

Baltimore Yearly Meeting **PROGRAM COMMITTEE**
ANNUAL REPORT: August 2021-July 2022

Annual Session (AS) 2021 was our second on-line AS but was now familiar territory for most Friends. It brought continued innovations with workshops spread out through two weeks, enabling more Friends to participate and opportunities for committees to give a zoom presentation and invite feedback easily. Our opening plenary featured Lauren Brownlee on Tuesday evening and our closing Carey Lecture was given by Carl Magruder on Saturday evening. Carl stayed with us online throughout the week at Bible Study and Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business—blessing our community with his spiritual input. We had some losses as well: interest groups, displays, Coffee House could not be replicated on line and the usually vibrant JYF and YF programs found our youth zoomed out!

In early 2022, we began to prepare for our first in-person Annual Session since 2019 and our first hybrid AS ever. In addition, this is our first, in person Pay-as-Led AS, ensuring that some who would not be able to afford in-person attendance, will be supplemented by those who volunteer to donate beyond the actual cost. It is our hope that we can break even this year, enabling Pay-as-Led to guide us in future years as well.

Program Committee is responsible for planning and arranging the program elements at Annual Session each year. This year, the Committee consisted of eight (ideally it should be nine) appointed members as well as the Presiding Clerk, General Secretary, Bookstore Manager, Registrar and representatives of: Ministry and Pastoral Care, Junior Yearly Meeting, Young Friends, and Young Adult Friends. We work throughout the year to plan and implement a fun, dynamic and inspiring program. Our goal is to support and strengthen BYM through building community and offering opportunities for fellowship, surrounding our meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business.

Among other things, and with significant staff support, the committee: identifies themes, invites speakers and plans plenary programs, oversees the JYM program, supports those responsible for the retreat and other worship opportunities, supports Young Friends and Young Adult Friends as needed, recruits workshop leaders, runs the bookstore, plans and manages the Annual Session budget, handles room and board logistics, manages meeting space and audio-visual needs—and puts up lots of signs around campus.

We take joy in our gatherings and in our service to BYM. Our hope is that you will find at Annual Session some spiritual nourishment and go from Annual Session refreshed to continue the work. We look forward to meeting again next year.

Barb Thomas and Linda Coates,
Co-Clerks of BYM Program Committee