

BETHESDA FRIENDS MEETING

Religious Society of Friends

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BFM Newsletter January 2017 Version for Web

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 2017 Calendar

Meeting for Worship is at 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. every First Day (except for January 10, when Meeting for Business is held at 9:15 a.m. and Meeting for Worship at 11:00 a.m.). Because New Year's Day falls on First Day this year, and the Meetinghouse will be closed, Meeting for Worship will be held on the Upper School campus on Sunday, January 1, at 11:00 a.m. We also have a mid-week Meeting for Worship on Wednesdays, at 7:30 p.m.

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| 8 | Sun | 9:00 a.m. Meeting for Business: All are invited to participate! |
| | | 11:00 a.m. First Day School: Worship & Qkr Camp Expo for Families |
| | | 12:15 p.m. Potluck: Please Bring a Dish to Share |
| | | 12:45 p.m. Strangers in a Strange Land: Interfaith Worship Sharing |
| | | 1:00 p.m. Library Committee, BFM Library |
| | | 6:30 p.m. WPH Potluck: (topic and presenter to be determined) |

		7:30 p.m.	Experiment With Light
9	Mon	7:00 p.m.	Parenting Workshop on Bullying, Bethesda Library
		8:00 p.m.	Stewardship & Finance
13	Fri	8:30 p.m.	February Newsletter Deadline
14	Sat	3:00 p.m.	Quaker Book Group at the Bethesda Library
15	Sun	9:30 a.m.	Committee Day: Advancement & Outreach, RE, & ARE
		11:00 a.m.	First Day School: Worship & Environmental Stewardship
		12:30 p.m.	Env. Sustainability Group: Energy Efficiency Workshop
		12:30 p.m.	Committee Day: Pastoral Care & Ministry & Worship
		1:00 p.m.	Library Committee, BFM Library
		5:00 p.m.	Deadline for Registration for the Women's Retreat
		7:00 p.m.	BYM Camp Enrollment Opens
21	Sat		Women's March for Equity
22	Sun	9:15 a.m.	Peace & Social Justice Committee, Teachers' Lounge
		9:30 a.m.	ARE: Finding Spiritual Meaning & Purpose in the Election
		11:00 a.m.	First Day School: Worship and Quilt Making
		12:00 noon	Welcome to New Members
		2:00 p.m.	Memorial Meeting for Paul Luckenbaugh
		7:30 p.m.	Experiment With Light, at Jane Coe's House
27	Fri	4:00 p.m.	BYM Women's Retreat (www.bymwomensretreat.org)
29	Sun	9:30 a.m.	Exp. with Light/Spiritual State of the Mtg. Reflection
		11:00 a.m.	First Day S: Worship & Class, "Jesus was a Rulebreaker"
		12:30 p.m.	Coordinating Gathering, Meeting Room
		12:30 p.m.	Environmental Sustainability Group, Music Room

Social Concerns Box

The Social Concerns Box for January is for the Torture Abolition & Survivors Support Coalition (TASSC). TASSC is an organization founded by and for torture survivors, the only one of its kind. Its mission is to end the practice of torture wherever it occurs (in some 150 countries) and to empower survivors, their families, and communities wherever they may be. Given the fact that people in US prisons are tortured (solitary confinement is classified as torture), and that president-elect Donald Trump has promised to renew torture as part of routine interrogation techniques in alleged terrorism cases, it is all the more important that we support such efforts. For details, see <http://www.tassc.org>

In November, the Social Concerns Box had \$362 for Action in Montgomery. The total for the Mary Jane Simpson Scholarship Fund is now \$16,781.

Religious Education for Children

Children of all ages are welcome and encouraged to join their families in Meeting for Worship from 11:00 to 11:15 a.m. each Sunday. For details, see:

<http://www.bethesdafriends.org/FDS-2016-17-Calendar.pdf>

Jan. 1: No First Day School.

Jan. 8: A Quaker Camps Expo for parents, children, and potential camp counselors is in the lower level lounge of the Groome Building. The camps are open to all. Please invite your neighbors, too. Information will be available for local BYM camps (Shiloh, Opequon, Catoctin), Journey's End in PA, Camp Celo in NC, Friends Music Camp in OH, and Camp Onas in PA. (Snowdate: January 22).

