlisle.
 But no-one blinks; no single Friend affords
 A miser's oath to comment on the sight:
 Yes, *cushions* on the unforgiving boards
 Of benches that were naked just last night!
 Though worldly, I believe that I can reach
 The Throne to doff my hat with many bows;

For nowadays, it's truth makes plain our speech,
Not little sprinkled thees or precious thous.
A sweeter destiny now shapes our "ends:"
Thank God from the Society of Friends.

Peace, Ed Sonnenberg

CHARLOTTESVILLE

Within the calendar year a couple of cherished elder Friends have moved from our midst into assisted living close to the BYM hub, and a couple of young, active families have been called from our university town in the foothills to work in major metropolitan centers. We have welcomed a newborn into the Meeting, recorded six new memberships (four of them children), and overseen a wedding. Our Meetinghouse caretaker of nearly seven years has left, and a successor is now well settled in. Two of us have sojourned at Pendle Hill, several others took part at the FGC Gathering in nearby Blacksburg, and many of us young and old hiked and swam, counseled and cooked in BYM's summer camping program.

All this motion, constantly stirred by a welcome stream of tourist and student visitors who come on First Days – some to sample Quaker worship, some to stay for more of what we do – has led us to set up an ad hoc committee on internal communications, revitalizing the monthly newsletter and expanding our cyber-outreach through an update and ramification of our web site. A Meeting initiative on conscience and military conscription is also reaching out to the Charlottesville community, as well as inwards to our hearts and minds, and those of our young people. Following up on a Third Month "peace summit," we will help inquirers to find reliable draft counseling and will maintain for those identifying themselves as conscientious objectors a safe file of statements and other records they may need. Another ad hoc committee has arisen, this one devoted to environmental "earthcare witness," with a special focus on how as a Quaker meeting we should husband the resources that get us to and from the Meetinghouse, and that we use when we are together there.

This last concern should affect in interesting ways our rapidly developing plan for reconstruction of the rear portion of the Meetinghouse. Financial impediments to this work were substantially removed this year by a very generous anonymous gift. The work of spirit-building will engage us during a Meeting-wide retreat this fall in neighboring Louisa County. Finally, the to-and-fro of Quaker life in and out of Charlottesville will dispatch one of us to Burundi as a missionary engineer

installing computer equipment to assist the national healing there, while others expect to travel in time through local Friends' history, in preparation for the 2007 quad centennial observances now in incubation across the Old Dominion.

DEER CREEK

Harford County Friends, new students, teachers, families, board members and their friends will have gathered for Meeting for Worship at Harford Friends School at Deer Creek on September 8, the very first day of operation for the newly founded middle school. Members at Deer Creek are grateful for the leading of those who have made this day possible. Over the last year our committees have taken special interest in this precious endeavor by making building changes to accommodate a sixth grade class, beautification of our flower beds, the restoration of our historic carriage shed, and helping with the HFS Blueberry Festival, the most successful of our seven previous Festivals. As a Meeting, Friends continue to search for ways to let our Light shine through our study of the Testimonies and Queries, a dynamic First Day School curriculum for our children, our quarterly Road Clean-up, a Meeting newsletter, participation as a group in a 4th of July parade, and the hosting of our community barn dance.

FREDERICK

Frederick Monthly Meeting continues to receive applications for membership in the Meeting. Some have been from long term attenders who having looked within, and decided to make that step on their spiritual journey which calls them into service to the meeting from yet a deeper place. We were honored recently, to be asked to care for the marriage of a young man this fall who was an attender at our Meeting as a child.

Representatives from Frederick Meeting who attended BYM annual sessions are holding the lessons gained and sharing them as the Meeting seeks awareness of how we are called to be merciful and how we can nurture and support our community more deeply. In the annual proceedings, Frederick Meeting and Hopewell Center Meeting were identified as two BYM meetings that have been facing issues related to having identified sex offenders participate in their Meetings. Some of the Frederick representatives felt humbled that others might be looking to Frederick Meeting for Light on this subject as they felt the Meeting is not yet clear and in a place of unity on this. They felt it was heart warming and encouraging to meet and speak with members of Hopewell

Center and to hear that there are similarities in our journeys through this issue. Frederick representatives are hopeful that we can get together over the coming year to seek guidance and support from members of Hopewell Center Meeting as Frederick Meeting continues to seek healing and unity.

