

Interchange

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

WELCOME ALL TO ANNUAL SESSION 2021

Stephanie Bean, Presiding Clerk

You are joyfully invited to join the 2021 Annual Session of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. This session is being held virtually again this summer, as much as we still miss seeing each other in person. The Program Committee has thoughtfully arranged times when we will gather to worship together, do our corporate discernment for business, and spend time in community learning and deepening into our spiritual practices. Our theme this year, *Seeking Wholeness: Knowing Our Shadow and Our Light*, will guide us as we listen to each other, hear from our plenary speakers, and attend the opening retreat, workshops, and worship sharing. Though we will not be sharing dormitories or dining halls, we will gather in groups large and small to celebrate our faith, our community, and the gifts we each bring to each other.



Annual Session 2019 photo by Skip Duncan

We extend a special welcome to several groups who will have some of their own events. Our youth, from the youngest through 8th grade, will join in programming led by Junior Yearly Meeting. We include time in our schedule for Friends of Color to be together. Young Adult Friends will gather as their own community as well as participating in the overall schedule. We will miss having Young Friends doing their programs alongside the main schedule, though individual Young Friends are always welcome to join as they are led.

We have continued the practice from last year of mixing up times and keeping sessions short so that Friends get plenty of time away from their screens and those with less time flexibility can still attend some events. Please participate at whatever level will work best for you. We rejoice in whatever time we can spend together. To incorporate more of the business and sharing we customarily do together, we will hold some of the workshops and times for reports the week ahead of the main session. Your registration will include all events that you wish to attend over both weeks. A special anchor for our community this year is the celebration of being Friends together these past 350 years, which will call on us to consider the shadow and light of our past and present, and what hopes we carry for our future.

Even though we experienced this event online last year, we find ourselves in a new place as a community. We have new Clerks, new Recording Clerks, and new understanding of how technology can be used to be more inclusive while still keeping us grounded in Spirit. What has not changed is the understanding that it takes all of us to build this beloved community and that the better we understand our Shadows and our Light, the more we are able to love each other fully and be more Whole by living into our intention to be an anti-racist faith community.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE COMMITS TO PAY AS LED MODEL FOR ANNUAL SESSION

The Program Committee wants as many Friends as possible to participate in Annual Session programs this year. So we have adopted Pay as Led financing after its success at last year's Annual Session 2020. A similar model is being used in our camping program.

By making Annual Session more financially possible for more people, we hope our community can become more inclusive and welcoming. Pay as Led financing acknowledges that while some Friends require assistance to participate, many others could pay more/give more than the rates that are set. We are aware that during the pandemic some Friends have been unemployed, living on their savings, or experiencing other financial hardships. Do not let a lack of funds keep you from participating.

The suggested Annual Session registration fee is \$100 per adult (over age 18). As always, youth programming is free. This \$100 fee includes the retreat, all programs during the week, and programs

scheduled in the pre-session week. Donations above \$100 will help other Friends participate.

Whether you attend a lot or a little of the Annual Session program, we invite you to prayerfully consider your own financial circumstances, and pay as you are led. You may be led to pay significantly more than \$100, or less. It is up to each of us to individually discern what fee to pay. You will see the option to enter your fee on the registration page.

You MUST preregister to receive the technology link for any session. Registration is online only. If you need assistance, please contact the Yearly Meeting office or Barbarie Hill, the Registrar (registrar@bym-rsf.org). You may register throughout Annual Session, but must register for any specific event or session no less than 2 hours in advance to allow time to receive the connection information. We will not be posting them publicly due to security issues.

2021 ANNUAL SESSION THEME

Seeking Wholeness: Knowing Our Shadow and Our Light

*I would know my shadow and my light,
so shall I at last be whole.
Then courage, ..., dare the grave passage.
Here is no final grieving, but an abiding hope.
The moving waters renew the earth. It is spring.*
From the oratorio "A Child of Our Time," Michael Tippett

350 years! Beginning with this Annual Session and concluding in 2022, Baltimore Yearly Meeting will celebrate its 350th year of gathering as a community of Friends. Three hundred fifty years of ministry and worship and witness.

There is a biblical concept called Jubilee; a recurring cycle of celebration centered upon reflection, forgiveness, and justice. As commanded by ancient biblical prophets, Jubilee calls for examination of the ways in which injustice is embedded in personal and communal relationship patterns. It demands of us deep courage; to look with honesty at the shadow side of our history. It invites us to embrace the Light that exposes both our flaws and our potential. It provides us an opportunity to move forward together with integrity toward wholeness.

The biblical notion of Jubilee can help us focus our celebration as a time for looking back and looking forward. We look back at 350 years of Quaker history both to celebrate accomplishments and to assess where we failed our call. We look forward to finding where we might plant the sacred seeds of truth, justice, and love entrusted to us by our Quaker forebears.

Friends, as we celebrate our Jubilee together let us embrace this moment to refresh ourselves for the work and the ministry to come.

LYNN DOMINA

ANNUAL SESSION 2021 OPENING RETREAT

A LONG WAY HOME: TAKING THE SCENIC ROUTE TO FORGIVENESS

In so many stories from the Bible, when Jesus tells people their sins are forgiven, they seem to be freed from the burden of those sins immediately. For most of us, though, forgiving and being forgiven are more complicated. We find ourselves in the position of Peter, required to forgive not just once, not even seven times, but seventy times seven. It's not that someone has sinned against us on 490 different occasions. We have offered forgiveness, but then we recall our anger and need to forgive all over again, and again. We think we're on the right road, but we end up lost, and there's often no map to show us the way.

Forgiveness isn't just an action—it's a lifestyle.

During this retreat, we'll explore what it means to forgive and to be forgiven. We'll think about personal

failings as well as community and national ones. We'll devote time to storytelling, creative activities, and quiet reflection. Perhaps some of us will discover that we've been on the right road after all. Perhaps others will create a new path. Hopefully all of us will find ourselves a bit closer to true reconciliation, with the sacred, with our neighbors, and with ourselves.



Lynn is a Department Head & Professor at Northern Michigan University with teaching specialties in American, African American, and Native American Literature and Poetry.

Rita Willet of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee reported that Lynn has led several retreats, including a well-received retreat at Richmond Friends Meeting.

Register for Annual Session 2021 online now at
www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession

2021 PLENARY SESSIONS

Lauren Brownlee

Tuesday August 3 Evening Plenary Speaker

Lauren Brownlee is a member of Bethesda Friends Meeting and has served on the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Peace and Social Concerns Committee, the Growing Diverse Leadership Committee, and as a Yearly Meeting appointee to the Sandy Spring Friends School Board of Trustees.

Lauren is an alumna of Sidwell Friends School and worked at Sidwell as Assistant Director of Auxiliary Programs and a history teacher. She completed the Friends Council on Education's Institute on Engaging Leadership in Friends Schools and had an article, "Recognizing Teacher Activism," published in the Friends Council book *Leading in the Light: Celebrating 325 Years of Quaker Education*. She serves as a member of the Friends Committee on National Legislation's Executive Committee and as a board member for the DC Peace Team. She is currently the Upper School Head at Carolina Friends School.



Carl Magruder

Saturday August 7 Evening Carey Lecturer



The 2021 Carey Lecture will be presented on Saturday evening by Carl Magruder, M.Div., BCC. Carl is a "cradle Quaker" of the waiting worship tradition. He lives in California, where he works as a palliative care chaplain, accompanying those with life-limiting illness. An EarthQuaker, Carl finds that of God in the world around him—"the text God wrote Himself."

Carl is a bicyclist, beekeeper, bibliophile, motorcyclist, tinkerer, and fountain pen re-storer. He has two kids, aged 13 and 17. In this time of transition, Carl wonders at the Jack Pine, whose cones only open and germinate in fire. Can Friends be a people of faith on fire, germinating spiritual seeds that bring vitality to the interconnected web of being?

Carl supports all systems of belief, from Atheist to Zoroastrian. Often when physical health issues arise, spiritual well-being is a determinative aspect of our human existence and quality of life.

You can find out more about Carl at Soulways Ministries (www.civilight.org/soulways) Carl has begun work on his podcast, "How to Beat Cancer Even if It Kills You."

ARE YOU NEW TO

ANNUAL SESSION? WELCOME!

