

# BETHESDA FRIENDS MEETING

*Religious Society of Friends*

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*BFM Newsletter July/August Version for Web*

### Query for July: Young People

How do we provide young people with explicit guidelines in Quaker faith and practice? In what ways do we honor that of God in children and young people? How do we share our deepest beliefs with children while leaving them free to develop as the spirit of God may lead them?

### Query for August: Peace

What does it mean to live "in virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars?" What can I do to create a more peaceful and just world? As we work for peace in the world, how are we nourished by peace within and among ourselves? How are we serving as instruments of reconciliation and love?

### July/August 2016 Calendar

Meeting for Worship is 11:00 a.m. every First Day. It is also held at 9:30 a.m. every First Day except for Sunday, July 19, when Meeting for Business will be held at 9:15 a.m.

July 3 to 9			Friends General Conference, St. Joseph MN
July 3	Sun	12:30 p.m.	Environmental Sustainability Group, Meeting Room
July 9	Sat	10:00 a.m.	Friends Wilderness Center Green Building Workshop WV
		3:00 p.m.	Quaker Book Group at the Bethesda Library
July 10	Sun	12:30 p.m.	Coordinating Gathering
		1:00 p.m.	Library Committee, Teachers' Lounge
July 13 to 31			Pendle Hill's Conflict Transformation Institute

<b>July 17</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>9:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Meeting for Business</b>
<b>July 24</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>7:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Experiment with Light,</b>
<b>July 31</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>9:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Experiment with Light, Music Room, SAM Bldg.</b>
<b>August 1</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>2:30 p.m.</b>	<b>BYM Retreat, Hood College, Frederick MD</b>
<b>August 2 to 7</b>	<b>Tues/Sun</b>		<b>BYM Annual Gathering, Hood College, Frederick MD</b>
<b>August 7</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>12:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Environmental Sustainability Group, Meeting Room</b>
<b>August 13</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Friends Wilderness Center: program t.b.d.</b>
		<b>3:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Quaker Book Group at the Bethesda Library</b>
		<b>8:30 p.m.</b>	<b>September Newsletter Deadline</b>
<b>August 14</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>7:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Experiment with Light,</b>
<b>August 28</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>9:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Nominating Committee, Teachers' Lounge</b>
		<b>12:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Coordinating Gathering</b>
		<b>7:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Experiment with Light,</b>

### **The Social Concerns Box**

The Social Concerns Box for July and August is Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR). Friends World Committee for Consultation organized RSWR in 1967 with a mission statement that reads: *God calls us to the right sharing of world resources, from the burdens of materialism and poverty into the abundance of God's love, to work for equity through partnership with our sisters and brothers throughout the world.* Right Sharing of World Resources is a Quaker micro-credit organization that supports grassroots income-generating projects in developing countries, led by women, many of whom are making less than a dollar a day. In 2015, RSWR was able to give grants totaling \$215,000 to fund 43 groups, which supported 1,257 women to start small businesses in India, Kenya and Sierra Leone. RSWR continues to provide Friends the means by which we can examine our life of plenty, to provide a practical outlet to assist and empower some of the poorest people in the planet (some of whom are Quakers), and to come to a deeper understanding of economic discipleship as part of our individual and corporate life as a faith community. The RSWR web site has many educational resources for youth as well as adults. For details: [www.rswr.org](http://www.rswr.org)

In May, the Literacy Council of Montgomery County received \$114.

### **From the Clerks**

Discernment on Growing Diversity. Baltimore Yearly Meeting's ad hoc Growing Diverse Leadership Committee (GDLC), of which BFM's Lauren Brownlee and Peirce Hammond are members, is charged with discerning how BYM and local Meetings can work together to strengthen our faith and communities by increasing the participation of and quality of experience for young adults and people of color in our local and yearly meetings.

