

BETHESDA FRIENDS MEETING

Religious Society of Friends

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A Guide to What's Inside!

[Calendar](#)

[Query: Integrity](#)

[The Social Concerns Box](#)

[Religious Ed. for Children](#)

[Events](#)

[Into the Future](#)

[Committee Notes](#)

[Fellowship & Hospitality](#)

[Meeting Notes](#)

BFM Newsletter April 2017 Version for Web

April 2017 Calendar

Meeting for Worship is held at 11:00 a.m. every First Day. The meeting room is also available at 9:30 a.m. for those desiring a smaller, quieter Meeting for Worship, except on the first First day of each month, when Meeting for Business is held at 9:00 a.m. We have a mid-week Meeting for Worship at BFM on Wednesdays, at 7:30 p.m., and a worship group in Boyds the second Sunday of the month at 11:00 a.m.

1	Sat	9:30 a.m.	Peace & Social Concerns Networking Day, Ijamsville MD
2	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Meeting for Business (Child Care is Provided)
		11:00 a.m.	First Day School: Worship & Classes
		12:15 p.m.	FMW Book Talk: An Address in Amsterdam
		6:30 p.m.	WPH Potluck & Dialogue: Diversity in Quaker Camps
3	Mon	7:00 p.m.	First Monday: A Perspective on Lynching, Beth. Library
7 to 9			Pendle Hill Workshop: Practicing Forgiveness
8	Sat	3:00 p.m.	BFM Book Group at the Bethesda Library
9	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Pastoral Care Committee, Teachers' Lounge
		9:30 a.m.	ARE: Ralph Steinhardt's Spiritual Journey
		11:00 a.m.	First Day School: Worship & Service: Ramallah
		12:30 p.m.	Learn More About Ramallah Friends School
		12:30 p.m.	No Potluck at Bethesda but yes in Boyds MD
		7:30 p.m.	Experiment with Light at the Nielsen-Jones's House
		8:00 p.m.	Adult Religious Education Committee, BFM
12 to 17			Buy Silent Auction Items Early: Buy It Now Sale
13	Thurs	8:30 p.m.	Deadline for the May Newsletter
16	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Committee Day: Ministry & Worship and Pastoral Care
		9:30 a.m.	Committee Day: A&O, Religious Ed., and S&F
		11:00 a.m.	FDS: No FDS, supervision available with Child Care
20 to 23			AFSC's Waging Peace Summit for Peace & Justice
22	Sat	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.,	Drop-off of Items for Spring Fling, Groome Bldg.
23	Sun	11:00 a.m.	First Day School: Worship & Service: Spring Fling

		12:30 p.m.	Spring Fling for Ramallah: Food, Fun, & Contribution
		7:30 p.m.	Experiment with Light at Jane Coe's House
27 to 30			White Privilege Conference, Kansas City MO
29	Sat		People's Climate March, Washington DC
30	Sun	9:15 a.m.	Peace & Social Justice Committee, Teachers' Lounge
		9:30 a.m.	ARE: Experiment with Light
		11:00 a.m.	First Day School: Children-planned activity, TBD
		12:30 p.m.	Environmental Sustainability Group

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

Query for April: Integrity

How do we seek truth by which to live? How do we know it when we find it? In what ways does my life speak of my beliefs and values? In what ways is my life out of harmony with the truth as I know it? Why?

Social Concerns Box

The Social Concerns Box for April is for scholarships to the Ramallah Friends School in the West Bank (Palestine). RFS, founded by American Quakers in 1869, is a co-ed K-12 school that provides a first-class, peace-oriented education to children of all faiths. Most of the money for two scholarships will be raised at Spring Fling on April 23 (see details below). Or contribute to the social concerns box. It is an opportunity for us to help build peace in the Middle East.

The February Social Concerns Box for hunger relief programs in Montgomery County received \$743.

Religious Education for Children

Families are encouraged to bring their children to the first fifteen minutes of worship at 11:00 a.m., in the Meeting Room.

- On Sunday, April 2, children will meet in two classes.
- On Sunday, April 9, there will be a multi-age activity and conversation with the Ramallah Friends School exchange student at Sidwell Friends School.
- On Sunday, April 16, there will be no First Day School. Supervision for children up to age 12 will be available with the child care staff.
- On Sunday, April 23, the children will prepare hummus for the Spring Fling celebration which happens at the rise of Meeting.
- On Sunday, April 30, there will be a multi-age activity planned by the children. The details are still being worked out.