The Program Committee extends a special welcome to Friends and friends who may be attending our Annual Session for the first time. We will set aside 1-2 times over the week for special, brief orientation to Annual Session for newcomers (times to be determined). We hope this will help you to feel at home among us.

Register for Annual Session 2021 online now at

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**BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING ANNUAL SESSION SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEKS
JULY 26 TO AUGUST 8, 2021**

Week of July 26-30

	Monday 7/26	Tuesday 7/27	Wednesday 7/28	Thursday 7/29	Friday 7/30
1-2 pm			Technology Training		
2-4pm		Reports	Reports	Reports	Reports
7-9 pm	Technology Training	Workshops		Workshops	Newcomer Orientation

Week of August 2-8

	Monday 8/2	Tuesday 8/3	Wednesday 8/4	Thursday 8/5	Friday 8/6	Saturday 8/7	Sunday 8/8
8:30-9:30 am			Worship Sharing or Bible Study	Worship Sharing or Bible Study	Worship Sharing or Bible Study	Worship Sharing or Bible Study	
9:30 am		Newcomer Orientation	Technology Training				
10 am – 12 pm		Opening Retreat	JYM	Business	JYM	Business	Worship
12 pm		Drop-in Lunch	Drop-in Lunch	Intervisitation	Drop-in Lunch	Drop-in Lunch	
1-1:50 pm		BIPOC Hang-out	BIPOC Hang-out	BIPOC Hang-out	BIPOC Hang-out	BIPOC Hang-out	
2 pm		Business	Business	Workshops	Workshops	Memorial Meeting	
4:30-6 pm				JYM			
6-7 pm		Free Time	Free Time	Free Time	Free Time	Free Time	Free Time
7-9 pm	Opening Retreat	Plenary— Lauren Brownlee	Workshops	350th Anniversary Kick-off	Business	Carey Lecture— Carl Magruder	

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ANNUAL SESSION 2021

EVENTS OF THE WEEK

WORSHIP SHARING

Each morning Friends will be invited to gather with others in small groups to share in worship. In keeping with recent practice, several different formats for worship will be offered. Among these will be worship sharing around a query, worship in unity with nature, family friendly worship, Bible Study, and possibly a few others. Details of who will lead these and how the on-line connections will be made are still in planning stages. We will also be asking Friends to offer the gift of “Holding the Meeting in the Light” during Business sessions and will be seeking volunteers.

BLACK AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF COLOR

HANG OUT

On Tuesday through Saturday, we will continue our BIPOC Hang-out, bringing in Friends from far and wide to join this exclusive space for People of Color.

DROP-IN LUNCH

Returning from 2020! We'll have some virtual “rooms” open for those who want to socialize online during the lunch hour. This could be a relaxing time to catch up with old and new F/friends.

INTERVISITATION LOUNGE

The Intervisitation Working Group will be sponsoring 1 session during the week when visitors to Baltimore Yearly Meeting can get together to discuss concerns and joys. We look forward to connecting with those that have joined us in the past and those new to our sessions. This is a great time to share what we have learned in our visits to other Meetings and from visitors to our own Yearly Meeting.

WORKSHOPS

Workshops on a wide variety of topics of interest to Friends are presented at five different times during Annual Session and the week of pre-session. Leaders come from BYM or represent other Quaker organizations. Descriptions of workshops are in this *Interchange* and online. Sign up for one workshop or a Connecting Local Meetings (CLM) session each day. CLMs offer a chance to consult with Friends from other Meetings, and share challenges and successes on the topic. Some workshops limit attendance, so make sure you get the workshop of your choice! You may indicate your workshop preferences at the time you register.

THE DAILY MINUTE

The *Daily Minute* is the newsletter of Annual Session. An electronic *Daily Minute* will be produced during Annual Session 2021 and sent to everyone who is registered.

350TH/100TH ANNIVERSARY KICK OFF!

Join us in the evening on Thursday August 5 for a fun and memory-filled evening to celebrate the beginning of a year of activities to commemorate the 350th Anniversary to Baltimore Yearly Meeting and the 100th Anniversary of BYM Camps.

THINGS WE WILL MISS

We will continue to miss sharing our talents and passions at the Coffee House, nightly singing, celebrating Friends of all ages at the Celebration and the Wednesday plenary, Interest Groups and Committee Meetings, browsing the crafts and media in the Bookstore. Come back in 2022 for these and more!

HAVE A BUDDY—BE A BUDDY

Is this your first time at Annual Session? Would you like to meet an “old hand” who can show you around (virtually), answer questions, and help you feel at home? If so, check the “Request a Buddy” box on your registration form. If you would like to help a newcomer learn more about Annual Session, check “Be a Buddy” on the registration form. Before you arrive, we'll connect you (via email) with your buddy, so you can get together when Annual Session begins.



CALLING ALL CAMPERS! STORIES WANTED!

We're getting ready to celebrate the BYM Camps 100th Anniversary and we're collecting oral and written archives. Tell us—How did Quaker Camp change your Life? Send your stories to 100storiesbymcamp@bym-rsf.org.

Our goal is to collect 100 stories to celebrate our 100 years of BYM's camping program.

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JUNIOR YEARLY MEETING

Kids (infant-rising 8th grade) can participate in Annual Session for FREE (registration still required).

Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) welcomes families to a vibrant community of adults and children. At Annual Session, your child can meet and get to know children from other Meetings, have fun, and learn Quaker values and history. We provide programming for children from infancy through rising 8th grade. The rising 6th through 8th graders (JYFs) meet in their own community to learn experientially about Quaker process and participate in a variety of activities. Rising 9th graders may choose to stay with JYFs or join the Young Friends.

To those new to Annual Session—please come join us! To the youth, parents, teachers, volunteers, and friends of the Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) program, we miss you! As we find ourselves unable to be together physically, we seek ways of connection and community with each other that are new to many of us. With these challenges may come some gifts, material and spiritual. During the planned virtual Annual Session gathering, we hope to provide face-to-face time to nurture the connection of young Quakers to their community, and we hope that you will help us collect some of the activities and values that you think make us such a special place to connect.

Though it saddens us to not be meeting in real life this year, the JYF (middle school) community has already started to gather. JYF families are currently being polled on the best way to meet. And if we have not included you, please join us by letting us know you—all are welcome!. Our hope is to offer a few live meeting times during the week of our gathering, and offer a platform for the JYFs to chat with each other. Carrying out our usual traditions we hope to meet up to play games together, and hold our annual sleepover by sharing in watching a movie together. (Sorry JYFs you'll have to bug your family to get you your own fun snacks this year. Ha ha.) Stay tuned for updates!

Please reach out! Email Alex (beansprout.a@gmail.com) or Amrit (amritcomooore@gmail.com) to volunteer to help or to share any thoughts, inspiration, or moments we can all celebrate. Love, JYM.

YOUNG FRIENDS

The Young Friends are not planning to hold meetings for business or other programming during Annual Session 2021.



*Young Adult Friends Plenary at Annual Session 2019
photo by Skip Duncan*

YOUNG ADULT FRIENDS

We are of course saddened to not see you all in person this year, but are glad to say BYM Young Adult Friends will be gathering online this Annual Session. Our schedule and activities are still being discerned, and will be shared with you soon. For updates young adults (ages 18-35) who want to stay in the loop or join in on our planning should join our email list (bym.youngadultfriends@gmail.com), or our Discord server (see the BYM YAF page on the Yearly Meeting website for a link to join). Even if you aren't planning to participate in this year's Annual Session, we'd love to have you join one or both of these channels to connect with us. Please note our Discord server is limited to Young Adults Friends ages 18-35 within (and outside of) BYM explicitly. Thank you for understanding our need for a safe and private space to gather our community. YAF's are of course encouraged to participate in all other Annual Sessions activities, and space will be given for such in consideration of our own Annual Sessions schedule. We look forward to seeing you online! Love and Light the BYM YAFs.

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ANNUAL SESSION 2021 WORKSHOPS

Tuesday, July 27 Workshops (7:00-9:00pm)

1. Connecting Local Meetings—Growing a Monthly Meeting:

Learn about resources for growing your local meeting and share experiences. We will discuss all aspects of this complex topic, including the relation between growing a meeting and anti-racism and increasing diversity and how monthly meeting growth is a spiritual exercise. **Facilitated by Victor Thuronyi**, Clerk of Growing Our Meetings Working Group.