Jan. 15: Let Your Life Speak program for families and all in the BFM community. A Bethesda Friend will talk about how Quakerism has influenced his career as an environmental advocate and activist challenging polluters and mitigating global climate change.

Jan. 22: K-2 class and 3-8th grade Quilt Making: children will work on the quilt block project.

Jan. 29: Bible Story Classes, K-2 and 3-8th grades. "Jesus was a Rulebreaker," (Mark 3:1-6).

Events

Spiritual State of the Meeting Month

As it prepares the Spiritual State of BFM report for 2016, the Ministry & Worship Committee asks you to consider the following query:

In the past year, how have the changes in our lives, our Meeting, and our nation affected our spiritual lives and the spiritual state of the Meeting?

Ministry & Worship Committee members plan to gather comments on this query at two times in January and probably a third in February. The first will be at potluck on Sunday, January 8. The second will be on Sunday, January 29, at 9:30 a.m., in the Music Room, when we will use the Experiment with Light process to guide us in shared reflection.

In addition to these planned sessions, your reflections are welcome at any time in any format to any member of the Ministry & Worship Committee.

1st: Holiday Meeting for Worship

Because the Sidwell Friends Lower School campus will be closed on New Year's Day this year, we will be holding meeting for worship at 11:00 a.m. in the Smith Meeting Room on the Upper School campus, 3825 Wisconsin Avenue, NW. There will be no childcare or First Day School program on January 1.

4th/11th/18th/25th: Mid-Week Meeting for Worship

In our on-going experiment with a Wednesday evening meeting for worship, we will now meet from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., starting on January 4. Please come when the Spirit moves you. Childcare is not available.

8th: Meeting for Business

On Sunday, January 8 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 are reports from the American Friends Service Committee's DC Peace & Economic Justice Program and the AFSC Regional Program, and the Child Care and Ministry & Worship Committees. All who come to Meeting for Worship are welcome and encouraged to participate in our worship. Childcare up to age 12 is provided. Please join us if you can.

8th: Potluck: Please Bring a Dish to Share

Please join us for potluck at the rise of Meeting on Sunday, January 8. Potluck is a good way to make connections with people you don't know so well (newcomers and others), so bring a dish to share and be ready to make some new friends. We gather in the Groome Building multi-purpose room at the rise of Meeting for feast and fellowship. Your contribution of a dish to share with others adds greatly to the occasion.

8th: Strangers in A Strange Land: Interfaith Worship Sharing

Bethesda Friends have a unique opportunity to reflect on how we feel and what we might do regarding unsettling aspects of public discourse these days. Especially vulnerable are members of non-majority religious faiths. On Sunday, January 8, at 12:45 p.m., an interfaith group and those Bethesda Friends who are interested will meet in our Meeting Room for worship sharing on the following queries: “How can we most effectively foster a caring and understanding attitude among all the faiths in our community? What helps us to listen deeply to one another, and to understand one another’s perspective? How can we best support one another?”

8th/22nd/29th: Experiment With Light

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. In January, there will be three sessions. One will be on Sunday, January 8, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. The second will be on Sunday, January 22, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. The third will be at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, January 29, in the Music Room (basement) of the SAM Building across the patio from the Meetinghouse. We will be using the Experiment with Light process to help us discern the Spiritual State of BFM. Please come if you can.

9th: “First Monday” Event: Preventing & Responding to Bullying

As part of its First Monday events, at the Bethesda Library (though this is the second Monday because the library will be closed on January 2), BFM is hosting a free Parenting Workshop: Preventing and Responding to Bullying. Please come by 7:00 p.m. for this interactive, responsive conversation and leave with strategies for having discussions with children and teens. The leaders are educational consultants, clinicians, former school administrators, and parents of middle and high school students. [Click here to view the flyer.](#)

14th: Quaker Book Group Meeting

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!). Since the time and date can change on short notice due to the Library’s scheduling practices, please join the Book Group List Serve. By joining the list serve, you can participate in the online discussions, read the post-meeting summary, and help choose the next book. For details [click here.](#)

15th: Home Energy Efficiency Workshop

Want to help save the planet and save money at the same time? On Sunday, January 15, at 12:30 p.m., in the Music Room (SAM Building basement), the Environmental Sustainability Group is hosting a workshop on home energy efficiency and simple steps you can take to help mitigate climate change. The workshop will cover simple and relatively inexpensive things you can do around your home to save on energy costs and stay warm. We will talk about starting with an energy audit, and the power of insulation and caulk. We will show how to source your electricity supply with wind power, discuss solar power options, and reduce your “carbon footprint.”

