Baltimore Yearly Meeting

Interim Meeting

9 November 2024

Little Britain MM and via Zoom

**I2024-32. *Opening*.** Friends gathered in worship online and in-person at 12:30PM EST. Clerk Tom Webb invited us to be tender with ourselves and with each other in a time of fear and anxiety, and to ground ourselves in Spirit as we make our way forward.

Clerk Tom Webb shared a land acknowledgement honoring those groups whose lands BYM works and worships on.

Linda Coates, Little Britain, welcomed Friends to Eastland Preparative Meeting and Little Britain Monthly Meeting, who are hosting Friends in person today.

Clerk Tom Webb introduced those at the clerks table, including substitute recording clerk Becka Haines Rosenberg, Alexandria, and offered thanks to those helping with tech support and those serving as Prayerful Presences to hold our meeting today. He offered both spiritual and practical advices that will help us do business together as a gathered body, and shared BYM’s anti-racism queries.

**I2024-33. *Nominating Committee Report.*** Debbi Sudduth, Goose Creek, shared a list of resignations from BYM committees and representative roles:

Michael Wallace, Bethesda, from Growing Diverse Leadership

Aaron Johnson, FMW, and Jim Webner, Stony Run, from Stewardship & Finance.

Andy Spawn, Stony Run, from Unity with Nature

Damaris Kifude, Stony Run, from A&O

Jimi Ayodele, Patapsco, as FGC Cental Committee representative

We do not approve resignations, but we accept them.

**I2024-34. *Search Committee Report.*** Gene Throwe, FMW, encouraged Friends to consider whether they are led to serve on BYM’s Nominating Committee, which is nominated by Search Committee, and to reach out to members of Search Committee to volunteer. Search Committee is committed to the values of diversity and anti-racism in finding new members for Nominating Committee. The members of Search Committee are Gene Throwe, Meg Meyer, and Josh Riley.

**I2024-35. *Development Committee Report.*** Gloria Victor-Dorr, Sandy Spring, reported on behalf of Development Committee. She shared total contributed income as of October 24, and thanked Friends who have already donated to BYM this year, and encouraged Friends to continue contributing to the yearly meeting.

Nikki Holland has had her plate full in her first six months as BYM’s Development Manager, shepherding changing software as well regular administration and communication work for the program. Gloria expressed gratitude for Nikki’s work.

Barbara Wille shared as a consultant on the Special Campaign for Opequon Quaker Camp. She thanked Friends who have worked on the Special Campaign and reminded Friends of some of the reasons for moving Opequon to its new location. The new location comes with a long lease and the opportunity for long-term investment, and the Special Campaign seeks $700,000 to support this work. Barbara shared that individuals and meetings have already given generously to the Special Campaign, which entered its public phase at Annual Session, and she hopes that those who are able to will give to the Special Campaign in addition to the General Fund before the end of the year.

**I2024-36. *Treasurer’s Report.*** Jim Riley, Hopewell Centre, reported as BYM Treasurer on BYM’s finances as of September 30. He reviewed highlights from the balance sheet and income statement ([ATTACHED](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fIrBQzOhy3m1ruLE2fxPZRs5H_J4w5sU/view)). He shared that our cash balance is lower than usual for this time of year and that this has required a draw from investments to ensure BYM has cash available for ongoing expenses. He reviewed the state of BYM’s investments and income, including contributions from the Special Campaign, and advised that the reasons for lower-than-expected camp incomes are being studied. BYM is expected to end the year with a deficit, but we do have sufficient reserves to cover this, and the extent of the deficit will be known once year-end contributions are counted.

A Friend requested that future Treasurer’s Reports include budgeted amounts for comparison to actuals and that large committee income and expenses be explained if possible. This year we see large expenses attributed to Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee due to activities of the Working Group on Racism and the publication of *A Tender Time: Quaker Voices on the End of Life*, although it was noted that this publication was partly funded by grant income.

Jim’s full written report is [ATTACHED](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A2zAsJrC57KFbnw4opWueQ8oceh96VMi/view).