On August 27th FDS Committee sponsored a Child Safety Training for FDS teachers and committee clerks. It was a time for deep reflection through worship sharing as well as a time to plan the logistics of teaching to the curriculum theme of Peace Making. We are blessed by a large and growing group of young people in our Meeting who are surrounded by loving and caring adults.

Over the summer, our Peace and Social Concerns Committee brought a request that the Meeting become an endorser of the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill (HR 2631). The Meeting endorsed the Peace Tax Fund at its August Meeting and further identified how we would support it in our September Meeting. We prepared a handout which was made available at BYM annual sessions, and we now encourage further consideration of this matter by the Yearly Meeting. Could the Peace Tax Fund be brought to Interim sessions? Our representative reported to us that when the issue was introduced at Warrington Quarterly Meeting in August, those gathered did not reach unity.

Recent events of the hurricane have brought us together to ask ourselves how are we called to respond to the needs of this situation as individuals and as a faith community. We will hold a called meeting to consider this further on the 11th of September. We are ready to cooperate with other Friends in BYM should opportunities arise.



Samson and Edith Wekesa, from Kenya, visit with some of the children during Annual Session

GOOSE CREEK

The summer Full Meeting picnic was held at the end of August. The large turnout was provided with biodegradable utensils. Several of us took home a bag of plates, knives, forks, spoons etc. for our compost heap. Guaranteed to become fertile compost in short order! Thanks to Unity with Nature committee. The First Day School is ready to begin the fall term this week.

Deaths; Jane Pancoast Shepherd, 2 August, 2005. A Memorial Service was held on Saturday August 13, 2005.

HERNDON FRIENDS

An ad hoc committee appointed earlier this year by the Religious Ed and Ministry and Oversight Committees has drafted a policy on protecting HFM youth from physical and sexual abuse. The document includes actions to protect children from abuse, screening requirements for volunteers who work with youth, and guidelines for response to concerns or incidents. The policy will be considered by the September Meeting for Business.

In our 10th annual bicycle collection on July 17, Herndon Friends processed over 100 bicycles for shipment overseas by Bikes for the World. This year's bikes are destined for micro economic development in Sri Lanka, Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica.

Writings by six members of HFM's Senior First Day School class were published recently in *Whispers of Faith: Young Friends Share Their Experiences of Quakerism*. Daniel Murphy, Aubrey Stanton, Taylor Stanton, Carl Taylor, Lauren Hoy and Anna McCormally all contributed pieces to this anthology, which can be purchased at www.QuakerBooks.org.

The meeting recently welcomed new member Suzanne Hodgkins, as well as new baby Hayden Lian Isobella Bush-Resko, born October 22, 2004, in China and adopted on August 11, 2005, by Jim and Lauria Bush-Resko.

HOPEWELL CENTRE

We held a weekend retreat in June entitled, "Building a Faith Community," which was facilitated by Arlene Kelly of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. The purpose was to promote renewal of the Meeting community and healing from conflicts within the Meeting over the past year. Over 25 members and attenders participated. We look forward to continuing this process throughout the coming fall.

LANGLEY HILL

Noah Abraham Belton, age 20, died from Alexander's Disease on eighth month 26, 2005; Anne Henderson died of cancer on eighth month 30, 2005.

LITTLE BRITAIN

We all know the story of the Country Mouse and the City Mouse. After they exchanged places for a while, they were each happy to go back to their familiar environment. Baltimore Yearly Meeting is a growing group. We are pleased and delighted to meet the many new people coming to Yearly Meeting. Most of the members are in the metropolitan area of Baltimore and Washington and are the most vocal in the Yearly Meeting. These people have access to much in the way of entertainment, activist groups, and interest groups. They are probably much more enlightened and liberal in their thinking than the rural members of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Many of us in the rural area of the Yearly Meeting come from small struggling meetings. We are more conservative and less vocal. We wrestle with issues in a different light. Many have farmed. We know that our food does not grow in the super market. It takes a lot of work for the 1% still farming to provide the quantity and quality expected. Farming teaches us we are not in control no matter how hard we try to plan ahead. Nature is in control. In addition, we must adapt to the changing desires of the customer. The US cheap food policy for nearly a century has changed the nation from an agrarian society to one that does not understand that farmers buy retail and sell wholesale. As long as the farmer can pay bills, he/she looks forward to the next season.