[Click here for details about the First Day School](#)

Events

1st: Peace & Social Concerns Networking Day

On Saturday, April 1, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., the Yearly Meeting Peace & Social Concerns Committee has planned a networking day for people in Quaker monthly meetings to meet and exchange ideas and resources. The keynote will be an interactive "Debate into Dialog" program, which will give Friends practice in a technique to resolve controversies within our own Meetings and in our communities. Friends will then be invited to choose between two or four one-hour workshops on addressing climate/environmental issues or making a difference in criminal justice;

and helping refugees and immigrants or working for economic and racial justice. Please register ASAP at peace@bym-rsf.org The event will be at the Friends Meeting School in Ijamsville MD.

2nd: Meeting for Business

On Sunday, April 2 at 9:00 a.m. Bethesda F(f)riends will consider various business items. 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. On the agenda this month are these reports: the Spiritual State of the Meeting (final), the preliminary budget, the BFM community, and Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Interim Meeting. There will be an update from the newly-formed Helping Refugees group. All who come to Meeting for Worship are welcome and encouraged to participate in our worship. Child care up to age 12 is provided. Please join us if you can.

2nd: FMW Book Talk: An Address in Amsterdam

On Sunday, April 2, at 12:15 p.m., Friends Meeting of Washington (2111 Florida Avenue, NW, near the Dupont Circle Metro) is sponsoring a book talk by author Mary Dingee Fillmore about *An Address in Amsterdam*. The book is a historical novel about a young Jewish woman who joins the anti-Nazi underground. At a time of deep concern about attacks on minority groups and religious communities, many of us ask ourselves what would we do if targeted persecution became more prevalent in the United States. History can provide insights, and thoughtful discussion can help us find our way forward in such vexing times. To help along this path, author Mary Dingee Fillmore will visit FMW to talk about these issues.

2nd: William Penn House Potluck & Dialogue

F(f)riends are invited to a potluck and Quaker dialogue at William Penn House on Sunday, April 2, at 6:30 p.m. The topic will be racial and economic diversity in Quaker camps. Dyresha Harris and Jamie DeMarco will present efforts to increase equity and accessibility at Quaker camps. Bring a dish to share; family members and friends are always welcome. WPH is at 515 East Capitol Street, SE. For more details: www.williampennhouse.org, 202-543- 5560.

3rd: First Monday: A White Historian Confronts Lynching

As part of its First Monday events at the Bethesda Library, BFM is sponsoring a free lecture and poetry reading on lynching. It will be on Monday, April 3, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. In response to Black Lives Matter and the murders at Charleston's Emanuel AME Church, historian Susan Strasser seeks to provide historical perspective to people grappling with contemporary issues of race and racism. This is part of a series of illustrated talks, "A White Historian Reads Black History." The topics include lynching, housing segregation, and voting rights. For more about Susan Strasser, see susanstrasser.net Her lecture will be followed by poet Marcia Cole reading her powerful "A Bitter Suite," winner of the 2010 College Language Association Creative Writing Contest first prize in poetry. ([See more here](#)) Many scholars and activists remind us that every image of a tormented black body has power in our culture. This presentation will include some disturbing images, offered as stark evidence of our shared history and in memory of those whose murder and torture they represent.

7th to 9th: Practicing Forgiveness as a Spiritual Discipline

From Friday, April 7, to Sunday, April 9, there will be a Pendle Hill workshop on practicing forgiveness as a spiritual discipline. Practicing forgiveness can move us closer to Spirit and inner peace and renew our relationship with self and others. The workshop will include presentations,

guided meditations, quiet worship, practical exercises, and group and individual time. Pendle Hill is in Wallingford PA. For details, www.pendlehill.org or 1- 800-742-3150.

8th: BFM Book Group

The Quaker Book Group meets monthly, normally on the second Saturday at 3:00 p.m. at Bethesda Public Library (not at Meeting). We will be in one of the two study group rooms in the rear of the Library. Newcomers are always welcome (even if you have not read the book)! By joining the [list serve](#), you can participate in the online discussions, read the post-meeting summary, and help choose the next book.

9th: ARE: Spiritual Journey

At the invitation of the Adult Religious Education Committee, a member of Meeting will share his spiritual journey with us. Spiritual journeys are occasional talks sponsored by ARE to provide insight into how some of our members have come to embrace Quakerism, what influenced them most, and how they see Quakerism in their personal and spiritual development. The session will take place on Sunday, April 9, at 9:30 a.m., in the Music Room (Lower Level) of the SAM building at Sidwell Friends Lower School.