2. Community Safety Beyond Policing: We want everyone in our communities to feel safe - and be treated with the dignity and respect we all deserve. But how can we make that happen? This training explores how we can create safe, healthy communities without law enforcement. We will take the community through stories, information sharing and exercises that explore these questions. Small group sessions are included. **Facilitated by AFSC Staff.**

3. Left Brain, Right Brain and Spirituality: Recent research on the hemispheric functioning of our brains not only corrects popular misinformation but also opens possibilities for a contemporary spirituality grounded in the early Quaker experience. We'll discuss core elements of spirituality in light of that research. Presentation and discussion format. **Facilitated by George Amoss.** George is a clinical social worker and writer with an interest in the intersection of psychology and Quaker spirituality.

4. Quaker Perspectives from Parenting while Social Distancing during a Pandemic: This interactive workshop will explore lessons learned about parenting during the past year during the uncertain times of school closures, job loss, social-distancing brought to us by COVID-19. **Facilitated by Breyette Covington.**

Thursday, July 29 Workshops (7:00-9:00pm)

1. Connecting Local Meetings—Listening to Local Ministry



Annual Session 2018 photo by Jennifer Dominick

Committees, Nurturing Roots on our Work: What are the issues of Shadow and Light arising in local meetings? How can BYM Ministry and Pastoral Care committee help? What should be on our agenda for coming year? **Facilitated by Greg Robb**, co-clerk of BYM's Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee.

2. Community Wholeness in the presence of Diverse Theological and Spiritual Beliefs: Friends invite diversity. We listen to each other's distinctive stories and we're the better for it, but this beautiful blessing also brings challenges and sometimes disagreement. We'll look at the Quaker foundations that bind us as well as what historical Friends say to us about heterogeneity and discord. **Facilitated by Susanna Laird and Religious Education Committee.**

3. Shadows and Light in Baltimore Yearly Meeting History 1672-1972: We will use the Quaker Testimony of Equality/Equity to explore both troubling and inspiring events in the history of our yearly meeting 1672 -1972. We will reckon with BYM's involvement with and efforts to address slavery and racial injustice, as well as coercive acculturation of Native Americans. **Facilitated by Jim Fussell.**

4. Body-Centered Practices to Heal from White-body Supremacy: We practice body centered activities from "My Grandmother's Hands" by Resmaa Menakem. "White-body supremacy doesn't just live in our thinking brains." It is embedded in our bodies - inherited, internalized, experienced and witnessed. Prepare to settle, move and metabolize the discomforts we hold about race to evolve and transform into an antiracist faith community. **Facilitated by Bette Rainbow Hoover and Sandy Spring Friends Meeting's change group.**

Wednesday, August 4 Workshops (7:00-9:00pm)

1. Connecting Local Meetings—How Do Meetings Discern their Vision of Community and Financial Stewardship: Gunpowder Friends Meeting opens the discussion by sharing its experiencing seeking a greater sense of the whole by developing and stewarding a meeting-wide vision for financial and community stewardship and invites other meetings to share their questions, concerns, and experiences, shadows and light, on this matter. **Facilitated by Amy Schmaljohn and Greta Krik-Mickey.**

2. Racial Wounding: Stopping it and Healing from it: Racial biases are a shadow white Friends acquire growing up. They will explore the harm they cause and how to stop it. Friends of color are often racially wounded in Quaker Meetings. They will learn ways to heal those wounds. Together both groups will practice having conversations about race. **Facilitated by Tronette Anochie, Sabrina McCarthy, David Etheridge and Working Group on Racism.**

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3. Emerging from the Darkness of Militarism and Nuclear Buildup: We start with a PowerPoint presentation about the excesses of military spending and the threat of nuclear war. We discuss how Friends can lead their communities away from the darkness of militarism and warfare to the light of peace and healthcare. **Facilitated by Dat Duthinh.**

4. Difficult Conversations as We Near the End of Our Lives: A supportive workshop to discuss often difficult conversations with loved ones about various legal, social, financial and spiritual concerns at the end of our lives. Time allotted for Q+A and discussion. **Facilitated by Eileen Stanzione and the End of Life Working Group.**

5. Native People and BYM Friends; 226 Years and Counting—Part 1: Pat Powers and Martha Catlin have written an extensive history of the BYM Indian Affairs Committee. They will share some of what they have learned. From its inception in 1795, through Quaker Indian Agents, to present challenges, participants will share our journey. **Facilitated by Indian Affairs Committee.**

6. Quaker Science of Social Change: Re-Discovery of Methods from the 1600's for Building Heaven on Earth: Quakers grew alongside birth and development of science. Using Scientific Method, Francis Bacon (1622), provided analytic tools powering "The Naked Brain" to change "the physical estate of man." An empowering scientific method arose in Friends of Truth addressing the spiritual/social estates of humans. Advanced System Sciences/Cybernetics validates the Quaker Method. **Facilitated by Lowell F. Christy Jr.** a Quaker anthropologist specializing in Cognitive Archaeology.

Thursday, August 5 Workshops (2:00-4:00 pm)

1. Connecting Local Meetings : Change Groups Working to Reduce Racial Barriers: A growing number of BYM local Meetings have small groups (sometimes called "Change Groups") dedicated to lowering racial barriers in their Meetings. Friends doing this work will share with each other what they have been doing, what they plan to do, and what challenges they face. **Facilitated by David Etheridge and Peirce Hammond, Working Group on Racism and Growing Diverse Leadership Committee.**

2. Listening: The Other Half of Vocal Ministry: In Meeting for Worship, only a few participants speak, but we all listen to vocal ministry. There is a protocol for deciding when to speak, but we are rarely taught how to listen to Spirit speaking to us through others. **Facilitated by Alexandra Bell.**

3. Labyrinth Walking for Inward Reflection: Outdoors, Indoors and/or Online: Labyrinths provide a path for mediation – a way to find the light within. Because of their unique design with many turns, the brain relaxes. Worries are replaced by thoughts from deep inside. We will explore different patterns, then walk and discuss. If online, we can "fingerwalk" using a downloaded pattern. **Facilitated by Cathy Curry Smith.**

4. Native People and BYM Friends; 226 years and Counting—Part 2 Current Issues: COVID-19 has presented unique problems for Indian Country. A Supreme Court decision changed interpretations of sovereignty. Missing and murdered indigenous women

SUGGESTED MATERIALS FOR WORKSHOPS

Since there will be no bookstore for Annual Session 2021 this year, Program Committee is recommending that you check out these suggestions from our workshop leaders this year. All are available from Amazon, but you may want to check out Bookshop.org and support your local bookstores. Some may also be in your Meeting library already. The workshop date and number are listed after the listing in case you want to prepare for your workshops. (i.e Th29/4 will be the 4th workshop choice on Thursday the 29th.)

Suggested Reading List from Workshop Facilitators for 2021 sessions:

1. How to be an Anti-Racist, by Ibram X. Kendi: **(Tu27/1)**
2. The Master and his Emissary, by Iain McGilchrist **(Tu27/2)**
3. Silence: A User's Guide (Vol 1), by Maggie Ross **(Tu27/2)**
4. Autopsy of a Deceased Church, by Thom Rainer **(Tu27/3)**
5. Unwelcome: 50 ways Churches drive away First-Time visitors, by Jonathon Malm **(Tu27/3)**
6. Paths to Quaker Parenting Using Quaker Beliefs, Testimonies and Practices, by Harriet Heath, editor, Danielle Beauvais, et al. **(Tu27/4)**
7. The Third Pillar, by Raghuram Rajan **(Th29/1)**
8. Testimony and Practice in the Society of Friends, by Jane P. Rushmore, 1959 **(Th29/2)**
9. The Message and Mission of Quakerism, by W.C. Braithwaite and H. T. Hodgkin, 1912 **(Th29/2)**