Rural people try to keep current in news, but too often fall asleep while reading. We know we are looked down upon as we have dirt under our fingernails. But we love working with nature and the soil, while providing affordable goods. Those who like the idea of no chemicals in food also look to genetically modified food as all bad. They forget that since the beginning of planting seeds from certain stock was saved, as it was superior. Now that we have technology to help with improvements, it is suddenly wrong to help change seeds or animals. Those who can afford to pay more for their food are the one who object most strenuously, while the underfed struggle to get food on the table. Who is right — the wealthy and their demands or the ones making it easier to get food to the masses? How does this have anything to do with Yearly Meeting? Perhaps none, but we need to be open and listen to all. When we know all of the facts we can make wise decisions. We must never

think we can change others by withholding finances to make a point. Do we continue to put farmers out of business with our cheap food policy? Do we try to ruin a Friends organization by withholding funding to make a point? We need to listen to all involved in this issue, without conveniently looking at ways to get issues passed when the minority is absent.

MAURY RIVER

Our new floor is beautiful. Member Eric Sheffield planed the old (1870) oak joists and then planed new white oak to fit with the old. Eric and Phil Hyre then laid the flooring. In addition, many members were inspired to caulk and paint the meeting room ceiling and walls. Benches will be moved back in soon, and we will return to meeting for worship in our improved old meeting room by the end of September.

Since this is also our 10th year in the meetinghouse, we've decided to celebrate one day in October with a floor warming and open house.

"Wage Peace" buttons and "War is Not the Answer" bumper stickers were well received from the MRF booth at the Rockbridge Community Festival in August.

Jay Cook, Jr., husband of member Flossie Cook, died August 4, 2004. Their son Jay Cook, III, died August 1, 2005.

NOTTINGHAM

A suggestion for forum or adult religious education periods: Have members share reflections and memories about their spiritual journey. Two such sessions over the past year in our Meeting have been revealing and drawn us all closer.

Considering the Faith and Practice Committee's draft Queries and Advices created a wonderful opportunity this spring for us to learn about the history of Queries within the Religious Society of Friends and the role they play and should play today.

We feel gratitude to those in the Meeting who meet the sometimes unexpected demands of our gracefully aging Meetinghouse and anticipate future needs. Tree roots invading our sewer line illustrated the former last spring; re-glazing the windows is a longer term example of the latter.

Nottingham and Little Britain look forward to seeing many of you at Interim Meeting in October.

PATAPSCO

Patapsco Friends Meeting held a retreat at Catoctin Quaker Camp May 20 – 22. In spite of the unseasonably cold weather, Friends worshipped, hiked, played games, made stationery out of magazine pages, and cooked a wonderful vegan feast under the direction of Bethanne Kashkett.

Some Friends feel the need to discuss the queries and advices in more depth than is possible at business meetings, so the Meeting has been continuing to hold discussions, facilitated by Jim Rose for an hour before Meeting on the fourth Sunday of each month.

Friends from Patapsco Friends Meeting hold a vigil for peace on Sunday evenings in Columbia in conjunction with a local peace group.

Patapsco is experimenting with a mid-week Meeting for Worship that meets in people's homes on alternate Wednesday evenings. A Bible study group also meets twice a month.

Patapsco continues its support of the Howard County Grassroots Shelter by preparing a meal once a month. Each Saturday morning, two Friends from Patapsco (not the same ones each Saturday) travel to Hagerstown to hold a worship sharing group with six inmates at the Hagerstown prison.

Patapsco is heartened that we have welcomed a number of new people in attendance at recent Meetings for Worship. We are still struggling to learn how to increase the number of people who attend our monthly Meetings for Business.