**I2024-37. Camping Program Report.** Brian Massey, Camping Program Director, expressed thanks to those who have made it possible for Friends to attend Interim Meeting remotely. He shared highlights from his written report ([ATTACHED](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1iayGpXeKmX2oiDGAcLvJTMO_OjNNPe_x/edit)), which was titled “Four Camps: Different Needs, Common Themes”. Brian summarized successes at each camp as well as opportunities for improvement. He lifted up the wide-ranging impacts of climate change on our camp properties and highlighted the changing expectations of campers, parents, and staff.

Brian acknowledged that there is a significant shortfall in the camp budget this year. He shared that in 2024 the Camping Program budgeted for higher income from camper fees than in 2023, but that the need for financial aid within our sliding scale fee model was greater than in past years, largely due to financial factors beyond camp. The camp budget was also impacted by our commitment to pay staff equitably and invest in them to increase staff satisfaction and retention during a time when staff can earn more elsewhere. Brian also acknowledged that session 3 at Opequon was canceled due to low enrollment, with most campers able to move to other, fuller sessions.

Brian shared his belief that the path to financial sustainability for camp is narrow but that with ongoing care and attention, it can be found. Camping Program Committee and others will be reviewing the current sliding scale for camp fees to determine how that structure might need to change. We must tenderly hold the financial challenges that all working families face at this time, and hold that alongside our understanding that camp is an invaluable resource for youth.

Friends heard that Camp Property Manager David Hunter is taking his first vacation in three years and that a full Camp Property report will be available at March Interim Meeting. Getting the new Opequon site up and running has been a huge task, and we look forward to celebrating that effort.

**I2024-38. *STRIDE Report.*** Rai Carter, STRIDE Coordinator, shared highlights from their written report ([ATTACHED](https://docs.google.com/document/d/129SJYupClQM0DUzT0haOxQ4dn9TLlq81/edit)) and their vision for the program. This summer saw 27 campers supported by STRIDE, an increase from 18 in 2023, and Rai expressed gratitude for being able to walk alongside those campers. They emphasized that the TR in STRIDE is “Transformative Relationships”, and they invited BYM Friends and monthly meetings to engage in deeper relationship with the program and its campers. The work of building an equitable camp community is work for all of us in BYM, and Friends are invited to attend STRIDE events as well as offer material and logistical support like rides and care packages.

Rai shared that although there was an active STRIDE working group in the past made up of Young Adult Friends, the members of that working group were stretched thin during COVID, and much of the work previously done by the working group is now done by Rai. This has meant transitioning to a model where Friends offer one-time support rather than ongoing committee service. In order for the program to work in this model, Friends need to pick up and fulfill these tasks, and Rai welcomes anyone who wants to to get more involved in this work. Rai invited monthly meetings to submit the names of members who are interested in supporting STRIDE to them so they have a larger pool of volunteers to call on.

**I2024-39. *General Secretary’s Report.*** Sarah Gillooly spoke as BYM General Secretary. They pointed out what a joy it is for our clerk, acting recording clerk, and General Secretary to be LGBTQIA+ people under the age of 45. There are hard days ahead, and the connections of our yearly meeting community and camp community will be more necessary than ever to sustain us individually and as a body.

Job descriptions are being written for the open roles of Opequon director and Youth Programs manager, and Friends will hear more about these positions in the months ahead.

Sarah recently attended the Gathering of West Virginia Friends, and they shared that Charleston Friends Meeting, which is currently unaffiliated with a yearly meeting, is discerning whether to join BYM.

Sarah shared that the 2024 yearbook is currently at the printer and should be ready by the end of the month.

Sarah shared a timeline for budget revision based on the budget shortfall we have already heard about in other reports. There will be a called online Interim Meeting on December 14 to review the revised budget.

Sarah and Betsy Roush have asked the clerks of the Yearly Meeting to form a study committee to evaluate camp governance, which will be considered as a separate item on our agenda. For liability and insurance reasons, we must give camp its own legal identity as a single member LLC under BYM or as a separate organization; and in order to move away from having five committees with a partial stake in the operation of camp, we need to clarify roles and responsibilities in camp governance. Currently BYM carries insurance policies from two separate carriers in order to ensure both camp and other programs are adequately covered.