9th: Up-County Worship Group

Live up-County? BFM is experimenting with a new worship group to meet on the second Sunday of each month in Boyds, Maryland. Initially, at least, it will be held at a member's at Breezy Hollow Farm in Boyds. The first meeting was on Sunday, January 8, at 11:00 a.m. and went very well with between five and ten people. It was decided to meet monthly on the second Sunday of the month, including a potluck lunch. This time, because there will be no potluck at BFM, you might want to try potluck in Boyds MD.

9th: Opportunity to Learn About Ramallah Friends School

On Sunday, April 9, at 12:30 p.m., in the Meeting Room, Joyce Ajlouny, Head of Ramallah Friends School, and Yasmin Qarout, a tenth grader there who is studying at Sidwell Friends this year, will talk about their school and their lives in Palestine and here. Yasmin will also talk with BFM First Day School students about her experiences, starting at 11:15 a.m. Ramallah Friends School's Scholarship Fund receives the proceeds of BFM's annual Spring Fling on April 23. Copies of a new history of the school, titled *Sumoud*, meaning "steadfast," will be available for purchase.

9th/23rd/30th: 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 three sessions in April. The first two will be from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. on Sunday evenings: April 9 and on April 23. On Sunday, April 30, it will be at 9:30 a.m. in the Music Room of the SAM Building, across the patio from the Meeting House. Please come if you can!

12th to 17th: Buy Silent Auction Items early from the on-line Buy It Now Sale

The list of possibilities will be sent out by e-mail the first or second week of April. If you have an item or service or talent to offer, please let us know.

20th to 23rd: Waging Peace: AFSC's Summit for Peace & Justice

On the weekend of April 20 to 23, the American Friends Service Committee is celebrating its 100th anniversary by hosting a Waging Peace & Justice Summit. It will be at the Sheraton Hotel (201 N. 17th Street, Philadelphia PA 19103). The summit will capitalize on AFSC's historic role as a convener of the peace movement, and reignite a global commitment to sow the seeds of lasting peace with justice. It is also a time for people who have been part of AFSC to come together and celebrate. The keynote speakers include Erica Chenoweth, author of the empirical study of civil resistance and non-violence, and Oscar Arias, two-time president of Costa Rica and 1987 Nobel Peace Laureate. Simultaneously, AFSC's Centennial Banner Exhibit will showcase powerful stories of AFSC's work of standing up to injustice, overcoming oppression, and speaking truth to power. The exhibit is at the African American Museum in Philadelphia. You can [register for all or part of the events online](#), details [here](#).

22nd/23rd: Spring Fling for Ramallah

[Spring Fling](#) is BFM's celebration of our community and the season. It's also our biggest fund raiser (for the scholarship fund at Ramallah Friends School). It is a fun and festive intergenerational event that includes a tasty Middle Eastern buffet lunch, a large "White Camel," (aka rummage) sale, a silent auction with an array of goods, services, and events, lively music, and wonderful BFM community spirit. Spring Fling, which engages scores of us, is built around three main activities, all of which welcome volunteers, donations, and customers. The activities are:

- Middle Eastern Buffet.
- "White Camel" Rummage Sale. Note: any child attending Spring Fling receives a \$5 gift certificate to the White Camel Sale. Donations of items for sale should be brought to BFM on Saturday, April 22, between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. so we have a chance to price them.
- Silent Auction of donated goods and services from canoes to karaoke coaching.
- Perennial Plant Sale.
- Ramallah Friends tee-shirts and Palestinian olive oil will be sold as well.

If you can't make this date or simply want to make a donation, Ramallah Friends is the Social Concerns Box beneficiary for April.

27th to 30th: White Privilege Conference

A number of us from Baltimore Yearly Meeting went to the White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia in 2016. [This year the conference](#) is in Kansas City MO from April 27 to 30. It is a very inspiring opportunity to work with a couple of thousand other people to combat racism and white privilege in our society. There is a Quaker discount and opportunity for hospitality through Friends General Conference. Contact: ministryonracism@fgcquaker.org

29th: People's Climate March

Bethesda Friends are in the process of deciding when and where to gather on Saturday, April 29, to participate in the People's Climate March. Updated information will be posted [here](#).