Junior Yearly Meeting craft projects

PATUXENT

Concerned about the victims of Hurricane Katrina, Patuxent Friends have made contact with the Friends Meeting in New Orleans and offered our assistance. Some Friends have offered to host people who have been displaced. We also have the upstairs of the meetinghouse to open up to a displaced family. We await opportunities to help where we can.

One of our member social workers, Karen Horton, has completed special training to counsel those who have been traumatized by disaster. She has now been called on short notice to travel to Baton Rouge to help hurricane victims. Karen will bring her peaceful presence and counseling skills to the effort. She doesn't know what she will find or how long she will be there - things are very uncertain right now. We are holding her in the Light, concerned for her safety but grateful that she will bring a measure of peace and comfort to those who are suffering.

Several members of our Meeting have been active in a new community action group, Housing for All Calvert, and are working with the county commissioners to influence zoning regulations in favor of expanded low income and workforce housing. Friends recently approved a minute endorsing these efforts.

Our next coffeehouse, scheduled for October 9th, will be another joint venture with the UUs. We have again reserved space at the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center to accommodate a large turnout. A rich tapestry of American and Celtic performances will include folk, traditional and Irish music, poetry and Celtic dancing. All contributions will go to Community Mediation Center of Southern Maryland, which has grown into a successful community outreach under the sponsorship of Patuxent Friends.

RICHMOND

On May 22, Richmond Friends Meeting celebrated a "homecoming," marking the completion of a \$600,000+ renovation and expansion of its Education building. The facility now is fully accessible on all levels, provides expanded multi-purpose space for meetings, monthly potlucks, and use by outside groups, renovated kitchens and restrooms, and two new classrooms as well as refurbished spaces for religious education and our library. There now is a bright, expanded foyer connecting the Meetinghouse to the Education building, and a lovely outdoor meditation garden. The project has been funded almost entirely through family and individual contributions, pledged over a three-to five-year period. Friends from far and wide attended the homecoming. Several

weeks later, we were able to share our new facilities with those attending the BYM interim meeting.

The Meeting has embraced Linda Heacock's ministry to Kenya this fall, where she will facilitate the Alternatives to Violence Project with Friends Peace Teams at work in the African Great Lakes Initiative.

After months of consideration and arranging many opportunities to provide individual perspective, an ad hoc Bequest Committee reached clarity of direction on the use of a bequest left to Richmond Friends Meeting by Alan McCullough, Jr. in honor of Arnold Ricks. After weighing the many views expressed and seeking a Spirit-led path to unity, the committee recommended that 90 percent of the bequest be applied to our building fund, and, in gratitude for this blessing, that 10 percent be given to charitable organizations, including American Friends Service Committee, the Baltimore Yearly Meeting camping program, and CHIP (Children's Health Involving Parents) of Greater Richmond.

Our community-building and Spirit nurturing activities continue at good pace: Bible Workbench weekly discussions, Quakerism 101, monthly meals for a local

tion to welcoming Tom Shapiro, who became a member fairly recently. Also accepted into full membership from associate membership were Seth, Trevor, and Tristan Dietz, sons of Jeanne Bowes. We were sorry, however, to have to say "until we meet again" to Beth Osuch, who has moved to London, Ontario, Canada, to take a position at the University of Western Ontario. Beth will be sojourning with Friends in the London area and maintaining her membership with Seneca Valley/Sandy Spring for the time being.

STATE

The clerk of the State College Friends Meeting, Elizabeth Zimmerman, has resigned and moved to Oregon. Douglas Miller is serving as interim Clerk until Margy Frysinger is ready to take over the position as Clerk. A "send off" potluck for Elizabeth was held July 19 in the Meetinghouse.

The Peace and Social Action Committee and the Peace Center held a candlelight vigil on Sunday August 7th near the entrance to the University Campus at Col-



Sufi dancing during the all-age celebration at Annual Session

homeless shelter, Friendly Eights, our occasional journal *What Canst Thou Say*, inner city work camps, vigils for peace and in opposition to the death penalty, and our religious education program for over 50 young people, infants through high-schoolers.