**I2024-40. *Ad-Hoc Committee on Camping Program Governance***. Clerk Tom Webb introduced consideration of the formation of a an ad-hoc study committee on camp governance. This request has been seasoned by Tom Webb, Steph Bean, Betsy Roush, and Sarah Gillooly. If approved, this committee will be under the care of Interim Meeting and will offer its first report by Interim Meeting in June 2025 and offer recommendations for consideration at Interim Meeting by November 2025. It will include representatives from Camping Program, Camp Property Management, Trustees, Stewardship and Finance, Development, and Growing Diverse Leadership committees, as well as a designee of the Yearly Meeting clerks from outside those committees to support difficult discernment. Friends who have already agreed to serve are: Anne Bacon from Stewardship and Finance, Tom Farquhar from Trustees, Greg Tobin from Camp Property Management, Katie Bliss from Growing Diverse Leadership, Betsy Roush from Camping Program. A member from Development Committee is yet to be discerned. We expect this work will be legally complex, and BYM has a legal firm available for consultation. The formation of this study committee also aligns with the goal of the 2022 BYM Camps Strategic Plan to “Determine the governance and leadership model that best meets the current and future needs of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting and the BYM camping program.”

Friends APPROVED the creation of this ad-hoc committee.

**I2024-41. *Considerations laid over to March Interim Meeting.*** Friends laid over consideration of laying down the Intervisitation Working Group and endorsing a statement on reparations brought to us by Reparations Action Working Group that were originally on our agenda for today. These will be given full time for consideration at March Interim Meeting.

The meeting closed with announcements, followed by a period of worship where we were reminded of the ways we can hold and care for each other.

ATTACHMENTS:

**Update on racial justice Change Group work for BYM Fall 2024 Interim Meeting**

 Note: This and all previous Change Group updates are available at this [link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1r9gVD3uuJEfkdKRcJ19Hc_7FEHiiusWs?usp=sharing).

**Adelphi**

Our anti-racism work at Adelphi seems to rest on a web of durable and flexible routines, with forays into new experiences.

We have continued to host monthly discussions on films on topics of justice and inclusion and, whenever possible, select options that are available through free streaming services. We also convened one “pop-up” discussion over a potluck lunch after Meeting, to hear about the connection of BYM Quakers to the Pawnee.

We have small groups – fewer than last year but lasting in the bonds they build and the depths they can explore. Four of these are now organized as “faithfulness groups,” deepening our spiritual engagement with racial justice.

We urge Friends to stretch and learn more, even when the effort would take us beyond our comfort zone:  two members of our Meeting convened a series of four open discussions on an [article](https://www.friendsjournal.org/white-supremacy-culture-in-my-clerking/) they were writing to explore white supremacy’s role in Quaker business meetings. Two Change Group members led a second-hour discussion on expanding the possibilities of worship in a series hosted by the Ministry and Worship Committee.

The meeting continues to reach out to our surrounding community, in small and sometimes more significant ways. We participate in a back-to-school shoe drive for our neighboring Prince George’s County elementary school, Mother Jones. We round up school supplies each fall for families who rely on the food pantry operated by St. Camillus parish near us.

Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee develops and sustains relationships in the larger surrounding community, looking for opportunities to offer “mini reparations” to help patch some of the inherited wounds of racism. Each year the Meeting sets aside a small but healthy chunk of its budget to support our mini reparations. For example:

* assistance to African American *doulas* to support healthy births among Black mothers, and
* continuing our support to programs in Prince George’s County Community College that provide a boost for students completing their studies and looking for that first professional or licensed job.

We make effective use of our weekly “Silent Announcements” to share resources for learning, opportunities for action, and news of events that would help us heal from racism. We also use our networking channels to encourage action – whether in events or in Congress – toward goals that are important to Indigenous peoples and people of color.  We provide a link each month to the Native American Legislative Update, featuring an action where the Friends Committee on National Legislation is finding some traction in Congress. Our organized “couch potato activists” post lists of living-room actions people can take to make the world better for all.

Several of our Change Group meetings this season reflected on the [Woolman Hill Remonstrance](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1h6WrK9kGYFLjPKxuGl-35aYkXovcDIXZLFb7spNEWi8/edit?tab=t.0). We examined where our Meeting has improved and what results we think we’re seeing, and tested ideas about some of the places we have not yet begun to explore. We drafted a response to the remonstrance and shared it with the Ministry and Worship Committee for their consideration, and then took it to the Meeting for Business, where it was accepted.

