

Bethesda Friends Meeting's March 2022 Newsletter

A Guide to What's Inside!

Query: Social Concerns
Calendar
The Social Concerns Box
Religious Education
Events
Into the Future
Committee Notes
 Nominating
 Ministry & Worship
 Threshing Session Prep Group
 Peace & Social Justice
Meeting Notes

Query for March: Social Concerns

How have I expressed my faith in action? How are my actions grounded in my faith? To what extent is my sense of justice based in love? In what ways do I endeavor to respond to my own pain and suffering, that of others, and in the wider world? How do we teach our children, and show through our way of living, that love of God includes our affirming the humanity and dignity of everyone and seeking that of God within every person? How do we prepare ourselves and our children to play active roles in a changing world?

March 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.

1	Tues	7:00 p.m.	Religions of the Axial Age (every Tuesday)
2	Wed	7:00 p.m.	Nonviolence Book Discussion: Healing Resistance
		8:00 p.m.	Mid-Week Worship (check-in by e-mail, every Wednesday)
3	Thurs	7:00 p.m.	A Double Take on Lynching (Susan Strasser/Marcia Cole)
4	Fri		Deadline for Workshop Proposals for BYM Annual Session
5	Sat	3:00 p.m.	AFSC: Punishment is Not Accountability
		4:00 p.m.	Nominating Committee
6	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Meeting for Business
		11:00 a.m.	First Day School
12/13		10:00 a.m.	BYM Junior Young Friends Conf., Homewood Frds. Mtg.
12	Sat	1:00 p.m.	Black Quaker Project Film Festival: Alaska on the Line
		1:30 p.m.	Quaker Book Group
13	Sun	9:15 a.m.	Committee Day: Religious Education

		12:30 p.m.	Reflections on FCNL Priorities
		7:30 p.m.	Experiment with Light (via phone/e-mail, Zoom sharing)
		8:30 p.m.	April Newsletter Deadline
15	Tues	7:00 p.m.	AVP Mini-Workshop: A Trauma-Informed Approach
		7:00 p.m.	The Still Small Voice: QuakerSpeak Video & Discussion
		9:00 p.m.	Deadline for Applications for BFM Assistant Treasurer
16	Wed	7:30 p.m.	Digitization Committee
19	Sat	9:30 a.m.	Baltimore Yearly Meeting Interim Meeting
		1:30 p.m.	Spiritual Formation Program Gathering
		3:00 p.m.	AFSC: Punishment is Not Accountability
20	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Committee Day: Pastoral Care
		9:15 a.m.	Committee Day: Ministry & Worship, Stewardship
		9:30 a.m.	Committee Day: Outreach & Communications
		11:00 a.m.	First Day School
21	Mon	8:00 p.m.	Book Discussion: Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship
22	Tues	7:00 p.m.	AVP Mini-Workshop: A Trauma-Informed Approach
26	Sat	1:00 p.m.	Black Qkr. Project Film Festival: Bayard Rustin
27	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Peace & Social Justice Committee: FCNL Priorities
		1:00 p.m.	Coordinating Gathering
		7:30 p.m.	Experiment with Light (via phone/e-mail, Zoom sharing)

For details, see www.bethesdafriends.org

The Social Concerns Box

The March Social Concerns Box is for Bethesda Help. Hunger in our community comes in many forms and is probably more widespread than most of us realize. Approximately 63,000 of our neighbors in Montgomery County are not always sure where their next meal is coming from. The pandemic and lockdowns have greatly increased the need. Bethesda Help offers immediate short-term food and financial assistance for rent (to prevent eviction), utility bills (to prevent service interruption), and prescription medicines (as needed) to residents in southern Montgomery County. For details and volunteer opportunities, see: www.bethesdahelp.org

In January, Chesapeake Climate Action Network received nothing via the Social Concerns Box. One member of our community reports that his plunge was joyous and raised \$1,000 so far.

Religious Education for Children

The Religious Education Committee is looking forward to having indoor First Day School (FDS) sessions on the first and third Sundays of the month, March 6 and 20, 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 meetinghouse, 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.