10. My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Bodies, by Resmaa Menakem **(Th29/4)**
11. Stop being Afraid, by Amanda Kemp **(W4/1)**
12. Me and White Supremacy, by Layla Saad **(W4/1)**
13. The Doomsday Machine, by Daniel Ellsberg **(W4/2)**
14. Do all Indians live in Tipi's? by NMAI, Wilma Mankiller, et al **(W4/5)** Sue Marcus has some available for \$7
15. New Albion: Four British Folkways in America (section on cultural history of Quakers, by David Hackett Fischer **(W4/6)**
16. The Pentacost Paradigm: Ten Strategies for becoming a Multi-racial Congregation, by Jacqueline J. Lewis and John Janka **(Th5/1)**
17. Path Companion: A Guide to Walking the Labyrinth to Heal and Transform, by the Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress **(Th5/3)**
18. The Light in their Consciences, by Rosemary Moore, Penn State University Press **(Th5/5)**
19. Cultivating Wholeness: a guide to care and counseling in Faith Communities, by Margaret Komfeld **(F6/1)**
20. When the Trees say Nothing: Writing on Nature, by Thomas Merton **(F6/2)**
21. From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the 21st Century, by Wm. Darity and A.K. Mullen **(F6/5)**
22. The Future We Choose, Surviving the Climate Crises, by Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac
23. Uprooting Racism, by Paul Kivel

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continue to weigh on the consciences of all of us, crying out for justice, What guidance do we as Quakers have for land acknowledgement? Reparations? Decolonization? **Facilitated by Sue Marcus and Indian Affairs Committee.**

5. Quakers and Conflict: Quakers are not immune to conflict. What has changed since 1660, what has remained the same? What has been gained? Lost? Using 2 books by Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences* and *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*, we'll talk about Quakers & conflict then & now. **Facilitated by Martin Melville, and Pastoral Care Working Group.**

6. Restorative Practices for Peacemaking: "It's simple but it ain't easy." The circle process comes from the practices of African and Indigenous peoples. They are effective for adults and children to break thru prejudice and bias and build equity in the community. Use of the 5 basic questions can get to the heart of a conflict in order to work together to make things better. **Facilitated by Bette Rainbow Hoover and Marcy Seitel.**

Friday, August 6 Workshops (2:00-4:00 pm)

1. The Joys and Challenges of Being Good: Learnings from a Supervised Ministry: Preparing to graduate in 2021 with an MDiv from Earlham School of Religion, Windy's supervised ministry project was in service to BYM's Pastoral Care Working Group. This workshop asks from that experience: what does it mean for us Quakers to be "good"; what if we discovered that we could not be "good"? **Facilitated by Windy Cooler and Pastoral Care Working Group.**



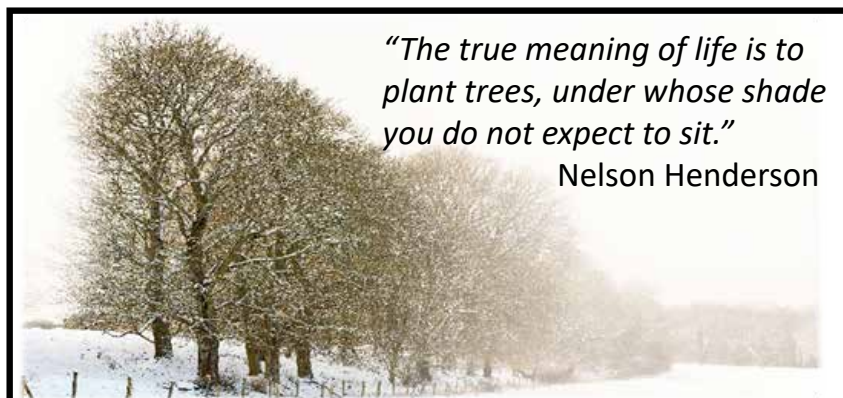
Annual Session 2017 photograph by Jennifer Dominick

2. Spiritual Paths towards Healing Creation, Transforming Awareness into Action: Two guided meditations. First, becoming aware of how the planet heals us. Secondly, following leadings on ways to heal the earth. Both meditations will be followed by sharing. **Facilitated by Fran Palmeri.**

3. Advocate for Migration Justice with FCNL: Immigration Policy in the 117th Congress: This workshop will provide a legislative update on immigration reform progress under President Biden and the 117th Congress, forecast prospects for change in the coming year, and equip Friends to support the vision of A Quaker Statement on Migration with advocacy and action. **Facilitated by Ali Rahnama and Jim Cason.**

4. Five Decades of Quaker Testimony in Baltimore Yearly Meeting since 1972: Quaker Testimony in recent decades in Baltimore Yearly Meeting. All six testimonies of S.P.I.C.E.S. will guide us exploring our evolving mid-Atlantic Quaker witness since 1972. While we will mostly discuss Equality, Peace and Environmental Stewardship, we will also address Simplicity, Integrity and Community. **Facilitated by Jim Fussell.**

5. How Friends May Engage with and Empower Impacted People in the Reparations Process: Initially, Friends will hear from a panel of local & national African-American and indigenous leaders as to their reparations goals. Then, Friends will divide into Zoom breakout-sessions to discuss how reparations work could be supported. Finally, Friend can question/interact with panelists. (Workshop organizers will invite participants to two follow-up workshops.) **Facilitated by Phil Caroom, Reparations Action Working Group.**



"The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit."

Nelson Henderson

LEAVING A LEGACY GIFT?

If you plan to name BYM in your retirement fund, life insurance, annuity and/or wrote BYM into your will, please help us to record your planned gift. Contact BYM's development director at Development@BYM-RSF.org or at 301-774-7663 to receive a simple document to safeguard your intent.

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GREETINGS FRIENDS!

The party planners have begun their work! We hope you will be part of the fun, creativity, conversation and learning. Baltimore Yearly Meeting will be 350 years old in the year 2022. During that same year, our Camping Program will be 100 years old. What's more, several of our Meetings are also celebrating their anniversaries. Watch for a rich schedule of coming events and opportunities to gather throughout the coming year across our Mid-Atlantic region.

In preparation, the ad hoc anniversaries planning committee is delving deeper into several areas of interest:

- Quaker Witness
- Youth Programs & Religious Education
- Camps
- Quaker History
- Intervisitation & Educational Outreach

Of course, Annual Session 2022 will feature a community cake along with special panels, speakers and workshops. On display at Annual Session will be timeline posters outlining the history of each local Meeting. We need your Meeting's timeline submission* as soon as possible please.

Also, to update the green passport book entitled Visiting Among Baltimore Yearly Friends please send any updated pictures or narrative about your Meeting before August 31, 2021 to Development@BYM-rsf.org Thank you!

We invite your interest and involvement in any of these preparations. For more information or to send your news for the coming festivities, please contact:

For history matters:	Katherine Smith	Persimmtree@centurylink.net
For communications:	Mary Braun	Development@BYM-rsf.org
For Quaker Witness:	Sharon Stout or Denna Joy	skstout@gmail.com or dennajoy@comcast.net
For camp plans:	Jennifer Collins-Foley or Lizzie Kellett	collinsfoley@yahoo.com or e.fetter.kellett@gmail.com
For general questions:	Harry Scott	Scottyvt@hotmail.com

Get ready to enjoy a year of commemoration and community with a special discernment toward the future! Our story is still unfolding...

Harry Scott
Clerk, Ad Hoc Anniversary Committee

*For examples of timelines, see-

drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ek4WtndzaLKNieGavw86FkkfblzTXqlQ?usp=sharing

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MIDLOTHIAN FRIENDS CALL FOR IMMEDIATE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY

In December 2020, Midlothian Friends Meeting approved a Minute calling for the immediate abolition of the death penalty in Virginia and federal courts. We published our faith-based statement in advance of the Virginia General Assembly's consideration of legislation to end capital punishment in our state. We shared the Minute with neighboring Quaker Meetings and other congregations, local advocacy organizations and press, and our state and federal legislators.

We're happy to report that in late February 2021 the General Assembly did abolish the death penalty in Virginia, including for those persons currently under a death sentence. Governor Northam has said he will sign the legislation into law by the March 2021 deadline. [Editor's Note: Governor Northam signed the legislation on March 23]

The text of our Minute follows:

As Quakers, we are called to answer "that of God in everyone." We believe an Inner Light abides in each of us; that we are equal and interconnected. The Light lends us dignity and can lead us to grow and change. We rely on Quaker Testimonies to guide us and give public witness to our inner faith.

The Quaker Peace Testimony urges us to oppose violence in all forms. We are called to transform institutions of society into instruments of peace. We seek to reconcile enemies and serve the needs of all sides torn by violence.

