

Bethesda Friends Meeting Newsletter for January 2022:

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Query for January: Simplicity

What in my present life most distracts me from God? What am I ready to release so that I can give my attention to what matters most? How do the ways in which I choose to use my time, my possessions, my money, and my energy reflect my most deeply held values? How do we support one another in our search for a simpler life?

January 2022 Calendar

Sunday Meeting for Worship is held at 11:00 a.m. in a hybrid format. Most friends participate via Zoom. Some friends participate in person at Bethesda Friends Meeting. (See guidelines under events.) Unless otherwise indicated, all of the other following events are virtual.

2	Sun	1:00 p.m.	Coordinating Gathering
4	Tues	7:00 p.m.	Religions of the Axial Age (every Tuesday)
5	Wed	8:00 p.m.	Mid-Week Worship (check in by email, every Wednesday)
6	Thurs	7:00 p.m.	Friends Community School Open House (virtual)
8	Sat	1:30 p.m.	Quaker Book Group
9	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Meeting for Business

		1:00 p.m.	Library Committee
		7:30 p.m.	Experiment With Light (via phone/email, Zoom sharing)
12	Wed	10:00 a.m.	Friends Community School Open House (virtual)
13	Thurs	8:30 p.m.	February Newsletter Deadline
15	Sat	12:00 noon	BYM Camp Enrollment Opens, see https://bymcamps.org
		1:30 p.m.	Spiritual Formation Program Gathering
16	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Committee Day: Ministry & Worship; Pastoral Care
		9:15 a.m.	Committee Day: Stewardship & Finance
		9:30 a.m.	Committee Day: Outreach & Communications
18	Tues	2:00 p.m.	“In America: How could this happen?” S. Firstenberg
23	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Peace & Social Justice Committee
		7:30 p.m.	Experiment With Light (via email/phone, Zoom sharing)
29/30	Sa/Su	10:00 a.m.	Junior Young Friends Conference (location TBD)
30	Sun	1:00 p.m.	Coordinating Gathering

Details are available on our web site: www.bethesdafriends.org

Social Concerns Box

The Social Concerns Box in January is for CCAN, the Chesapeake Climate Action Network. CCAN has only a few paid staff (and a lot of volunteers), yet they do an impressive amount of organizing, lobbying, and legal work to promote the vital switch to clean energy, and related programs. Their major fundraiser for years has been donations to people who take a plunge into the Chesapeake Bay in the midst of winter. This winter, on Saturday, February 12, one member of the BFM community plans to take the plunge. He sees this as an important way to protect the home of all life and welcomes feedback and support. The event will begin by hearing some inspiring talks via Zoom, and then immersion. Participants choose how to participate: jumping into an icy pool, dumping a bucket of ice water over themselves or going in a nearby creek or pond. The key is communion with water in its natural cold state on that afternoon. Perhaps other BFM folks would like to join the plunge this year; some other BYM Meetings have plunge teams.

To donate to the Social Concerns Box, please go to: www.bethesdafriends.org Clearly designate that your contribution is for the Social Concerns Box. If you prefer, you may send your check, made payable to Bethesda Friends Meeting, to Assistant Treasurer, Bethesda Friends Meeting, 3050 Military Road, NW, Apartment 834, Washington DC 20015.

In November, the Social Concerns Box received \$125 for A Wider Circle, and the First Day School's toy drive for A Wider Circle was a huge success.

Religious Education for Children

The Religious Education Committee is thrilled to announce that the first indoor First Day School (FDS) class in the new year will be on Sunday, February 6, beginning at 11:00 a.m. for fully vaccinated children, ages 5 and up. Please note the new start time and safety requirement that parents sign in their children before class. Parents will also be asked to complete a short registration form. (The registration form will be available in hard copy or on the BFM website at: <https://www.bethesdafriends.org/Religious-Education-K-8>.) FDS teachers will greet children and parents beginning at 10:50 a.m. inside the meeting house, in front of the meeting room door. At

11:00 a.m., FDS teachers will walk to a classroom in Sidwell Friends Lower School Manor House. When FDS class ends at 12:05 p.m., the children will be escorted by their teachers back to the meetinghouse to join their families. For details, feel free to contact FDS teachers.

A Wider Circle Toy Drive. Thanks to all who participated in our second annual toy drive for A Wider Circle! This year we had almost 30 BFM families join together to donate over 130 items, which went almost immediately into A Wider Circle's North Pole and out into the community. Our driving elves thoroughly enjoyed their conversations with the folks on their routes, and A Wider Circle is grateful for our donations.