Summer Camping Program. Enrollment for the BYM camping programs (at Catoctin, Opequon, Shiloh, and Teen Adventure) began on January 15. The camps are residential for children ages 9 to 17. Anyone may apply online (please do!). Spaces are available first-come, first-served, so please register as soon as you can if you need a particular session. To register, go to: www.bymcamps.org

Why consider a sleep-away Quaker camp for your children (9 years and older)? For most children, at first, Quakerism and Meeting for Worship are seen as a “grownup” religion and experience. At camp, however, children experience the Inner Light in a natural setting, in outdoor silent worship, and in community with their peers and well-trained, talented counselors, many of whom were once campers themselves. Campers detach from electronics and social media to have fun playing and participating in camp activities; they gain the confidence that comes from learning practical life skills through daily camp chores; they make lasting friendships with children from other parts of the area or country. The Quaker camp setting and program afford opportunities for experiential, multi-sensory learning that weekly FDS and traditional school cannot provide. All Quaker camps are open to children whether they come to BFM or not, so please share this information with others who might be interested.

For details about the camps, visit www.bymcamps.org or contact Brian Massey (301-774-7663). For an extended list of Quaker camps, see: <http://quakersdc.org/node/912>

Our Meeting would like to support our children going to camp to the extent of \$500 each, on a first-come first-served basis. When you apply, please contact David Whitford (301-385-9192, david.whitford@yahoo.com), of Pastoral Care. Parents may also contribute by volunteering at one of the camps during the summer.

Events

1st/8th/15th/22nd: Religions of the Axial Age

In March, the Comparative Religions class will draw to a close, continuing Confucianism, moving on to Daoism, and ending with Reflections on the Axial Age. 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.

2nd: Healing Resistance Book Discussion

Baltimore Peacebuilders (associated with Homewood and Stony Run Friends Meetings in Baltimore) has been sponsoring a four-part discussion of the book *Healing Resistance: A Radically Different Response to Harm*, by Kazu Haga on Wednesdays from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. via Zoom. The last session is on March 2. Register here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pdO2vpzIoHNZ-hgj7-jeUzOwvegDiv5PU>

You can buy the book here: [https://www.parallax.org/product/healing-resistance/Kazu Haga](https://www.parallax.org/product/healing-resistance/Kazu-Haga)

2nd/9th/16th/23rd: 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.

3rd: A Double Take on Lynching

Historian Susan Strasser and Poet Marcia Cole present an online illustrated lecture and poetry program on lynching on Thursday, March 3, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. The Jim Crow system of segregated facilities and state-sanctioned repression was held in place by terror, including thousands of lynchings. Susan Strasser's presentation, offering about sixty images, some quite disturbing, presents stark evidence of that history and serves as a memorial to those who were murdered and tortured. Marcia Cole will follow, reading her original poetry. For details, see www.susanstrasser.net Register here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-double-take-on-lynching-two-compelling-voices-tickets-253712901117>

4th: BYM Annual Sessions Workshop Proposals Deadline

Friday, March 4, is deadline for workshop proposals for Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Annual Session 2022. The theme of the August 1 to 7 annual session is "Considering the Wildflowers: Rooted in History, Growing Toward Spirit." As background here is a quote from Howard Thurman in *Meditations of the Heart*:

"The seed of the jack pine will not be given up by the cone unless the cone itself is subjected to sustained and concentrated heat. The forest fire sweeps all before it and there remain but the charred reminders of a former growth and a former beauty. It is then in the midst of the ashes that the secret of the cone is exposed. The tender seed finds the stirring of life deep within itself - and what is deepest in the seed reaches out to what is deepest in life - the result? A tender shoot, gentle roots, until at last there stands straight against the sky the majestic glory of the jack pine."

350 years is an achievement for any faith community, but especially so for one that actively encourages each practitioner to form their own personal relationship with the divine. If more organized faiths are well-tended gardens, then Quakerism is a meadow full of wildflowers. A riotously diverse but tightly interwoven ecosystem that is unified by its desire to turn towards the Spirit. Each bloom, whether plain or dazzling, can spread the seeds of their ministry across the ground and change our appearance, refreshing and enriching us to continue on into the future.

Even as we listen for and seek out continuing revelation as plants do the sun, we remain rooted in our past. We are enriched and invigorated by past Friends' labors and spirit-led ministries, just as new growth feeds upon the old as it returns to the earth. Our history is rich with moments where we fully opened ourselves to the messages of the Spirit, but also with times where we did not. Times we were not ready or willing to do what we were asked. Places where the soil is packed so hard that only those already established can grow there.