The Testimony of Community calls us to recognize and nourish the spiritual worth of all people, particularly those

who have been devalued or excluded. Along with Simone de Beauvoir we can say "One's life has value as long as one attributes value to the life of others, by means of love, friendship, indignation, and compassion."

Finally, the Testimony of Integrity calls us to authenticity and consistency between our values and actions, to live according to the deepest truth we know.

We call for abolition of the death penalty—by execution or lifetime incarceration without hope for parole—in Virginia and federal courts.

State-sanctioned killing denies the sacredness of human life and the human capacity for change. Executing criminals does not address the roots of violence in our society. It has not been shown to deter crime. It is rife with racial and class discrimination. Since the 1970s, at least 160 persons who were initially sentenced to death were found to be innocent and released. Others have been executed despite compelling evidence that they may have been wrongfully convicted.

Execution cannot restore lives destroyed by violence. We empathize with the agony of victims and their families, but we believe that executing people, even those whose guilt is beyond a shadow of doubt, is wrong. Rather than answering violence with violence, we urge a restorative justice that emphasizes reconciliation and focuses on the victims of violence as they rebuild their lives.

UNITY WITH NATURE COMMITTEE

Langley Hill Forms Climate Working Group

In October 2019, Langley Hill Friends Meeting approved forming a Climate Working Group, with the goal to educate, engage, and perform related actions. The Working Group split into two subgroups, given their diverse interests: personal actions, which has also centered its work on reducing the carbon footprint of the meeting house and of individuals, and a policy issues subgroup focused on legislation.

The policy subgroup is working to find unity on issues to take a stand on. Resources have been gathered into a Google doc to share with the meeting, as many groups have been working to address climate crisis and various approaches exist to make changes.

In 2019, group members were active in their ministry. Here are some highlights, but the list is not complete.

- Hosted a Friends Wilderness Center event with Kallan Benson, an Annapolis young Friend who has acted in Fridays for Future, was the major speaker.
- Created driveway signs with Earth-promoting messages

- Worked with the Finance Committee about shifting funds into Friends Fiduciary's Green Fund, with the final result that Friends Fiduciary is no longer investing in fossil fuel companies
- Protested in front of Chase Bank to witness against their investment in fossil fuel companies
- Supported the Virginia Clean Economy Act
- Held three Second Hour sessions on international efforts at reducing greenhouse gasses
- And other actions

In 2020, the pandemic has shift Friends' focus to the pandemic. Plans for 2021 include relationship building with Friends' and other faith-based climate organizations, Friends World Committee on Consultation, and FCNL. Plans are also underway for work with secular groups, Virginia state legislators and federal Congress and agencies. There is excitement in the group for the work ahead to combat climate change and make the planet a kinder place for their children's children.

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GUILFORD COLLEGE SEEKING SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS COM- MUNITIES

Guilford College, established in 1837 by the Religious Society of Friends, is seeking care from Meeting communities throughout the country. As a small, Liberal Arts College in North Carolina, Guilford prides itself on transforming students into agents of change through high quality Quaker-inspired education.

Quaker practices infuse many aspects of life on campus. Silence before gatherings, decision-making by consensus, egalitarian practices, commitment to anti-racism, and academics influenced by Quaker principles. Some Meetings may be familiar with the Quaker Leadership Scholars Program (QLSP) and Friends Center if they have had young people attend Guilford College, both QLSP and Friends Center have strengthened and continue to build generations of Quaker activists. Guilford serves as an unbroken historical link from our ancestors, who devoted their lives to ending slavery to making education available for women and other social justice causes, to current graduates who fight for responsible climate stewardship and lobby for the human rights of all.

Now, Guilford is facing some challenges familiar to other small liberal arts colleges – student recruitment and funding. With the help of a broad group of supporters, we believe the current situation is temporary and fixable. Thousands of current and former faculty, staff, students, parents of students, alumni, and Quaker Meetings have rallied around Guilford.

How can the Meeting community help Guilford?

- *Student recruitment:* help us get in touch with prospective students and spread the word about the value of a Quaker-informed education. Are their students in your Meeting, in your camping program, community, or grandchildren of members that might benefit?
- *Communication and networking:* spread the word about Guilford to others in your community and communities of care. Notify other Friends you may know or Meetings within your Yearly Meeting and bring this to their attention. Spread the word.
- *Quaker oversight:* invite interested members of your Meeting to get involved. Serve as your Meeting's Ambassador to Guilford. Please visit and follow the Save Guilford College page on Facebook (www.facebook.com/saveguilford), as well as on Twitter and Instagram (twitter.com/SaveGuilford and www.instagram.com/saveguilford/), and use the hashtags #SaveGuilfordCollege and #KeepTheLightOn. More information can also be found at www.saveguilfordcollege.com/
- *Fundraising:* Help us meet our ambitious fundraising goals



(\$4 million by May 31 and another \$2 million by Jan. 31, 2022; supporters can donate directly to Save Guilford, offer fundraisers, or donate directly to the college to help maintain Guilford's role in Quaker education.

If the Meeting or individual members want more information, please contact Martha Solt (Friends Meeting of Washington) at soltdozier@gmail.com or Suzanna Roettger (Homewood Friends Meeting) suzanna.roettger@gmail.com.

Want to donate directly: www.saveguilfordcollege.com/philanthropy OR www.giving.guilford.edu/s/1833/interior.aspx?sid=1833&gid=2&pgid=1796.

WORKING GROUP ON RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH ANIMALS OUR DIETS AND THE ENVIRONMENT ZOOM PRESENTATION TUESDAY, MAY 11, 6:30 – 7:15PM

To help inform our choices as we strive to live in harmony with the living world, Becky Ramsing of the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future will talk about the impact of our food systems on climate change and the ecosystem.

Co-sponsored by the Unity with Nature Committee and the Working Group on Right Relationship with Animals.

Register here to get the Zoom link:

tinyurl.com/cejtnwnk.

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IF YOU HAVE EARS, LISTEN UP

Alex Bell, Bethesda

Meeting for Worship is our basic Quaker practice. It is a communal experience where we gather together in expectant waiting for the movement of Spirit within and among us. We sit together, mostly silently, but occasionally a Friend rises to speak, which we call Vocal Ministry. When we are learning about Quaker practice, there is a fair amount taught about vocal ministry, such as—when is it appropriate to speak, and when should we wait? Is the message for me only, or for the group? We are urged to be as concise as possible and not to speak too often.

Although most of us rarely speak, we are all listeners. No one would give a message into an empty room. Vocal Ministry involves everyone present. Although the Spirit creates the message and the speaker provides the words—the Vocal part—it is the audience which transforms those words into Ministry.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting's 1988 *Faith and Practice* says: "Friends approach the meeting for worship confidently, believing that God speaks directly to us, revealing Divine Will and guiding those who listen. Each worshipper becomes a listener ready to receive God's message, which may come in the silence or in spoken words." Speak as if God is listening. Listen as if God is speaking. Speak as if Spirit is speaking through you. Listen as if Spirit is listening through you.

There is surprisingly little written about how to listen to messages in Meeting for Worship, as if listening is so easy that nothing needs to be said. I maintain listening is a spiritual discipline that needs to be practiced mindfully and with as much intentionality and discernment as settling into the silence or speaking.



Annual Session 2016 photo by Jennifer Dominick

So, how do you listen to messages in Meeting for Worship in a way that transforms them into Ministry? How do you hear the Divine speaking in the message? How do you "mind that which is eternal, which gathers your hearts together up to the Lord, and lets you see that ye are written in one another's heart." (George Fox, 1653)

Expectant waiting. I find this phrase a wonderfully helpful description of worship. This attitude helps create a positive tone where I hope to be led to a deeper connection with the Divine both through my personal meditation and prayer, and also through any messages that are given. There are many disciplines of prayer and meditation, which can help us to create an atmosphere of worship, so I won't try to describe them all. For myself, I come with a different phrase, song, Biblical quote, or prayer every few weeks, which helps me to center and become open.