Events

2nd & 30th: Coordinating Gathering

Representatives of most BFM committees meet during the week before Meeting for Business to discuss the upcoming agenda. These meetings are open to all who wish to attend. There will be one on Sunday, January 2, at 1:00 p.m., via Zoom, in preparation for the Meeting for Business on January 9. In preparation for the February Meeting for Business on February 6, there will be another coordinating gathering on Sunday, January 30, at 1:00 p.m., via Zoom.

2nd/9th/16th/23rd/30th: Meeting for Worship

Bethesda Friends worship together each Sunday at 11:00 a.m. Friends can participate remotely via Zoom, or meet in person at the Meeting House.

Friends Participating in worship via Zoom. Click on contact us to get the link.

Friends Participating in worship at the Meeting House. The following COVID rules apply to all of those attending in person:

- You must be vaccinated against COVID-19.
- You must wear a mask and maintain social distancing.
- You must self-screen based on COVID symptoms or exposure. You may not attend

in-person Meeting for Worship if you have a fever, have COVID symptoms, have tested positive for COVID, or have been exposed in the past 10 days to an individual testing positive for, or displaying symptoms of, COVID.

- You must sign in on a simple sign-in sheet.
- You must notify BFM promptly if you have a positive test after attending in person. BFM will provide notice to others who attended the same meeting of the COVID case (but will not identify the person testing positive).

4th/11th/18th/25th: Religions of the Axial Age

In January, the Comparative Religions class will be studying Buddhism. Using the Great Courses series: Religions of the Axial Age, we meet once a week by Zoom on Tuesdays, at 7:00 p.m., for a half-hour lecture with an additional half-hour discussion. A group of 8 to 10 has been meeting, and we greatly enjoy the fellowship as much as the lessons. You are welcome to join anytime.

5th/12th/19th/26th: Mid-week Worship

Over-zoomed? Join BFM Friends' "low tech" email mid-week worship on Wednesdays from 8:00 to 8:30 p.m. Each of us worships in our homes without video or audio. While some simply join in spirit, those wishing to touch base with the others receive emails at the start and end of worship. At rise of meeting, email participants are invited to worship-share via reply-all with the evening's email group.

6th/12th: Friends Community School (K-8) Virtual Open Houses

Exploring school options for next year? Learn more about Friends Community School, a thriving, K-8 Quaker progressive school that thoughtfully guides young children through adolescence. Located on 17 acres in College Park, FCS offers small class sizes, a diverse and inclusive community, a commitment to educating the whole child, and a curriculum that emphasizes inquiry-based and hands-on learning.

The FCS Regular Application deadline is approaching: January 14. Visit the Apply to FCS page of our website for more details. Special consideration for admission is given to qualified applicants who are members of the Society of Friends or regular attenders of local Meetings.

Join FCS students, parents, teachers, and administrators for a virtual admissions event to learn more on Thursday, January 6, at 7:00 p.m and/or Wednesday, January 12, at 10:00 a.m. For details:

<https://www.friendscommunityschool.org/admissions/apply-to-fcs> or email Caroline Johnson at carolinej@friendscommunityschool.org

9th: Meeting for Business

On Sunday, January 9 at 9:00 a.m., Bethesda F(f)riends will consider various business items at its Zoom Meeting for Business. How the Spirit will lead us in discernment of issues both large and small is part of the mystery that is the Religious Society of Friends. All who come to Meeting for Worship are welcome and encouraged to participate in our worship. Meeting for Business will include reports from Ministry & Worship, Child Care, and the Youth Safety Committee. The clerks will announce the appointment of the ad hoc committee to appoint the Nominating Committee. Please join us if you can.

9th/23rd: Experiment With Light Sessions

How do we quiet our brains enough to hear the still, small voice within us? How might we deepen our experience of meeting for worship? Experiment With Light is a meditative and centering practice based upon Rex Ambler's book *Light to Live By*, which describes early Quaker meditative habits and translates them into a highly accessible process of clearness and understanding. All are welcome to attend. First-time participants find the process quite easy to follow and, often, richly rewarding.

This is an invitation to two sessions, one on Sunday, January 9, and the other on January 23, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Starting at 7:30 p.m., you can follow the prompts at home and write or draw responses you have experienced during those prompts. Here is the link to the prompts:

<https://experiment-with-light.org.uk/meditations/> We usually use the meditation on the individual in modern language, full length, 37 minute version. Then around 8:30 p.m., if you would like to worship-share from your meditation experience and want to join in a Zoom gathering, please use the links below (remember to "unmute" your device). We anticipate that part of the gathering could go until 9:15 p.m.