Each of us plays an active role in the continual regeneration of our community, in the tending of our fields. When the diversity of our meadow is in decline, when the soil is packed too hard, we all bear the responsibility to reinvigorate it; to nurture the seeds of ministry that challenge us to turn away from the easy progression towards monoculture; to find the compacted earth and break it open so new growth can take root.

Queries: 1. In what ways do the seeds sown in our meadow by our forbearers guide us today? 2. Do we welcome seeds sown by those new to our community that begin to change our awareness and the landscape? 3. Are we able to acknowledge the impatience of those who have been excluded? Can we move ahead together and change? Here is how to submit workshop proposals on this theme and

other subjects of Quaker concern:
<https://www.bym-rsf.org/events/annual-session-2022/workshopprop.html>

5th/19th/April 2nd: AFSC: Punishment is Not Accountability

The American Friends Service Committee is offering a special workshop series on Quakers exploring “Punishment is not Accountability; exploring police, prison abolition, and the future of justice.” The workshops are an attempt to respond to the queries Lucy Duncan raised in “A Quaker Call to Abolition and Creation” in *Friends Journal*, April 2021: “What would it mean for us to take seriously and collectively as a Religious Society a call to finish the work of abolition, hand in hand and side by side with those affected and their loved ones? What would it mean for us to stand fully with the calls to abolish the police and fully fund community needs instead? What would it mean to reckon with our past complicity with harm and fully dedicate ourselves to the creation of a liberating Quaker faith that commits to build the revolutionary and healing faith we long to see come to fruition?”

The workshops will be online on three Saturdays, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., March 5 and 19 and April 2. The cost is “pay as led.” Here is how to learn more about it and register:
<https://bhfh.org/abolitionseries/>

6th: Meeting for Business

On Sunday, March 6, at 9:00 a.m., Bethesda F(f)riends will consider various business items via Zoom. 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. We will hear the draft of our Spiritual State of the Meeting report and an update from our Treasurer. All who come to Meeting for Worship are welcome and encouraged to participate in our worshipful sharing of Meeting for Business.

6th/13th/20th/27th: 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. If you wish to join us via Zoom, please send a message to Contact us on the BFM website.

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. Tight fitting masks such as N95 or KN95 are recommended.
- You must 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).

During these times of high COVID transmission, while the meetinghouse remains open, anyone attending should carefully consider the additional risks of gathering in-person.

12th/13th: Junior Young Friends Conference

Baltimore Yearly Meeting hosts a gathering of 6th to 8th graders from Friends Meetings in this area three or four times per year. This is a fun way to see friends from other Meetings or camp, make new friends, and retreat from the pressures of teenage life, while still developing skills around living in community and having a lot of fun. There will be a conference at Homewood Friends Meeting in Baltimore on Saturday and Sunday, March 12 and 13. Please register as soon as possible at:

https://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/yutes/yutes.html For more details: Sunshine Klein (301-774-7663, youthprograms@bym-rsf.org)

12th/26th: Black Quaker Project Film Festival

The Black Quaker Film Festival endeavors to educate all about the importance of Quakers of Color who for too long have remained within the margins of the Society of Friends and the wider world. Two films were shown in February; there will be two in March, on Saturday March 12 and 26, at 1:00 p.m.

The five film sessions are taking place every other Saturday on Zoom at 1:00 p.m. from February 12 until Paul Robeson's birthday on April 9. Each session will include a film centered on a Quaker of Color with an introduction from a guest expert and a follow up discussion facilitated by Black Quaker Project Director Dr. Harold D. (Hal) Weaver.

On March 12, "Alaska on Line: Red Boucher Interviews Mahala Ashley Dickerson"

On March 26, "Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin" (2003)

On April 9, "Paul Robeson and His Quaker Ancestors" (1989)

For details and to register:

<https://www.theblackquakerproject.org/black-quaker-lives-matter-film-festival>

12th: Quaker Book Group

The Quaker Book Group meets monthly via Zoom on the second Saturday, from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. In March, it meets on March 12 to discuss *Amigas del Señor* by Dr. Beth Blodgett and Prairie Naoma Cutting. A U.S. doctor gives up her career and founds a Methodist/Quaker women's monastery to minister to and with the poor in Honduras. Newcomers are always welcome, even if you have not read the book. We read a mix of books by Quakers, books about Quakerism, and books that speak to Quaker values and concerns. The group is invited to share announcements, summaries, and thoughts about the readings through an online mailing list.