15th: BYM Camp Enrollment Opens

Enrollment for Baltimore Yearly Meeting camping programs (at Catoctin, Opequon, Shiloh, and Teen Adventure) begins January 15, at 7:00 p.m., for returning campers and February 1, at 10:00 a.m., for new campers. The camps are residential for children ages 9 to 17. Anyone may apply online (please do!). Spaces are available first come, first serve, so please register as soon as you can if you need a particular session. For details: <http://www.bymcamps.org>

21st: Women's March

Martin Luther King once said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." One of the most powerful moments for his speaking up was the 1963 March on Washington. In an effort to capture that same spirit of unity for equity, a Women's March on Washington will be held on January 21. The event is being organized by a diverse group of women, and is open to "any person, regardless of gender or gender identity, who believes women's rights are human rights." The website for the event says "*This march is the first step towards unifying our communities, grounded in new relationships, to create change from the grassroots level up. We will not rest until women have parity and equity at all levels of leadership in society. We work peacefully while recognizing there is no true peace without justice and equity for all.*" This event is being designed as a positive and inclusive way of speaking up about justice. For details, see <http://www.womensmarch.com>

22nd: ARE: Finding Spiritual Meaning and Purpose in the Election

For many of us, the recent presidential campaign and election results have given rise to feelings of fear, distress, and even anger. How might we acknowledge and then transform our negative feelings so that we can respond to current events in a way that is helpful, healing, compassionate, and spirit-led? How might we find purpose and meaning in events that seem so distressing? We will base our discussion on some segments of two talks by Tara Brach in which she addresses this issue. Please join us in the Music Room (basement) of the SAM Building across from the Meetinghouse on Sunday, January 22, at 9:30 a.m.

22nd: Welcome of New Members

On Sunday, January 22, at rise of Meeting, Pastoral Care will welcome and re-introduce our new members since January 2016. Please join us in giving them all a warm formal welcome.

27th to 29th: BYM Women's Retreat

The 2017 Baltimore Yearly Meeting Women's Retreat will be held the weekend of January 27 through January 29 for the second year at the Pearlstone Conference Center in Reisterstown MD. The theme is Quaker Wisdom: Echoes in Our Souls. We are invited to reconnect with the wisdom of Quakers past and present through worship, stories, song, rest, and play. The plenary will feature Paulette Meier, who will share with us how she awakened to the words of the first generation of Friends through setting them to music of her own composition. [Registration is now open](#) on the Baltimore Yearly Meeting website. Please register ASAP.

29th: 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 29, at the rise of Meeting in the meeting room.

Into the Future

February 1st: BYM Camps Registration Opens for New Campers

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 in getting to know one another. For details, see <http://www.bymcamps.org>

February 3rd to 5th: Dayspring Silent Retreat

The purpose of silent retreat is the deepening of communion with God, with other persons, and with oneself. The point is to “make space for...a time of waiting in silence, in solitude, to hear the voice of the One Who speaks in everything that is, and who, most of all, speaks in the depths of our own being.” (Thomas Merton)

The retreat is at Dayspring in Germantown MD, and sharing the warmth of spiritual community in the heart of winter, amid nature’s beauty, is a great blessing! It is a wonderful opportunity for spiritual refreshment.

Committee Notes

Nominating

Thank you. On December 4, Meeting for Business approved the Nominating Committee’s nominations for committee members, officers, and liaisons to other organizations for 2017. The Nominating Committee thanks everyone who has agreed to serve. We are grateful for the continuing service of so many. Your experience and wisdom serve us well. And we are excited about the involvement of those who are new to committee work. Your enthusiasm greatly enriches our Meeting.

Transitions to new positions. As of January 1, the newly named committee members assume their new assignments. Current committee clerks are encouraged to welcome the new members and inform them of the time and place of the first committee meeting of 2017. At that meeting, the agenda should include orientation of new members and selection of the clerk (or coclerks) for the year. For information on choosing a clerk and other committee functions, please see the Community Resource Guide on page 46 of the 2016 Directory.