SENECA VALLEY

Seneca Valley Meeting was pleased to welcome Carol Briggs into membership in spring 2005. This is in addi-

tion to commemorating the 60th anniversary of dropping the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This is the same location where the weekly Peace Vigil is held every Saturday at 1:30 P.M.

The Meeting's Vacation Bible School was held August 7th to 12th, jointly with the University Mennonite and the University Baptist and Brethren Sunday Schools.

A potluck dinner was held to recognize eight young people attending First Day School, all of whom have now moved on to various colleges to continue their edu-

cation. The Religious Education Committee recognized the teachers and assistants, and thanked them for their support. First Day School was not held during the summer, but childcare continued to be available.

Attendance at Meeting for Warship had dropped off some during the summer, but will probably increase after University classes start in the fall.

VALLEY

Our Meeting community has supported each other through great joys and sorrows over the past several months. We celebrated, under the care of the meeting, the marriages of Carina Detrich and Cole Watkins in May and Katherine Kessler and David Garnick in June. The unexpected death of Robert H. Duffield, our former Clerk, on August 7 was the third loss of a beloved member this year. Bob Duffield, Helen Davis and Doris Baker brought deep Quaker experience to our community and we feel their loss deeply.

We learned more about each other through an intergenerational talent share and recognized those graduating from high school and post high school programs with the presentation of books. Chuck Fager joined us for an informative program on the life of Lucretia Mott and Julie Harlow shared about the work of Friends House, Moscow. Young Friends from BYM Planning Committee held an overnight planning session preceding yearly meeting at the meetinghouse and a junior high group from Shiloh Quaker Camp spent two nights at the meetinghouse during which time they painted two large murals with a peace theme for our nearly completed downstairs; they also weeded our playground area.

Valley Friends continue to support the Summer Peacebuilding Institute at Eastern Mennonite University by funding a partial scholarship for a student with ties to the Religious Society of Friends. We would encourage the wider Friends community to assist us in growing this scholarship by sending earmarked contributions to Valley Friends, P O Box 781, Dayton, VA 22821-2005.

WILLIAMSBURG FRIENDS

Williamsburg Friends Meeting has been meeting for several years in the warm and welcoming home of Peg and Len McMaster. However, the McMasters are now in the process of moving, and our Meeting will have to relocate. We are looking for a new home, and are exploring several options. We are a small Meeting, but

we believe that we are up to the challenge of achieving this transition.

Several of our members and attenders have moved away during the summer. We are sad to have to say goodbye, but send our friends on with our blessings.

Our Meeting has been active at Shiloh and Catoclin camps this summer. We have had several persons who served on staff or as volunteers. A Williamsburg Meeting member managed the camp kitchen all summer.

At this time, we are reverberating from the heartbreaking images of the devastation wreaked by Katrina. Although our Meeting is small, we are making contributions as we can.

We send our greetings to all our fellow Friends, and pray that we all may continue to be sustained by the Light.

YORK

Friends at York went through several changes this past spring. We said goodbye to our Clerk Dave Elkinton, as he and his wife, Jan Hurst, moved to Maryland. We welcomed Leada Dietz as our new Clerk. Other new officers are Dorothy Shumway, Recording Clerk, and Louise Heckert as Assistant Treasurer. We also welcomed new members Wim Neij and Dorothy Shumway.

The Meeting will offer Quakerism 101 beginning October 9, 2005 from 9 – 10:30 am. The course is open to the public and will be held for seven months on the second Sunday of each month. A workshop will be held on Saturday, March 18th from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, led by Ria Hawkins, who uses the life and times of James Nayler to bring the spiritual energy of early seekers of truth and light to enliven modern Quaker experiences.

Several members of our Meeting will be volunteering at the “Eyes Wide Open Exhibit” at Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, PA, September 23-25.

Thursday evening, September 15th, at 7 pm, longtime Friend Lamar Matthew will talk about his recent visit to Ramallah, the West Bank, and Israel, and the work that needs to be done on the Friends International Center in Ramallah. He will share insights on possibilities for peace in Palestine and tell of the ongoing nonviolence activities in the region. Light Middle Eastern refreshments will be served. We hope many friends will join us for this evening.