13th/27th: Reflections on the FCNL Legislative Priorities in the Next Congress

For every new US Congressional Session, the Friends Committee on National Legislation asks Meetings for recommendations on their legislative priorities. This time, it is for the 118th Congress that begins in January 2023, and our input is due before April 12. Input from Meetings and others across the country are taken very seriously. For details, see www.fcnl.org/priorities We are asked to identify 7 priorities of 30 words or less. It may help to see what the legislative priorities are for the current Congress: (note that the order of these priorities does not reflect their comparative importance)

- Promote peacebuilding by emphasizing diplomacy and honoring treaties and by working towards peaceful prevention and resolution of violent conflict, especially in the Middle East.
- Confront the paradigm of global militarism, demilitarize space, reduce military spending, limit the spread of conventional weapons, prevent armed interventions, repeal the Authorizations for Use of Military Force (AUMFs), and reassert Congress' oversight role.
- Promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.
- Advocate for a justice system that is just and equitable, eliminates mass incarceration and police brutality, and establishes law-enforcement that is community-oriented and demilitarized.
- Ensure that the U.S. immigration system promotes and respects the rights, safety, humanity, and dignity of all immigrants, refugees and migrants.
- Support equitable access for all to participate in open, secure, and transparent political and electoral processes, protect the integrity of our democratic institutions and processes, and work to ensure honesty and accountability of elected and appointed officials.
- End gun violence by supporting policies that are informed by public health best practices.
- Witness and advocate for American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian rights and concerns. Honor the treaties and promises.
- Address structural economic inequality through measures such as a fair and progressive tax system, a living wage for all, and an adequate social safety net.
- Prioritize programs that meet basic needs including universal access to quality affordable health-care, a necessity magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Strengthen environmental protections and advance environmental justice, while recognizing the finite capacity of the earth and the need to protect human, animal and plant diversity.
- Promote sustainable, science-based solutions to the climate crisis and prioritize international cooperation to achieve global sustainability goals and protect vulnerable populations.

There will be two opportunities to reflect on these and other possible priorities. One will be at the rise of Meeting on Sunday, March 13 (with the same Zoom link as Meeting for Worship). The other will be at the Peace & Social Justice Committee meeting on Sunday, March 27, at 9:00 a.m.

13th/27th: 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. There will be two Sunday evening sessions in March, on March 13 and 27, 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/22nd: AVP Mini-Workshop: A Trauma-Informed Approach

Alternatives to Violence is offering a mini-workshop with a focus on trauma on Tuesday evenings, March 15 and 22, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. We all have scars that put us somewhere on the

spectrum of woundedness from personal experience to witnessing or hearing stories of others' experiences of trauma. In this mini workshop we will:

- Become familiar with the terms and types of trauma
- Identify motivations for addressing our personal and collective wounds
- Find ways to soothe ourselves and stay grounded in the present
- Practice alternative responses when triggered that build resilience
- Learn to remember and listen to past experiences without reliving them
- Be better prepared to facilitate AVP workshops.

15th: Reflection on “The Still Small Voice”

Patapsco Friends Meeting is hosting a viewing and discussion series of QuakerSpeak videos on the third Tuesdays of February, March, April, and May. On Tuesday, March 15, at 7:00 p.m., the viewing and discussion will be of “The Still Small Voice.” When we sit in silence on Sunday morning, Quakers often like to say that we’re “listening.” But what does that still small voice sound like? To get the Zoom link, click here: <https://patapscofriends.com/quakerspeak-series/> QuakerSpeak Videos are also available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-r97fEzGE2Th6OgcDQIY14jMi0wknb8u> There are a number of very interesting titles, such as What Brought Me to Quakerism? Am I Good Enough to Be a Quaker? What is the Difference Between a Welcoming and an Inclusive Space? How Quaker Camp Changed My Life, and Writing a Spiritual Autobiography.