Connection. I like the practice of deliberately connecting with everyone in the room when I enter into Meeting for Worship, saying each person's name to myself or carefully observing their presence as I glance around the room. I keep my eyes open during this process, but even if you are someone who likes to keep your eyes shut, you can be aware of the people around you. Meeting for Worship is not private meditation; it is communion. We are manifesting the Divine because we are all together and willing to share our experience one with another. "Each is aided by the seeking of others, so that worship becomes a corporate experience." (BYM 1988 *Faith and Practice*)

Gratitude. When someone rises to speak, be grateful, be curious. We have been striving to hear "the still, small voice within." Now someone is doing us the favor of speaking that voice out loud. Silently, sincerely, thank them in your heart as they rise to speak and again when they conclude. I rarely speak in meeting, but I know the quaking feeling it entails. The speakers are brave souls.

Discernment. Still your inner critic. Everything you may have read or heard about discerning whether you should rise and speak has zero relevance to the question of how to listen to the message. Assume that the speaker has done all the appropriate work and that s/he is channeling the Spirit in the Meeting to the best of their ability. Your work is to discover how the message touches you, how God is reaching out to you through another's voice.

Listen carefully. Think and pray on what is said. I used to passively let the words wash over me, but now I actively try to engage with them, and see where they lead me. Sometimes, it is the emotions, more than the words, that need to be heard. Maybe pain or joy is the primary message. Often, I am able to distill a few key words, especially when more than one person speaks. Something is stirring among us when one message leads to another and then another, although it can be hard to connect them all. I am particularly appreciative of those with a gift for rising late in the Meeting to unify all the messages. I think we too easily disparage a "popcorn" meeting when, really, we should be impressed with the Spirit bubbling up, in, and through so many people. How can we bring the kernel of these

Listen continued on page 14

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Listen Carefully to What Is Said In Worship

Listen continued from page 13

messages back into the Silence before Meeting is over?

Openness. We need to listen to the spirit behind the words. Sometimes we have to translate phrases into something we understand better. If a message is too “new-age,” is there a Bible passage with a similar theme? If the message is too Christ-centered, can I find a universalist theme instead? Does it sound too mundane, as if pulled from the newspaper or Facebook? Look to the Eternal behind the everyday. Be careful. It is easy to get caught up in editing and lose the message. If we get too involved in disagreeing or correcting, we should let it pass, like any other distraction. I can easily hear God in the birds outside or a child’s laugh, so the message does not have to be profound to be meaningful. We need to listen with love.

Ministry. Ministry means service, healing. The easiest ministry is just to direct my thoughts inward and work on my own spiritual practice. For example, I can probably find something in my own life that is similar to what the speaker is talking about. It is more of a challenge to focus on what the message is telling me about the speaker, or what the words are telling me about the Meeting as a group. Is there something I should be doing differently, now that I have heard this message? Is there something the Meeting could be doing? Do I need to hold the speaker in the Light? How might this message change me? How might it affect my relationships with others?

Resistance. I freely admit that there are people I find easy to listen to, and people who are more difficult to hear. But perhaps we actually get more spiritual benefit from this difficulty, just like a strenuous workout makes us more fit than an easy one. At the very least I can project love and gratitude towards each speaker. It is also true that our careful listening can help all the speakers grow and improve in their abilities. Even the best speakers were novices once.

Social hour. Some people do not like to talk about the messages after Meeting, but I have found talking about the preceding worship often promotes spiritual dialog. I have also heard the complaint that coffee hour can seem too superficial. When can we engage in deep spiritual



Annual Session 2005

dialog? It is fun to speak with others about the messages; the conversation brings us closer as a spiritual community. For the people who spoke, I have found that they appreciate the acknowledgment, even as we remember that messages are brought to us through the Divine. Others often enjoy the opportunity to talk about how the messages touched them.

I invite you to experiment with participating fully in Vocal Ministry by listening with God’s ears.

Queries

What practices do you find particularly helpful to becoming open and receptive to spoken messages in Meeting for Worship?

What gets in the way of your listening to others, and how have you overcome resistance and negativity?

When you have spoken in Meeting, have you felt that you have been truly received in Ministry?

THE RESILIENCE GROUP

Joan Gugerty (Baltimore, Stony Run)

Uncertainty is epidemic in today’s world and it is affecting every phase of our lives. Social and personal connections remain a challenge and our daily routines and rituals have been disrupted. This type of chronic stress can alter our health and well-being in a negative way. Mutual support is essential.

As a Certified Integrative Health Coach who has benefited immensely from the integrative health community, I want to pay it forward. I am offering to facilitate on-line Support Groups for the Community of Friends and others. When you work in a group, you are exposed to a variety of insights that empower you to see a situation from multiple angles and motivate you to develop new solutions. This can uncover many possibilities one has not considered.

The Resilience Group’s purpose is personal support and the agen-

da for each group will be cocreated with the group members. The mind, body and spirit work together in everyday life, so all aspects of health will be considered. Depending on the needs of a group, we could address stress management techniques, healthy lifestyle as well as emotional and/or spiritual support.

With others you will join a close-knit group that is energizing, motivating and healing. I also provide an atmosphere in which all communications are confidential and where there is a sense of safety. If you are interested in being part of the group or would like more information, contact me directly at joangugerty@gmail.com or call me at 410-404-0383.

Joan Gugerty’s Resilience Group will be under the care of Stony Run Meeting, BYM Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee has discussed the group and feels it will be of great benefit to BYM Friends.

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SEEKING WHOLENESS— KNOWING OUR SHADOWS AND OUR LIGHT

Rose Longworth, Valley

Once upon a time there was Darkness over the deep and God said “Let there be light.”

And God made his people out of the clay and blew his spirit into them. The people got distracted with everything and forget from where they came.

God watched his people with great interest. They were visited regularly by the darkness and the light from the unknown both inside and outside. There were wars, there was peace, there was the best of times and the worst of times.

All people, were pleased to be in their own movie, directing it this way and that and plenty of mud slinging to make enough tension to spring them up the ladder of Oneness. God squirted in the light and the Devil the darkness and the people had lots of sightings of both. It was always up to God’s people to slap them together and climb.

In the midst of the chaos and the confusion and the love and joy some of they slowed down enough to consider many things including their dreams that came to them in the night.

In their dreams there were great fights depicted between the light and the darkness, being chased and being gagged at the same time. Being locked in mortal combat with an adversary, with a huge darning needle, both trying to impregnate the other. Fighting with the one that has a sharp knife that intends to torture you slowly and to flay you lovingly.

Eventually the people of God realize they have a chance to pull the darkness up until it was no longer in their own deep, weaving it with the light into a whole armor.

Then they would feel that solidness in their belly, giving out light, recognizing light in friend and foe, carrying light and recognizing that Oneness in light between all of God’s people, no longer them and us but all in this together.

They could climb the ladder out of the mind, into the place of silence where their real inheritance from God, are the wheels where God’s Spirit runs. They could talk to their bellies and insist on the reversal

of the wheels from cursing to blessing. There were those who pulled down the light to shine it into the darkness until it is clear what is going on underneath, or behind them in the shadow.

The Devil thought that Man would drop into the darkness and never come truly up out of the mud, but God said they were his people and that the Spirit of God breathed into them would last forever and that those marvelous people would catch the Spirit of God, even as they are on the Earth- none would be lost. They would sit into the moonlight running up and down their spines.

Civilizations, Holy writings, great art, renaissance blossomed and bloomed out of the stinking mud of life as man made use of his knowledge of his shadow and brought it together in the light. In silence they possessed their souls.



WHEN THE SPIRIT CALLS: ENGAGING THE CHALLENGES OF MINISTRY

Windy Cooler, Sandy Spring

As an embraced public Friend in the unprogrammed tradition, I highly recommend to Baltimore Yearly Meeting the plain, thorough language of the new book *When the Spirit Calls: Engaging the Challenges of Ministry*.

Jay Marshall, is the recently retired dean of Earlham School of Religion. Jay’s knowledge of global Quaker culture and theology shines through this text. While Jay is a Christo-centric Quaker from the programmed tradition he speaks directly to the full spectrum of traditions he has served at ESR for 20 years. Indeed, while the book is a rare and much needed Quaker-specific how-to manual for embracing our individual

calls to ministry as a community, it is also an inviting introduction to our global family of Friends.

Jay invites us to read this book with our Meeting, each chapter ending with a set of useful queries. *When the Spirit Calls* is an invaluable tool for Quaker clearness committees, Meeting clerks, and all Friends who want to discern together their unique ministry to the world and how best to plan and fulfill their call.

Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee recommends this book to Friends. Jay Marshall can be reached at quakerleader@gmail.com, or through his blog at jaymarshallonline.com.



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WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY NEWS

ADELPHI FRIENDS MEETING

Greetings! Adelphi Friends Meeting has continued in pandemic mode, worshipping primarily online. We have celebrated those who come week after week in Zoom mode, including some newcomers, and feel the loss of those for whom Zoom worship is not satisfying. A small but hardy group of our folks continues to meet outside in our Memorial Garden, socially distanced and masked. They made it through the winter, bulked up by coats and sometimes seated under umbrellas. Some of our younger children and their parents also come for outdoor First Day School activity, and even were present during very cold weather. We feel happy knowing they are there. With spring now officially here, however, we hope to make better use of our outdoor facilities for those who prefer in-person gathering. Getting vaccines has encouraged us to think to the future when we can meet again in person, but anxiety about safety still keeps us quite cautious.

While we have celebrated being together in new ways, we have mourned and at times raged over the terrible events related to virulent racism and gun violence. Those, coupled with the losses related to the pandemic and the complexities of life caring for ourselves, our families and our friends have drained us. Gathering together has continued to give us some strength to continue when energy wanes.

Several major projects have occupied our community time. The first is a series of "Quakerism 201" Second Hours based on the development of a set of recommended practices and queries for Quaker discernment and decision-making in our Meeting. This project grew out of difficulties that arose during two of our Meetings for Business last summer. A joint effort of our Continuing Quaker Education and Ministry & Worship committees has helped to transform a serious difficulty into a joyful opportunity to work together to bring forth our highest aspirations for decision making as we sit together with the Spirit.



Annual Session 2007

A second major project is that we as a community will need to make a final decision soon about the building project for our Meeting House. Construction prices have risen steadily during this pandemic period and we have undertaken a process to see what we will be able to manage in terms of a mortgage. We also await building permits from Prince Georges County. This is a very big decision that we face and we hope our discernment will lead us into a fulfilling decision. This project has occupied us for over 10 years and we are hopeful about where it will lead us for the future.

And ongoing for some time now are the offerings of our very active Change Group. We continue to work on being an anti-racist community through reading books together, watching films related to different aspects of racism, and having group discussions. This process has been difficult and revealing, but also empowers us to become stronger in our desire to make a difference in this essential area of social justice work. We send blessings and wishes for love and transformation of our troubled country and planet.

BALTIMORE MONTHLY MEETING, STONY RUN

Stony Run has been remarkably active during this 'COVID season'. Hardy folk continue to have Meeting for Worship on the porch, but most meet via Zoom, for Worship, Business, and Committees. Benefits include seeing Friends who have moved away, and welcoming back locals not seen for years. A recent highlight was the broadcast of our annual Music Evening, with hundreds of Friends virtually listening to jazz. Financial proceeds were the highest ever.

A large Change Group is active, and our Business Meeting usually has more virtual participants than when we met in person. We are undecided about when to return to the Meeting House. Property Committee is doing a 'deep dive' into what will make our premises a safe place taking not only masks and distancing into consideration, but also air quality and how that is kept clean. Our Outreach continues unabated. Stony Run has many people helping refugee families, providing food aid, supporting Unified Efforts programs for youth, supporting the Women's Clinic in Burundi, working to reform Maryland laws, and so on.

In addition to our traditional Unprogrammed Worship, weekly Programmed Worship is timed to overlap with First Day School and Simple Lunch. This worship is largely attended by members of African Meetings, many of who have now joined Stony Run.



Annual Session 2008

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WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY NEWS

BETHESDA FRIENDS MEETING

After almost a year's pause, Bethesda Friends Meeting (BFM) restarted the in-person meeting of worship under the tent in the Sidwell Friends Lower School campus. The meeting's life was shaped by the constraints created by the COVID 19 pandemic, with worship, business, and our activities conducted almost entirely by videoconference. This virtual format has allowed friends from afar to participate in meeting for worship and other activities. Meetings for worship felt robust despite the shift away from in-person gatherings. Instead of our traditional coffee hour, we offered a collective opportunity to share with a subset of friends who "linger" on Zoom after the rise of meetings. The meeting has many other activities that nurture the Spirit that were continued virtually, including a spiritual formation group, sessions using Experiment with Light, weekly Bible Study, a monthly book discussion group, and a quarterly spiritual coffee house. Committee work has continued. Bethesda Friends have been aware of the many conflicts in our broader society, and recent events have stimulated the meeting community to take action for racial justice. We have embraced the yearly meeting's call to re-envision our roles and identity as an anti-racist community. A diversity/change group, in operation for several years at Bethesda Friends, has recently been very active in leading Bethesda Friends to discern a meeting-wide response to this call and to explore resources for such in a threshing process. In October 2020, a donor contributed \$20,000 for the support of racial justice. After ten video conferences, the BFM Ad Hoc Racial Justice Donation Committee recommended \$10,000 to DC Peace Teams; \$5,000 to Mutual Aid Movement DC; and \$5,000 to A Wider Circle, specifically for its Family Success Center in Ward 8. Most Bethesda Friends begin 2021 with relief and renewed optimism. Through the challenges, we regularly draw strength from one another.

CHARLOTTESVILLE FRIENDS MEETING

Those of us who are able to gather via Zoom appreciate the opportunities to maintain our Sunday routine of worship, education, and socializing. We deeply miss the many who don't join us online, but we are pleased to have visitors from afar and several new attenders. Sunday afternoon meditative nature walks with queries continue for the children, although the number of attenders has dropped. An ad-hoc committee has been exploring ways we might safely open up the Meeting House for Sunday worship. There will be a trial run of an 11:30 in-person worship during April and May, that will be evaluated at our June Meeting for Business.

The two pods of English language learners, which had been with us since the fall, left us with warm good-byes when the city schools reopened in March. Due to the pandemic, services for the homeless were altered. Rather than hosting the women's shelter for two weeks in January, we contributed meals to the men's shelter for two weeks in March. For our Big Friendly Read this year, we will come together during Library Week to discuss *The Last Runaway* by Tracy Chevalier.

We are grateful that there have been no COVID deaths within our community, yet there is much sadness over the isolation from other Friends and family members. Our committees have worked hard to support Friends in need and keep things running smoothly during this time of uncertainty.

DEER CREEK FRIENDS MEETING

Deer Creek Friends Meeting was possessed of a brilliant idea! How to present the tradition Christmas program in a time of reduced attendance, covered faces, and social distancing was the dilemma to be solved. Once the brilliant idea was suggested, thoughts rolled in, tumbling one upon another. We would use the resources with which we were blessed: a stable from the days when Quakers



Annual Session 2013 photo by Nony Dutton

arrived by horse and buggy, a circular driveway to accommodate drive-through visitors, eager children and accommodating parents and Friends. DCFM staged a live nativity scene to raise the spirits of members and the community alike. The exuberance was particularly evident among the participants who arranged lighting, costumes and props, dressed wise men and shepherds, and procured live animals, including donkeys, sheep and a baby goat. The camels were cardboard cutouts with soulful expressions that the Magi maneuvered as they arrived at the manger. The star of Bethlehem shone down on Mary and Joseph and the Babe. A chorus of adults sang traditional Christmas hymns and teens handed out candy canes (with kitchen tongs!) And paper ornaments to departing guests. It was grand! But, more importantly, it brought much needed Christmas spirit to many who had been home-bound and facing a pared-down holiday. The



Annual Session 2015

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WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY NEWS

response of the community was overwhelmingly elated. Some visitors returned for a second look saying they didn't want to miss a thing! And, the members of DCFM reveled in a experience of cooperation, creativity and innovation that brought blessed joy to many in the Christmas season.

HERNDON FRIENDS MEETING

The youngest Friends class is taking a break from the Godly Play curriculum to hear antiracist stories read to them over Zoom. The whole Meeting will be trying out a little virtual intervisitation at the end of April when we will be having a joint worship service with Wilmington (Ohio) Friends Meeting. The reception for the Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County was conducted on Zoom this year, which does have the advantage that the recording allows anyone interested to see what this program is about by going to our YouTube channel. tinyurl.com/swmwvzhs Frederick Friends have their own Student Peace Awards, and we hope that others will follow suit.