Hospitality. The Nominating Committee is happy to provide hospitality at the rise of meeting and to serve potluck in January. The committee’s principal function is to nominate Meeting officers, members of committees, and representatives to other organizations. It typically meets once a week from late August through October, and other times as the need arises.

Ministry & Worship

Embracing Children in Meeting for Worship. Presently at BFM, children are invited to come to Meeting for Worship for the first fifteen minutes and then go to First Day School. Since this fall, we have been blessed with increased attendance of children in Meeting for Worship. The Ministry & Worship Committee has tried to support their attendance by having the head of Meeting welcome them. We all know that children cannot be perfectly silent or still. However, as observed in an article in *Friends Journal* (July 2013) about welcoming children, “everyone in the meeting is a part of creating gathered worship, and we all bring our imperfect selves to that task.”

“Bringing Children to Worship: Trusting God to Take Over from There,” by Kathleen Karhnaak-Glasby, presented these ideas about how to make Meeting for Worship a more welcoming place for children and their parents:

- Hold the children in the Meeting in prayer and invite them into a loving, centered space when they enter worship, praying that they are surrounded by a palpable sense of God's living presence.

- Send calming love to a parent and child who seem to be struggling with settling into the silence. Perhaps tell that parent afterwards that you were glad they brought their child, give them a chance to talk about their experience, and share stories of your children's experiences attending Meeting.

- Outside of the meeting for worship, you might talk with a child whom you have noticed has been able to sit a little longer or a little more quietly than usual and ask what that experience was like. You might also ask about what they did in First Day School.

- Find ways to know the children in our Meeting. One way to get to know our very young children is by volunteering in the nursery. At coffee hour, greet their parents. Parents love to hear nice things about their little ones. As for older children, you can volunteer a Sunday in First Day School. For example, this winter the children will be cooking for the homeless shelter. We always need adult hands for these Sundays. So, please, bring your imperfect selves to Meeting and welcome our children into our worship.

Please be mindful of hearing-impaired Friends. M&W would like to encourage everyone to please be mindful during Meetings for Worship of those who are hearing impaired by: (1) speaking clearly and with full voice when delivering messages, and (2) turning off cellphones.

What do we do when it snows?! In general, there will be Meeting for Worship if the Sidwell Friends Lower School is open. Call 202-537-8197 or see www.sidwell.edu

Pastoral Care

Financial Aid. BFM offers financial aid for those seeking to participate in workshops or seminars that aim to help them grow as Quakers or as BFM committee members, clerks, or teachers. Pendle Hill (www.pendlehill.org) offers a number of pertinent seminars, for instance.

The Meeting offers financial aid for BFM children who would like to attend Quaker summer camps. Registration for Baltimore Yearly Meeting summer camps begins in mid-January for returning campers and February 1 for first-timers. (See www.bymcamps.org)

Finally, the Meeting offers a limited amount of financial aid for those suffering from personal emergencies in which money is a factor.

All aid is provided confidentially via the Pastoral Care Committee. For inquiries about financial aid, contact your personal friendly ear or Pastoral Care clerks.

Pastoral Care Resource List. The Pastoral Care Committee seeks to connect those requesting assistance or counsel on particular issues with those in the Meeting who have offered to share relevant skills or life experiences. PC maintains a confidential referral list for this purpose.

If you are a regular participant in BFM, please contact the Pastoral Care Committee to express a need, or to offer referrals or assistance based on your experience and current availability. PC will ask for your consent before sharing your name with those requesting assistance. All such conversations are confidential.

The topics below reflect the offers of knowledge and experience received thus far from members of our community. This list evolves over time. A more detailed list of topics is available from Pastoral Care.

- Health (specific health issues; nutrition, etc.)
- Family (challenging teens, separation & divorce, elder care, etc.)
- Home (decluttering, carpenter, computer help)
- Learning & Education (tutoring, alternatives)
- Spiritual exploration
- Legal & Financial Matters
- Language & Culture (cultural shock, language help)
- Gift of time (driving, cooking, pet care)

Advancement & Outreach

Welcoming. Thanks to all who reach out to help people new to BFM feel at home here. If you are sitting near someone who introduces him/ herself at rise of meeting or seems to be quite new, please introduce yourself and invite them to coffee hour or potluck. Also, please invite him/ her to sign the guest book on the hall table. When someone signs the guest book, we send a note of welcome. If someone indicates he/she may be coming back on a regular basis, please ask him/ her to fill out a newcomer card, so we can make a name tag and add them to the mailing list. The cards are available on the hall table and in the newcomer packets and may be turned in to the head of Meeting or put in the Editor's pocket at the bottom of the stairs.