Into the Future

July 2nd to 8th: Friends General Conference (FGC) Gathering

The FGC Gathering this year will be at the Niagara University, Niagara Falls NY. The theme this year is “Ripples Start Where Spirit Moves.” The Gathering is a chance to be together with over 1,200 Friends. There are many opportunities to address spirit, mind, and body. Look up the program for this year at www.fgcGathering.org You can enjoy lots of activities: singing, dancing, good food, and good conversation. You really ought to go to a Gathering at least once. Early registration for the Gathering opens April 3. There are both half-gathering and part-time attender options for adults. Financial aid is available.

By way of background, Friends General Conference nurtures the spiritual vitality of the Religious Society of Friends by providing programs and services for Friends, meetings, and seekers. The work of FGC can be summarized into three areas of endeavor:

- Help meetings deepen Quaker worship and practice
- Support a loving Quaker community
- Support Quaker outreach

FGC is a volunteerled association of regional Quaker organizations, primarily in the United States and Canada. Founded in 1900, FGC has grown from a voluntary organization of seven yearly meetings, created to hold a “general conference” every other year, to an association of fourteen yearly meetings, supplemented with regional groups and individual meetings. FGC continues to sponsor an annual Gathering of Friends. FGC seeks to use resources effectively with a concern for simplicity and openness. It is funded through the support of Quaker meetings, individuals, and foundations. FGC is a 501(c)3 organization. For details, see: www.fgcquaker.org

July 31st to August 6th: Baltimore Yearly Meeting Annual Session

Baltimore Yearly Meeting will gather from July 31 to August 6 this year at Hood College in Frederick MD. The theme is “Growing Towards Justice - Acting on Faith.” Beyond the horrific headlines and news from the streets of our cities and rural areas, we must look carefully and recognize the many roots of this crisis. What are the causes? What actions can we take together to help change lives - as a people of faith, concerned citizens, organizers, advocates, and volunteers? How can we use our lives and power to take away the occasion of violence, the waste of young lives, the injustice that plagues our communities? There will be a plenary on Tuesday evening on Ending the School to Prison Pipeline; on Wednesday there will be an intergenerational workshop on nonviolence; and on Friday, Shan Cretin, General Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee. One big change in yearly meeting is that all children from birth through 8th grade can attend at no cost - for free! You can learn more about workshops and interest groups in the Spring Interchange which will be coming out very soon or at: www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession

Committee Notes

Fellowship & Hospitality

We thank Fellowship & Hospitality for providing refreshments at the rise of Meeting and for assisting with the preparation and serving of Spring Fling lunch in April. The committee oversees hospitality after Meetings for Worship, and potlucks on the second Sunday of most months, although direct responsibility rotates monthly among all committees. F&H also provides hospitality for special occasions, such as memorial meetings.

Meeting Notes

Peace Notes

One meaningful way of advocating for causes you believe in is writing letters to the editor. Recently, Gettysburg Friends Meeting shared a letter to the editor with newspapers in Gettysburg, Hanover, and Frederick:

“In light of what we see in the world right now—fear, anger, depression—we have concern that our neighbors near and distant feel safe and cared for, especially those who have increasingly been targets of threats or violence. We as Quakers affirm the following statements of our faith:

Our faith challenges us as to whether we allow ourselves to become a divided people swept along by the stream of mistrust and fear, arrogance and hatred which produces tensions in the world; or whether by our own decision, confidence and courage, we can become a bridge linking those elements which promote truth, justice and peace. (from German Quakers, 1948)

We actively oppose all that leads to violence among people and nations, and violence to other species and to our planet....We must start with our own hearts and minds. Together, let us reject the clamor of fear and listen to the whisperings of hope. (from A Statement on Peace issued by New Zealand Quakers, 1987)

When one of us is not safe, all of us are unsafe. We affirm ‘that of God’ in everyone, and hold all the world in the Light of God’s grace.”

For more information on how to write an effective letter to the editor, [click here](#).

Thinking About Race

Below is an excerpt from a review of “I Am Not Your Negro” Will Make You Rethink Race, by A. O. Smith in the *New York Times*, February 2, 2017. “Baldwin could not have known about Ferguson and Black Lives Matter, about the presidency of Barack Obama and the recrudescence of white nationalism in its wake, but in a sense he explained it all in advance. He understood the deep, contradictory patterns of our history, and articulated, with a passion and clarity that few others have matched, the psychological dimensions of racial conflict: the suppression of black humanity under slavery and Jim Crow and the insistence on it in African-American politics and art; the dialectic of guilt and rage, forgiveness and denial that distorts relations between black and white citizens in the North as well as the South; the lengths that white people will go to wash themselves clean of their complicity in oppression.”