15th: BYM Camp Enrollment Opens

One of the most popular programs of Baltimore Yearly Meeting is the camping program at Catoctin, Opequon, Shiloh, and Teen Adventure Quaker Camps. Kids have a wonderful time in the natural world and getting to know one another. Enrollment for Baltimore Yearly Meeting camping programs begins Saturday, January 15, at 12:00 p.m. The camps are residential for children ages 9 to 14, with a trips-based program for 15- to 17-year-olds. Anyone may apply online (please do!) here:

<https://bymcamps.campbrainregistration.com/> Spaces are available first come, first serve, so please register as soon as you can if you need a particular session. For more information, visit the BYM Camps website (www.bymcamps.org) or contact the Program Manager, Brian Massey (301-774-7663, brian@bymcamps.org) For details about Quaker camps, see: <http://quakersdc.org/node/912>

18th: “In America: How could this happen...”

On Tuesday, January 18, from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m., a member of the BFM community, will talk (via Zoom) about how and why she created the public art installations making visible the COVID-19 pandemic’s cost in American lives. This included the installation of over 600,000 small white flags on the National Mall. Her art created a national space for mourning. Suzanne is a visual artist who has demonstrated the power of art to touch hundreds of thousands of lives. In fall of 2020 and 2021, images of her "In America: How could this happen..." art installation graced over six hundred news articles on six continents. Suzanne believes in times like ours, when words fall on unlistening ears, art is not an elective, but an imperative. She will show photos of her art and talk about how she became an artist and what inspires her. The event is free and open to the public. The event is sponsored by the Connie Morella Library. Here is the link:

<https://mcpl.libnet.info/event/5614545>

29th/30th: Junior Young Friends Conference

Middle School-aged youth are invited to a Junior Young Friends Conference via Zoom on the weekend of January 29 and 30. Here is the link to register: www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/jyfs/ There may be as many as 60 kids from local Meetings hanging out and having a good time, getting to know one another, learning something, and sharing activities. For details, contact Sunshine Klein, Youth Programs Manager (301-774- 7663, youthprograms@bym-rsf.org)

Into the Future

February 5th: BYM Women’s Retreat

The Baltimore Yearly Meeting Women’s Retreat is an annual event for Quakers in this area. This year it will be online via Zoom from 10:00 a.m. to noon on Saturday, February 5. Its purpose is to provide refreshment and spiritual insight to BYM women so that they may grow in the Spirit. In recent years, more than 100 women have attended each year. To learn more and to register: <https://womensretreat.bym-rsf.net/>

Committee Notes

Youth Safety

The Youth Safety Committee has been working to prepare the Meeting for the restart of in-person First Day School in February 2022. The new Youth Safety Policy brings the Meeting into compliance with Montgomery County regulations, insurance policy requirements, and overall best practices for individuals and organizations that provide programs for minors in Montgomery County. Now we need to implement it. Our child care providers have completed mandatory background checks, and both the Child Care and Religious Education Committees are working to ensure that regular volunteers in those programs receive appropriate training in youth safety procedures, including knowing how to identify and report suspicious conduct around children and youth. In addition, the Youth Safety Committee is asking all members of our community, whether they expect to work directly with young Friends or not, to take the Montgomery County Youth Safety Training and obtain a certification of completion to ensure that our entire community is familiar with the standards of appropriate conduct and understands both how to behave individually around our young Friends and when to report suspicious activity. The training can be found at <https://training.reportabusemd.com/login> Please retain your certificate of completion; ultimately the Youth Safety Committee plans to have a digital repository for the certificates on the BFM website for their retention.

Thank you to our community for recognizing the importance of this issue and doing what you can to keep our young Friends safe and growing in the Light.

Library

Distance Library Access Via Mail. To increase accessibility to our collection, the Library Committee is delighted to now offer distance lending to anywhere in the United States via the postal service. We will mail requested resources directly to you and provide return instructions. The committee will cover shipping costs. Detailed information on the distance lending process may be found on the Library Committee webpage at: <https://bethesdafriends.org/Library>. Please browse our library collection online at: <https://www.librarything.com/catalog/BFMLibrary> to find resources that may be of interest.

We encourage everyone to take advantage of this service. Please contact the Library Committee at library@bethesdafriends.org to request resources.