EXCERPTS FROM 2005 YEARLY MEETING EPISTLE

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” Matthew 7:7

Greetings to Friends everywhere:

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends gathered in Harrisonburg, Virginia from 1 Eighth Month to 7 Eighth Month, 2005, for the 334th Annual Session, with the theme “Called to be Merciful.” We met in unity and in love with the Divine Light that we see everywhere in this hurting world. We came eager to inspire others to take up witness and put their faith into action, with love and mercy for our world. Presiding Clerk Lauri Perman conducted the Meetings for Worship with a concern for Business with grace, humor and tactful efficiency. Her spiritual presence guided the community through the difficult discernments we labored over throughout the week. We met in friendship to listen to how Truth prospers among us, hopeful that wisdom, understanding, and faithfulness would flow through us all.

As Friends gathered for the retreat preceding the Annual Session, we sought deeper understanding of what Gospel Order means to our lives. From our exploration of the spiritual order of our lives and our relationship to Gospel Order, we came to a greater awareness of the Power dwelling deeply within our community. A Wellspring that is always present, this Power refreshes our sense of right relationship, good order, and the desire to better the world in which we live. The experience of the opening retreat set a tone of prayerfulness, spiritual expectation and loving-kindness as we moved forward to our Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business.

Worship sharing each day, on the Annual Session theme “Called to be Merciful,” continually brought our spirits into the flow of Divine Love that creates Gospel Order. In responding to Queries such as: How have we experienced mercy in our own lives? How have we been merciful? What are the roots of mercy? How has being merciful to others helped us to feel the presence of God in our lives? Our spirits flowed together as we shared deeply of ourselves.

Throughout the week we were joined in love and friendship by many Friends from across our own country. Many of these Friends felt a call to be with us and journeyed from Friends United Meeting (FUM) and several different yearly meetings. Cecile Nyiramana from Rwanda, Edith and Samson Wekesa from Kenya, and visitors from the Middle Atlantic Region Office of the American Friends Service Committee, including the new director Clinton Pettus, joined us as well. We were enriched by Friends who offered workshops on a wide variety of topics, including Michael Gibson, from Woodbury Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and Friends General Conference Religious Education Committee. We received and read minutes from Friends far and wide, including a letter from Ramallah Monthly Meeting, which declared, “...it is a privilege and a blessing to affirm all that is possible when we link hands and hearts and ministries.”

The theme “Called to be Merciful” wove itself into and among our hearts and minds, and was reflected in every report of the programs and committees shared in our business sessions. One Friend spoke of a great witness among us, of the love and community which produces the beautiful children and young people that dwell in our presence. As we heard reports from the camp directors of our camping programs we came to see how each camp is an individual stream

of love and friendship flowing into one program. Campers learned how to move from their differences into harmony, and to unite together to face challenges and celebrate friendships.

We were called to be merciful to our Quaker family. We heard from the representatives to the FUM Triennial as they described both the smoothness and roughness of the uneasy waters that divide us but at the same time provide a way for us to cross the divisive gulf. Their personal testaments helped us to see the places where they felt the waters flowed smoothly, as well as the places where the waters were rough and the journey uneasy. While we are aware that unity on the personnel policies of FUM may lie far ahead us, we step into action with our planned intervisitation program with other FUM meetings. We experienced in our delegates’ stories how we must ever remember to turn inward from our outward



Friends of all ages at business meeting during Annual Session

actions, seeking the One who mediates all differences, before we turn outward yet again to action.

Perhaps one of the most difficult yet most moving hours of the week was a Meeting for Listening on the topic of convicted sexual offenders and Friends Meetings. We listened as two Friends shared information and experiences to help us all engage in worship over this difficult issue. We felt new hope as this difficult problem was brought further into the Light. We continue to labor over both policies and right order, while we attend to the wounds felt by many. It is our hope that as we grow in understanding, we may be a resource to all of you, as many of you have been to us. We experienced the mercy of God's grace in the faithfulness of one Friend who traveled to be with us, following a mysterious leading, who found she had valuable knowledge to share with us around this issue.