15th: Deadline for Applications for BFM Assistant Treasurer

After eight years of service to Bethesda Friends Meeting as Assistant Treasurer, Marion Ballard is stepping down. The Stewardship & Finance Committee is now seeking to fill the paid position of Assistant Treasurer to maintain the account records for the Meeting. The time commitment is approximately 10 to 15 hours per month. The start date for the position is May 1, 2022.

The Assistant Treasurer receives and deposits donations, writes checks for the Meeting's expenditures, and enters all transactions into the Meeting's accounting system. Specific duties and responsibilities include processing incoming and outgoing payments and keeping records of them; keeping the accounts in QuickBooks; maintaining BFM bank and investment accounts and reconciling account transactions; and working with the Treasurer to make major accounting decisions. At this time, the work of the Assistant Treasurer also involves weekly trips to the Bethesda Post Office (6900 Wisconsin Ave. in downtown Bethesda) and First National Bank of Pennsylvania (locations in downtown Bethesda, Rockville, and elsewhere).

Candidates should have training or experience in accounting. A familiarity with QuickBooks is helpful. To apply, please respond by March 15. Your response should consist of a paragraph or two describing why you are interested in the position and your resume.

19th: Baltimore Yearly Meeting Interim Meeting

The Baltimore Yearly Meeting Interim Meeting will be held Saturday, March 19, in a hybrid format at Stony Run Friends Meeting and via Zoom. Friends will gather in worship at 9:30 a.m. and Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business will start at 10:00 a.m. Light hospitality will be provided by Stony Run. Attendance is open to all and offers a chance to get to know Friends from across the Yearly Meeting and be part of the decision-making. Please register here:

<https://www.bym-rsf.org/events/interim/> The agenda will be available at that same location and updated in the weeks ahead. Send any agenda items to Interim Meeting Clerk (imclerk@bym-rsf.org) by Saturday, March 12.

21st: Book Discussion of *Fit for Freedom; Not for Friendship*

If you have read, are reading, or are interested in the discussion of Quaker history in *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship*, here is a Zoom connection to a reading group. Note that it has already begun and will examine chapter four on Monday, March 21 at 8:00 p.m. our time (it is based in California). Sessions are on the third Monday of the month from now until probably November. Please see these community agreements regarding participation:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uCXCRzPrR7yoHTRF3KWhqt1O7pixUCCzaYjdptzs/edit>

Here is the link to the study guide, which is filled with quotes, queries, and suggested activities:

<https://quakerbooks.org/products/fit-for-freedom-study-guide-2269> Here is the link: Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84186028808?pwd=WmF4UGZxeDdMcSt1UmlITS9pRWxPUT09>, Meeting ID: 841 8602 8808; Passcode: 126795; phone: 301-715-8592.

27th: Coordinating Gathering

Representatives of most BFM committees meet during the week before Meeting for Business to discuss the upcoming agenda and to share our reflections on the spiritual state of our community, specific tasks, and Quaker processes. These meetings are open to all who wish to attend. There will be one at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 27.

Into the Future

When Way Opens

Once convinced that COVID has relented, Friends will want to celebrate. Fellowship & Hospitality and other committees are thinking about an outdoor gathering at rise of Meeting, or possibly on a Saturday, for rejoicing and reflecting.

The date could be late spring, summer, or later. It would follow a decision by the Meeting clerks, based on advice from the Ad Hoc COVID Advisory Committee, the Sidwell Friends Lower School, and Montgomery County. We will abide by strict safety protocols shared widely in advance. We will also respect and seek ways to include members who are unable to join in due to personal risk factors, vulnerable family members, or other reasons.

The event will be a chance to talk to old friends, make new ones, and enjoy live music, some surprises, and the best permissible refreshments. The aim is to bring together all our pandemic-era groups: the Zoom community, breezeway/Meeting House stalwarts, two years of newcomers, and Quakers long absent.

Given the unknowable date, all we're doing now is preparing to act fast once the light turns green.

Committee Notes

Nominating

We are now entering our nominating season, the time of the year when the Nominating Committee makes recommendations to the Business Meeting to fill the openings of the Meeting's officers, committee members, and liaison positions with Quaker organizations. During March and April, the Nominating Committee will identify nominees to begin serving in July 2022. Nominations will be presented at the May Meeting for Business and approved in June. Members typically serve for a two-year term, renewable for another two years.