HOMWOOD FRIENDS MEETING

Homewood Friends celebrate 100 years in Charles Village, Baltimore
Homewood Friends Meeting, located at 3107 North Charles Street in Baltimore, will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the building's opening with events and activities from fall, 2021 to spring 2022. The Meeting House and the congregation that has lived and worshiped in it for 100 years have a remarkable history of both shadow and light that we are (re)learning to inform us as we move into the second century. We know that many Friends from other parts of the region, country, and the world have visited and have a connection to the building and the Meeting. Whether that was through attending Young Friends Conference, Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting, or Baltimore Yearly Meeting, or some other event, we would love to hear those stories of connection. Please feel free to contact the Homewood Friends Meeting Centenary Committee or its convener, John McKusick, by June 15th. Email addresses: Homewoodfriends@gmail.com or John.ca.mckusick@verizon.net.

HOPEWELL CENTRE MONTHLY MEETING

Seeking Wholeness: Knowing Our Shadow and Our Light

In the midst of this heartbreaking pandemic, Hopewell Centre Meeting has found creative and prayerful ways to heal and attain wholeness. With the help of technology and savvy members, our new "hybrid" Meeting allows a safe number of us to meet in person at Hopewell meetinghouse while



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others worship at home via Zoom, and everyone can see and be seen, hear and be heard as we worship as one. Together, we have woven our words of sorrow, fear, and hope into a single, memorable collaborative poem, "Patchwork of Hope: Quaker Voices During the Global Pandemic." And we are learning to *bow humbly to the darkness within us*...using BYM's *Dismantling Racism* workbook to understand our role within the White Supremacy culture...in REs such as "Speaking Across the Divide"...and in books like Joanna Macy's *Active Hope*.

It's hard to let the Light in to *darkness fueled by fear and grief*...but we have, with "Let Your Light Shine: How to Develop a Healing Vision and Reconnect as We Speak Up & Step Out," and other challenging REs. Thanks to Pastoral Care, we now have a "Light Line," where we share, via email, personal thoughts and writings, quotes, and meditations to bring each other ongoing support, inspiration and joy in the time between meetings. It's almost as good as a hug. And as we receive Light, we share it with those beyond our Meeting...serving meals to the homeless at our local community's annual WATTS (Winchester Area Temporary Thermal Shelter) Dinner...meeting with our new BYM liaison, Karie Firoozmand...and following FCNL's lobbying efforts. Awhile back, we introduced our "A Minute Against White Privilege: Action Steps to Build a Beloved Community" to other BYM Meetings and a wide public. Many of us attended this year's FCRP (Friends Conference on Religion and Psychology) where the focus was *White Privilege: Naming It and Its Complex and Confronting It to Build an Equitable Society*. Going forward, we will explore the idea of acquiring a Sister Meeting...and with joy, host a "hybrid" Interim Meeting in June. A final note: darkness and Light come full circle and *patterns emerge from this strange new tapestry of uncertainty where we may see ourselves whole*.

Please hold our faithful member, John Trueblood, in the Light as he grieves for the loss of his beloved wife, Margaret.

Lines in italics are taken from *Patchwork of Hope: Quaker Voices During the Global Pandemic*, with the words of Hopewell Centre members and attenders, stitched together by Maggie Stetler

RICHMOND FRIENDS MEETING

Since March, 2020 the Richmond Friends Meeting House has been closed due to the Covid-19 virus pandemic. Our first day Worship and most community activities have occurred online right up to the present time. By using Zoom we have been able to stay connected with each other and



Annual Session 2014 Plenary Session photo by Nony Dutton

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WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY NEWS

with the wider Quaker community. Meetings for Worship on Zoom and beginning in the fall of 2020, in-person worship twice a month at RFM Clearing Retreat have been well attended. Each week on Wednesday evening we have worship sharing with 20 minutes of silence followed by responses to a query provided by Ministry and Worship.

Thanks to Zoom, the spiritual education of our meeting community has continued and prospered. Our meeting is blessed with 24 children ranging from infancy to 6-8 years old. RE committee has provided puppet shows, book readings and craft activities for the children throughout 2020 and into the new year. In 2020 the Adult Spiritual Education Committee sponsored a six-part series, "Mystics, Living from the Inside Out." In 2021 a new ASE six-part series, "Spirituality Made Tangible" has been offered on Saturday mornings. Peace and Social Concerns Committee has provided activities to consider racial justice issues with a film series, "Race in America" followed by opportunities for discussion on Zoom. Bible workbench, Spiritual Formation and Friendly Eights groups have continued. During the time the Meeting House has been closed the interior education rooms were painted and other maintenance repairs completed.

All in all, Richmond Friends Meeting has found that the challenge of the pandemic has helped us discover new gifts and talents, find creative ways to stay connected, and realize the blessings of our spiritual community.

SANDY SPRING FRIENDS MEETING

Sandy Spring Meeting continues to seek a deepening of spirit and worship, even as we cope with the many challenges of the pandemic, including questions about reopening and then closing and now again reopening our Meeting House as we greet the spring, and arranging combinations of in-person, virtual and hybrid Meetings that serve our varied situations. Through it all, we are rediscovering our many sources of connection and shared Light. As expressed in our Spiritual State of the Meeting report:

Our Sandy Spring Meeting community has been a lifeline to many members in this year of immense change, grief, confusion, and overwhelming challenges. For some it has been a time of introspection and study, for others a time of isolation, loneliness, and depression. Through it all the Meeting community has felt like an anchor of love that has held us safely in the storm.

With the leadership of our Change Group, we adopted our own query on racial and social justice to help guide our discernment and decisions in Meeting for Business and other settings:

Understanding that we all, including our faith community, are part of a harmful culture of white supremacy that continues to damage communities and individuals through generational systemic racism, do the decisions and discussions we have today promote equity, inclusiveness, and welcome for all people and our transformation into a more diverse, antiracist faith community?

This query has been directly relevant to our efforts to develop a job description and take other steps to hire someone to fill our new position of Meeting Coordinator, and in other decisions. Thanks to the work of our Religious Education teachers and parents, we have been able to continue a First Day program for children with regular classes and activities conducted outdoors in a safe and supportive environment.

WILLIAMSBURG FRIENDS MEETING

Williamsburg Friends feel grateful to be meeting each Sunday on

Zoom. For many, the Meeting has become a lifeline, a touchstone where we find connection to Spirit and comfort from each other as we go deeper into our spiritual lives and discern how to let our lives speak. We are enriched by the knowledge that people in our Meeting have a wide range of beliefs, all stemming from the awareness that the inner Light dwells in everyone. We continue to appreciate the presence of far-flung friends and the opportunity for easy conversation and sharing during our Thursday night check-in gatherings. Peace and Social Concerns remains active and is guiding us through challenging discussions about racism. In spite of restrictions, we have been able to offer meals and care to several members who have been ill.

We are also aware of the limitations of Zoom and the fact that it's hard for newcomers to feel truly part of the group. We look forward to the day when we can gather in person to share worship, hugs and homemade blueberry pie.



Sustaining Quakers

BYM'S MONTHLY DONOR PROGRAM

BYM's Monthly Donors provide a stable base of support our Yearly Meeting can count on. Friends may now choose this convenient means of continued support for our extended faith community – without having to write checks, send mail, or log on to the web. By giving automatically each month, Friends can make a big impact.

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BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING UPCOMING EVENTS

[See the Yearly Meeting Website for Details and Other Events \(bym-rsf.org\)](http://bym-rsf.org)

May

- 5 – General Secretary Candidate Presentation
- 6 – General Secretary Candidate Presentation
- 7 – General Secretary Candidate Presentation
- 14-17 – Spiritual Formation Retreat
- 15-16 – Young Friends Graduation Conference
- 18 – Called Interim Meeting
- 31 – Yearly Meeting Offices Closed

June

- 12 – Sixth Month Interim Meeting

July

- 5 – Yearly Meeting Offices Closed
- July 26 – August 7 – Annual Session 2021

STAFF AND OFFICERS OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

Stephanie “Steph” Bean	Presiding Clerk ymclerk@bym-rsf.org	Brian Massey	Camping Program Manager brianmassey@bym-rsf.org
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