Friends Journal Subscriptions. BFM is giving subscriptions to Friends Journal to college-aged people in our Meeting.

Stewardship & Finance

Reimbursement for Meeting Expenses. Our Treasurer would like to remind everyone that if you make a purchase in support of your committee's activities, or other purpose for the Meeting, you can be reimbursed by filling out this form: <http://www.bethesdafriends.org/expense-reimburse-form.pdf>

Then e-mail it to the assistant treasurer. Paper forms are also available in the Treasurer's pocket in the Meetinghouse. If you prefer that your purchase be considered a donated expense, please let us know via the form or by e-mail so we can record it. Any committee expense should also have the approval of, or at least a copy of the request to, the clerk of that committee.

Friendly Eights

There will be no Friendly Eights dinners in January. In addition, there will be no Adult Friendly Eights dinners in the winter or spring of 2017. The committee hopes to schedule a couple Family Friendly Eights dinners after January, if hosts come forward. There is no clerk for the coming year because none of the present members was interested in taking on that role.

Peace & Social Justice

The first First Monday event (in December) at the Bethesda Library was extremely successful in the sense that about 70 people attended the film and panel discussion of Incarcerating US. Information was also available from the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform.

Here are links to the movie and the panelists.

<http://www.incarceratingus.com>

<http://www.cjpf.org>

<http://www.famm.org>

<http://www.ma4jr.org>

<http://www.fcni.org>

<http://www.bethesdafriends.org>

Meeting Notes

BFM Newsletter at 50

Sharp eyes will note at the top of the newsletter that we are beginning our 50th year of publication. According to the book, *Bethesda Friends Meeting: The First 25 Years* (1988), a group from Friends Meeting of Washington who lived in Bethesda began gathering in Bethesda once a month in 1961. In March 1963, the group was more organized and became a preparative Meeting under the care of Friends Meeting of Washington. In 1967, BFM began the process of becoming a Monthly Meeting and that coincided with the first newsletter.

Bethesda Shelter Supper Group

For many many years, BFM has been taking supper once a month to the Bethesda Shelter. Our 'teams' that do this are under enrolled -- we need more cooks in the kitchen for this project. Please consider joining. It is not a big commitment.

The Bethesda Shelter is run by Catholic Charities. It is now located on Marinelli Road in Rockville. It provides transitional housing to homeless people with chronic mental illness.

The BFM supper group has six teams; each team provides supper two times a year. There are traditionally four people on a team. On the first Saturday of the month, members of a designated team bring a meal for 15 men consisting of a main dish, a vegetable side or salad, a dessert, and a gallon of milk/soy milk.

Might you be interested in participating in this project in 2017? Participating is a great way for a family to do a service project together. Also, some months, the children in First Day School cook the entree. If you are a parent or an adult who would like to do some cooking with them, join us! Or, if you want to cook all by yourself, that can work too. You arrange your contribution with your team.

Friendly Gardens Vacancies

At a recent board meeting it was noted that the waiting list for an apartment in Friendly Gardens is as short as it has been in many years. So if Friends want to get into Friendly Gardens, this is the time to be added to the waiting list. The tenant's income is checked when an apartment becomes available (not when the seeker is added to the waiting list). Friends interested should contact the office to be added to the wait list. That number is 301-589-4916. Please note that virtually everyone who is pulled from the wait list is at the very low end of the income spectrum.

Thinking About Race

"If whiteness is no longer the default and is to be treated as an identity (even, soon, a 'minority'), then perhaps it is time white people considered the disadvantages of being a race. The next time a white man bombs an abortion clinic or goes on a shooting rampage on a college campus, white people might have to be lectured on religious tolerance and called upon to denounce the violent extremists in their midst. The opioid epidemic in today's white communities could be treated the way we once treated the crack epidemic in black ones; not as a failure of the government to take care of its people but as a failure of the race. The fact that this has not happened, nor is it likely to, only serves as evidence that white Americans can still escape race." From "The Identity Politics of Whiteness," by Laila Lalami, author of *The Moor's Account*, in *The New York Times Magazine*, November 27, 2016.