

Blacksburg Friends Meeting: Timeline for BYM, 2022

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The story of the Blacksburg Friends Meeting begins slowly, but over time, dedicated Friends carried out a vision to find their Monthly Meeting its own home. In 1965, a worship group known as the Roanoke Blacksburg Preparatory Meeting gathered alternately in Roanoke and Blacksburg, and by 1967 it converted to a Monthly Meeting. In 1977, the Meeting was described as a very small group with fluctuating attendance.

Over the next 10 years, an influx of Friends caused a major change: attendance at Blacksburg went from 8 to 20, and First Day school was thriving. By 1991, the Blacksburg Friends agreed upon a trial separation from the Roanoke Blacksburg Meeting. In 1992, the official separation was accomplished and recognized by BYM.

The enthusiasm of the Friends led them to search for their own Meetinghouse. In 2004, land was purchased on Mount Tabor Road, about 2 miles from the center of Blacksburg, within a residential neighborhood. This accomplishment was accompanied by growth of the Meeting in experience: committees were formed for stewardship of funds and for building research.

The dedication of the Blacksburg Friends Meeting Building Committee led them to work with the fifteen families attending to raise enough capital for a building on the site. Until that far-off time, a parking lot and picnic shelter were constructed there. The first on-site Meeting took place in August 2008. During that year, the Stewardship and Finance Committee related that the donations from Friends was enough to fund a Meetinghouse. The Meeting was astonished and thankful. Construction was completed in 2010, and the grateful Friends settled into their new home. At present (2022) the mortgage is within 2 years of final payment.

The Building and Grounds Committee makes sure our home is in good working order, and hosts Third Saturday Workdays where we come together to clean and improve our place. One of our young Friends did his Eagle Scout project in the form of stairs up a steep bank, and the Landscape Committee guides our beautification using mostly native plants. We have added a Memorial Wall to our grounds and are now hosting a preschool in the lower floor that has brought vibrancy to the Meetinghouse during the week.

Blacksburg Friends Monthly Meeting has a history of engaging in service. During the period from 1965 to present, Friends have shown their commitment to many activities.

Highlights during the 1980s:

- Clothing was gathered by both Meetings and sent to Nicaragua for the Quest for Peace program.
- Participation in the Women's week activities at Virginia Tech.
- Supported a peace play called "Peace Child".

- Sponsored a volunteer with Quaker Volunteer Witness.
- Sponsored a peace essay (1981-1984) in local high schools to encourage thoughtful consideration of non-violent solutions to world problems.
- Supported a member's visit to Haiti.
- A member participated in a Central American study tour of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala.
- In 1990 the Meeting helped clean up highways with the Adopt a Highway program.
- Supported Seeds for Peace (1988).

Highlights during the 1990s through today:

- Sustained efforts for peace in the form of the Post Office Vigil and the Henderson Lawn Vigil and our participation in the Christmas Parade
- Sustained efforts to relieve hunger in our community through OXFAM Crop Walks, Food Pantry contributions and volunteering. The Friends Beans and Rice Dinner activity helped in this effort.
- Provided support for indigent returning citizens. In the past we have taken up similar type collections for AFSC to support war-torn areas (like Iraq).
- Hosted the FGC in 2001 and 2009, the New River Valley Friends Gathering in 2006, and the Blue Ridge Gathering in 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2018.
- COVID interrupted our inside-the-Meetinghouse in-person worship for many months after March, 2020. Meeting moved to virtual and/or outside on the lawn when the weather allowed. We got back into the Meetinghouse for in-person worship in December, 2021.

Clerks for Blacksburg Monthly Meeting