For people who have not been involved in committee work before, we strongly encourage you to join a committee. We have found that working with others on committees is one of the most rewarding ways of deepening our relationships within the Meeting community and putting our Quaker principles into practice. BFM committees are always eager to have new faces, new ideas, and new energy.

We would like to learn about the interests of members who are interested in participating in the life of the Meeting. The last time we solicited the cooperation of our members to become active, many of you had requested to take a year off. We hope that you will reconsider that decision as we need to have all hands on deck to prepare the Meeting to get back to "normal" soon. To learn more, please see the list of committees with descriptions of their activities and responsibilities on pages 2 to 10 in the BFM Directory or go to: <https://www.bethesdafriends.org/Officers-&-Committees>.

In the next month or so, you will be contacted directly by a member of the Nominating Committee.

Ministry & Worship

During the month of February, the Ministry and Worship Committee gathered feedback from the BFM community about how the Meeting is addressing people's spiritual needs, what the joys and sorrows of the past year have been, and how the Meeting has done in adjusting to the pandemic (Otherwise known as discerning the Spiritual State of the Meeting). At the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business on March 6, the M&W committee will present its draft report to the Meeting. Please read the draft report and provide feedback at the March 6 meeting or thereafter. A final report will be given at the April Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business.

Threshing Session Preparation Group

As discussed at the February Worship for Business, BFM wishes to augment our anti-racism efforts with a process to assess where we are, who we are and want to be, what skills we need to develop, and what actions we will commit to as a collective community. We are seeking guidance and recommendations on an approach in supporting and providing guidance on our journey. Request for Proposals are being solicited to identify an individual or institution that can serve that role. Friends who are interested in evaluating RFP responses with the Diversity Change and Threshing Session prep groups are asked to send an email to: BFM-diversityactivities@bethesdafriends.org We expect to review submissions in late March.

Peace & Social Justice

Quaker Voice in Annapolis is a way to get our voices heard on matters we care about. Quaker Voice's Maryland legislative priorities are focused on racial equity, climate justice, and voting rights. Regular updates on what has been happening in the legislative session which ends on March 15 are available at: <https://bit.ly/3HyeGji> You can learn more about the organization here:

<https://www.quakervoicemd.org/legislative-session> Whether you're well versed on the legislative process or new to the game these House and Senate advocacy guides are an awesome tool for navigating the 2022 General Assembly. Thanks to Strong Schools MD for creating and sharing: https://drive.google.com/file/d/16fQnuOgq79_9LzvQPWC5lEOnarDqR3dT/view and <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1w48rb7UJq1QvZnw1lipsTMJjrhzcfjP/view> To learn more about Quaker Voice: <https://www.quakervoicemd.org/>

Meeting Notes

Thinking About Race

The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story expands the 1619 New York Times Magazine issue that reframed American history to place slavery at the center, socially and economically. The creator of the project, Nikole Hannah-Jones, writes in the preface:

“My favorite subjects in school were English and Social Studies, and I peppered my teachers with questions. History revealed the building blocks of the world I now inhabited, explaining how communities, institutions, relationships came to be. Learning history made the world make sense. It provided the key to decode all that I saw around me.

Black people, however, were largely absent from the histories I read. The vision of the past I absorbed from school textbooks, television, and the local history museum depicted a world, perhaps a wishful one, where Black people did not really exist. The history rendered Black Americans, Black people on all the earth, inconsequential at best, invisible at worst. We appeared only where unavoidable: slavery was mentioned briefly in the chapter on this nation’s most deadly war, and then Black people disappeared again for a full century, until magically reappearing as Martin Luther King, Jr., gave a speech about a dream. This quantum leap served to wrap the Black experience up in a few paragraphs and a tidy bow, never really explaining why, one hundred years after the abolition of slavery, King had to lead the March on Washington in the first place....

The world revealed to me through my education was a white one. And yet my intimate world – my neighborhood, the friends I rode the bus with for two hours each day to and from the schools on the white side of town, the boisterous bevy of aunts, uncles, and cousins who crowded our home for barbecues and card games – was largely Black. At school, I searched desperately to find myself in the American story we were taught, to see my humanity – our humanity – reflected back to me.”