Peace & Social Justice

Quaker Voice advocates policies being considered by the Maryland Legislature in Annapolis. Quaker Voice will be focusing on Climate Justice, Voting Rights & Elections, and Racial Equity. The working group is currently researching legislation on these topics. If you have a piece of legislation you'd like Quaker Voice to be aware of please email: quakervoicemd@gmail.com

Our effectiveness would be greatly enhanced with a liaison from BFM who can coordinate with Quaker Voice and alert us to opportunities to be in touch with our Maryland legislators.

Meeting Notes

Quaker Voluntary Service

QVS is rediscovering and reclaiming the living tradition of Quaker service for our time, offering new models built on enduring truths. QVS is a year-long Fellowship program in which young adults (age 21-30) build intentional community, work full time at social service and social change agencies, and explore themes of spiritual and personal growth with local Quakers. The program year runs from late August through the end of July. Fellows are placed in one of five program cities: Atlanta, Boston, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Philadelphia, or Portland, OR. Applications for the 2022-2023 fellowship year are now open: <https://quakervoluntaryservice.org/> The application deadline is February 28.

Thinking About Race: Overcoming Medical Bias

“Medical bias can be deadly,” by Damon Centola, in *The Baltimore Sun*, December 6, 2021

“In the largest study of its kind to date, a 2020 analysis of more than three million U.S. patients’ hospital admissions between 2012 and 2017 found that adults who are Black or from other under represented racial or ethnic groups received up to 10% fewer early treatments for heart problems than white patients. Medical bias according to race and gender is so powerful that even mega stars like Serena Williams have nearly died from it.

“Institutions including medical schools and hospitals have responded to the problem of bias with implicit bias training—the use of cognitive techniques to make people aware of their internalized assumptions about race and gender. But the data show that it doesn’t work. Being taught directly about one’s own internalized assumptions unfortunately doesn’t seem to alter behavior. So, what can we do about bias that is unconscious, pervasive and threatens the lives of millions of Americans?

“In a study published this month in the journal *Nature Communications*, my colleagues and I discovered a surprisingly effective answer: an online group reasoning technique known as networked collective intelligence, which basically means getting doctors to exchange treatment options with one another. Think of it as a group chat for specialists.

[The article then describes the new online group approach and its remarkable results.]

“While no single discovery or innovation can eradicate race and gender bias from medicine, using egalitarian networks to improve medical care could spark a badly needed paradigm shift, where we train future clinicians to seek answers through peer problem-solving networks rather than deferring to seniority.”

Damon Centola is a senior fellow at the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, professor of communication, sociology, and engineering at the University of Pennsylvania and author, most recently, of *Change: How to Make Big Things Happen*.

Peace Notes

Build Back Better Act. Congress is actively considering climate policies in the Build Back Better Act that are fundamental to the clean energy transition. But we still do not know whether these vitally important climate initiatives will survive the intense negotiations currently underway in the Senate. Your voice could play a vital role in determining whether key policies will make the final cut. The climate provisions in the Build Back Better Act, including tax incentives for renewable energy, electric vehicles, and domestic clean energy manufacturing, play a key role in securing the country’s economic prosperity. Funding in the bill for environmental justice initiatives will begin to address a long national legacy of environmental discrimination. The Build Back Better Act is what

the country needs to build a sustainable low-carbon economy with justice and opportunity for all. Tell your lawmakers that they must meet this historic moment and support robust climate and environmental justice funding in the Build Back Better Act. An email template can be found at this link:

https://fcn.lquorum.us/campaign/34603/?utm_campaign=contacts&utm_medium=email&utm_source=ak&utm_term=20725.209196.6b-UoJ

Pendle Hill Pamphlet

Pendle Hill published a new pamphlet in December 2021 called *The Atheist's Guide to Quaker Process: Spirit-Led Decisions for the Secular* by Selden W. Smith. Can the nontheist participate fully in the religiously rooted Quaker “sense of the meeting” process? This essay offers a practical guide for those engaged with Quaker-led institutions who are not Quaker themselves, and who may not hold any religious beliefs at all. Whether you are an atheist, agnostic, skeptic, or simply never gave it much thought, this essay describes how, by relying on a handful of noble yet entirely human qualities, the benefits of this time-tested decision-making model can be available to nonbelievers without hypocrisy or pretense. A brief list of recommended readings is included. To receive the latest Pendle Hill pamphlets as they are published, subscribe online here:

<https://pendlehill.org/product-category/subscriptions/?bbblinkid=255339807&bbemailid=35073610&bbejrid=-2136630951>, or call 610-566-4507, ext. 124, or write to pamphlets@pendlehill.org.