As we move into the fall season, we are working to increase the skills among Friends in Adelphi to confront and heal racism – in ourselves and when we see it in others – and to increase openness to more diverse experiences. We are also led to engage with Friends in our Meeting who have not yet experienced the integral connection between their spiritual lives and the limitations imposed by the disease of racism. In response to these concerns, we are exploring ways to create various “drop in” opportunities, perhaps over a meal, to discuss relationships and spirituality.

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**Alexandria**

We participate in Trust Circles.  We were trained by Kathryn and Clinton Pettus in April of 2023, and we began meeting in a Trust Circle over that summer.  In September 2023, we welcomed more people into the group, and we formed a second Trust Circle that meets on Zoom.  Each Trust Circle has 6-8 members and meets once a month.  These two Trust Circles continue in 2024 and are open to new members.

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**Goose Creek**

Our committee continues to meet on a regular basis.  We have been fortunate to forge a connection with some local indigenous people who have recently created a pop-up museum locally.  Our committee visited the museum and participated in a community program they offered.  In addition, we led a teen RE discussion on indigenous issues - including Indian agency superintendent Samuel Janney (of Goose Creek), BYM IA committee and the local presence.  This was followed by a teen field trip to the museum where they were able to meet with a local Lumbee tribal member as well as tour the museum.

We also continue to provide short articles and links to pertinent issues in our Meeting newsletter.

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**Gunpowder**

Gunpowder Friends Meeting Working Group for Racial Reconciliation (WGRR) was one year old in August. While an ad hoc group has worked for over a decade to bring forums and initiate discussions on the topic of racism, this group was formalized in August of 2023. We grieve the loss of Bob Fetter (1930-2024) whose deep personal and family commitment to making reparations for slavery continues to hold our work up to the Light. And it’s a great joy to welcome three new members to the working group.

The charge of this Working Group was and remains as follows:

* Strengthen Gunpowder’s beloved community
* Provide education and raise awareness about matters pertaining to racial reconciliation
* Enhance communication within the Meeting on matters pertaining to racial reconciliation
* Build community partnerships outside of our Meeting to foster collaboration and strengthen relationships

The work of our Meeting for racial reconciliation is the work of the whole Meeting, not only of the WGRR. Therefore, while the WGRR plans and presents forums and initiates discussions, others in the Meeting carry out other aspects of the work and the WGRR attends to these. We continue to publish the Thoughts About Race (TAR) column in our monthly newsletter.

We have continued our work with our One Book, [*Healing Resistance*](https://www.amazon.com/Healing-Resistance-Radically-Different-Response/dp/1946764434) by Kazu Haga, in which we have focused not on shaming, punishing, and eradicating racism, but rather on building beloved community.

Our Meeting’s work with the McKim Community Center in Baltimore has continued including hosting several days of summer camp at Gunpowder, an annual McKim Youth and adult leadership retreat at Gunpowder in which some Gunpowder Friends participate, and we participated in the regional McKim Community Games held at Frederick Douglass High School this April in Baltimore.

Our Meeting has concluded our refugee resettlement work with two resettlements of families from Sudan and Syria. Gunpowder continues to offer financial support to BYM Camping/STRIDE programs, the McKim Community Center, and the Baltimore Peace Movement.

We look forward in the coming year to a possible book study using the 2023 One Book, a forum in December of 2024 on reparations, continued work with McKim Community Center and continued financial support of BYM programs, McKim Community Center, and the Baltimore Peace Movement.

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**Herndon**

The Antiracism Working Group (ARWG) at Herndon Friends Meeting had a vendors table at a Juneteenth event in June, where they displayed a petition advocating for the language on a historical marker (regarding the history of our Meeting House) to include accurate information about segregation. The Town of Herndon has created a draft of the language that includes accurate information about segregation which will be on a new marker. An ARWG member recently shared correspondence from the Town of Herndon, stating their intention to work with the group in charge of historical markers to do a final draft of the language and plan for production of the new marker.

In August and September, the Antiracism Working Group, along with the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, participated in a Get Out the Vote (GOTV) postcard campaign coordinated by the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy. Several members of both groups, additional Herndon Friends, and a few family members and friends of Herndon Friends, completed and mailed approximately 860 postcards. The postcards (non-partisan,) which encourage people to vote and include voting information, were sent to BIPOC voters in Virginia.