Throughout our Annual Sessions, the power and presence of God's grace and mercy were affirmed to us. We needed only open our hearts to receive it. We will leave these sessions refreshed and infused with the energy and renewed resolve to act on our testimonies as a "People of Peace." We send this message to you in that spirit.

Yours in the Light.

FAITH AND PRACTICE REVISION COMMITTEE

We ask that each Monthly Meeting, either as a whole or in small groups, read and discuss all the Advices and Queries as we distribute them. We need this feedback so that our final product will reflect the needs of the whole Yearly Meeting, not just an individual or a small contingent.

Worship: Advices

The heart of the Religious Society of Friends is the Meeting for Worship. In that Worship we are called to offer ourselves, body, mind and soul, for the doing of God's will.

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. *God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.* (John 4:24, RSV) We treasure silence as a path towards inspiration and guidance which leads to communion with God.

In our Meetings for Worship, we are called to the spirit of 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. Worshipping God together, we can strengthen one another, and our bodies and minds can be refreshed in the life of the Spirit. Our daily lives are linked with the Meeting, the Meeting for Worship with our daily lives. "Let meeting for worship nourish your whole life." (Britain Yearly Meeting, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1.02.10)

Friends are encouraged to give adequate time for study, meditation and prayer, and other ways of preparing for worship. 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 Holy Spirit to testify, to share an insight, to pray, to praise. When we speak, 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—For the Individual:

How do I prepare my heart and mind for worship?

What do I do to prepare myself to receive the power of God's presence and love?

How does worship deepen my relationship with God and how is this inspiration carried over into my daily life?

How do I discern the source of my leading?

How do I know when to speak?

For the Meeting:

Do all other activities of our Meeting find their inspiration in worship and in what way do these activities, in turn, help to uphold the worshipping group?

How does the Meeting assure that there is time after Friends have spoken for the ministry to be absorbed by those for whom it was intended?

Sheila Bach, Clerk

Baltimore Yearly Meeting
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Sandy Spring, MD 20860

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October

- 9/30-10/2 Opequon Work Weekend, David Hunter
- 7-9 Friends United Meeting General Board, Richmond, IN
- 14-16 Catoctin Work Weekend, David Hunter
- 16 Centre Quarter; West Branch Meeting; Walt Fry, Clerk
- 22 Fall Yearly Meeting Day; Little Britain Meeting; Michael Cronin, Clerk
- 25-30 Friends General Conference; Central Committee; New Windsor, MD
- 28-30 Catoctin Work Weekend, David Hunter

November

- 4-6 Catoctin Work Weekend, David Hunter
- 20 Warrington Quarter, Menallen Meeting
- 25-27 Young Friends Conference; Monthly Meeting TBA; Hope Braveheart, Youth Secretary

January 2006

- 13-15 Young Friends Executive Retreat; William Penn House; Hope Braveheart, Youth Secretary

February

- 10-12 Young Friends Conference; Baltimore, Stony Run Meeting; Hope Braveheart, Youth Secretary

March

- 4 Spring Yearly Meeting Day; Monthly Meeting TBA; Michael Cronin, Clerk
- 12 Chesapeake Quarter; Baltimore, Stony Run Meeting; John McKusick, Clerk

April

- 7-9 Young Friends Bus Trip; Richmond; Hope Braveheart, Youth Secretary
- 21-23 Shiloh Work Weekend, David Hunter
- 28-30 Catoctin Work Weekend, David Hunter

May

- 12-14 Catoctin Work Weekend, David Hunter
- 19-21 Young Friends Conference; Sandy Spring Meeting; Hope Braveheart, Youth Secretary
- 19-21 Catoctin Work Weekend, David Hunter

June

- 2-4 Opequon Work Weekend, David Hunter
- 3 Summer Yearly Meeting Day; Monthly Meeting TBA; Michael Cronin, Clerk

July

- 7/31-8/6 BYM Annual Session; James Madison University; Lauri Perman, Clerk of Yearly Meeting