One ARWG member who is on the Political Action Committee (PAC) of the Fairfax County NAACP participated recently in a voter registration drive put on by NAACP. The PAC is currently planning a Souls to the Polls event on October 27th, which will encourage people to vote.

Finally, Herndon Friends continues its monthly vigils for peace, justice, and equality.

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**Mattaponi**

One attendee participated with the NAACP Essex County Branch President and Essex/Richmond Democratic Chair in an event highlighting the importance of voting. This took place at the Ebeneezer Baptist Church in Essex County which draws its congregation from surrounding Black communities. A handout with local voting information was created to share with the congregation.

The same attendee worked with the NAACP Essex County Branch President to create a handout with specific voter information for Essex County and it included key points that National NAACP have highlighted from Project 2025 that will negatively affect Black communities. This handout is being distributed at various events including voter registration drives.

Two members worked with the NAACP King & Queen County Branch at two voter registration events.

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**Maury River**

On Sept. 24th, co-clerks Dave Walsh and Kathy Fox met with Glasgow’s new town manager Allyson Finchum to help with applying for a grant to help with the problem of flooding in Glasgow. We talked about local people and ways they can help to approach the problem.

With the Rockbridge NAACP, we had a good turnout and fun for the Green Pastures potluck---a local outdoor recreation center for African Americans.

Kathy sent out email reminders to MRFM before the time of the Juneteenth celebrations. There were celebrations locally Saturday June 15 at Lexington, Richardson Park and on June 14th at the community Center in Glasgow

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**Roanoke**The Anti-Racism Interest Group is alive and well in the Roanoke Quaker Meeting. Since our last report, we reviewed anti-racism efforts by BYM Friends Meetings as listed on the BYM website. We have begun a series of activities to involve Roanoke Friends in anti-racism work. In early September we hosted an online session on antiracism and white privilege which began with watching a video of a TED Talk interview with Ibram X. Kendi, followed by worship sharing. In early October, we launched our effort to learn about our local history and get to know our neighbors. First, we hosted an online talk by Jordan Bell on Roanoke history and the devastation of Gainsboro and other neighborhoods caused by urban removal (which James Baldwin called “Negro Removal”) during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. Next, in mid-October we had Jordan lead twenty of us on an enlightening and eye-opening walking tour of Gainsboro. Jordan is recognized throughout our community as an excellent historian and activist for his work regarding racist policies in Roanoke. We received a grant from the BYM Working Group on Racism to support Jordan’s talk and tour.

 Some of us are active in the Roanoke Reparations Group, and last academic year we sponsored and participated in the Reparations Book Group. In September we began the second year of that book group, which we are renaming the Anti-Racism Book Group. That group involves people from various congregations, and we rotate meeting once a month at their churches and at the Meetinghouse.

 Activities for the coming months tentatively include a discussion with a panel of guest African American speakers from our community, an evening of worship sharing of Friends’ Experience with Racism, and a guest speaker on Quakers and Slavery/Racism. We also plan to draft an Anti-Racism Statement for our Meeting’s approval.

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**Washington**

In August 2024 the FMW Antiracism Spiritual Friendship Group (ASFG) met to watch and reflect upon a [TED talk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xw_720iQDss) by Loretta Ross entitled “Don't call people out -- call them in.” In October 2024 a group of 25 Friends attended a workshop led by Garrett Bucks based on his book [*The Right Kind of White: A Memoir*](https://www.amazon.com/Right-Kind-White-Memoir/dp/B0CLWNZDB9). The ASFG is also sponsoring a talk on January 19, 2025 by Debra Bruno about her book, [A Hudson Valley Reckoning: Discovering the Forgotten History of Slaveholding in My Dutch American Family](https://www.politics-prose.com/debra-bruno).

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**York**

We have been reading and discussing [*One Day in the Life of Abed Salama*](https://today.duke.edu/2024/10/searing-story-accident-east-jerusalem) by Nathan Thrall.  It gives a different perspective and history of the Palestine/Israel conflict and occupation through the experience of a Palestinian father searching for his son who was injured in a school bus accident.   It is eye-opening, brutal at times, and reminiscent of James Baldwin in 1960's America.