As one of its first acts, the GDLC is requesting information about individual Meetings' current demographics, specifically age and racial identity, so that BYM can chart its progress. To that end, BYM's annual Community Statistics report now asks for details of membership (though not individual members) by age and racial identity. BFM already collects age data through its membership process, but we have never attempted to collect the racial identity of members and attenders. This information would only be collected to be shared with BYM in aggregate form.

This fall BFM will begin a discernment process regarding its response to the GDLC's request. Some of us may feel uncomfortable with talking openly about racial identity and may be reluctant to ask our members and attenders to provide that information. However, Quakers have long understood that there can be value in putting conscious attention on a topic and allowing ourselves to sit with and wrestle with it. If we agree with the principle of the GDLC's request, the logistics of collecting this information would need to be determined. We hope that the Meeting will both read the supporting documents on our web site and think deeply about this topic over the summer to prepare for this discussion. A good way to start would be to review the excellent materials the

GDLC has prepared, especially the “Survey FAQs” document. These materials [are available on the BFM website](#).

### **Children’s Summer Program**

For children K-6th, there will be supervised play on the playground with Hannah Yasharoff. Until 11:15 a.m., parents are encouraged to bring their children to Meeting for Worship. At 11:15 a.m., children will meet Hannah in the Meeting House foyer. At 12:20 p.m., Hannah will bring children back to the foyer to join their parents. Supervision will end at that time.

For children 6 months through pre-K, child care will be available in the Child Care room from 10:45 a.m. to 12:20 p.m.

Usually, both groups will share time together outside. When the weather is not conducive to being outside, children will usually be in the Groome Building Lower School classroom.

One adult volunteer is needed each Sunday to assist the paid staff. Can you volunteer one or more Sundays this summer? Please [sign up here](#).

### **Events**

#### **July 3rd to 9th: Friends General Conference (FGC) Gathering**

The FGC Gathering this year will be at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph MN. The theme this year is “be humble, Be Faithful, BE BOLD.” The Gathering is a chance to be together with over 1,200 Friends. There are many opportunities to address spirit, mind, and body. You can enjoy lots of activities: singing, dancing, good food, and good conversation. You really ought to go to a Gathering at least once. 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. For details, see: [www.fgcquaker.org](http://www.fgcquaker.org)

#### **July 3/August 7: Environmental Sustainability Group**

The Environmental Sustainability Group of the Peace & Social Justice Committee will gather on July 3 and August 7. At our May meeting, we considered the spiritual basis of our efforts, and explored how our mission has both educational and activist aspects. Our discussion was full and exciting, with numerous directions of movement suggested. Some members committed to sorting through the rich material to organize our efforts and help us focus future action; others undertook to develop the content and structure of tips, information, and so on to be posted on the BFM web site. Our July agenda will focus on these two topics; the agenda for the August meeting will depend on the outcome of the July meeting and will be arranged afterward.

#### **July 9th/August 13th: Friends Wilderness Center Programs**

Friends Wilderness Center (Harpers Ferry WV) invites us to a green building workshop from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 9. Join Board Member, Pete Walton, in a lively discussion and examination of different ‘Green’ building techniques and technologies, such as rammed earth and straw bale construction, and gain insights into how you can build durable, cost-effective and low-impact structures from humble outbuildings to a full-size houses. Please RSVP to Sheila Bach and when doing so indicate whether you would like to have a home-cooked lunch (a \$10 cost).

There will be another program on Saturday, August 13. The specifics will be announced closer to that date.

Friends Wilderness Center is in West Virginia, near Harper's Ferry. FWC is just 1.5 hours from Bethesda. To avoid getting lost or arriving later than intended, please see [crucial information here](#).

### **July 9th/August 13th: 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!). 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. To join the listserve [click here](#).

### **July 10th & August 28th: Coordinating Gatherings**

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, July 10, and another on Sunday, August 28, both at the rise of Meeting.

### **July 13th to 31st: Pendle Hill's Conflict Transformation Institute**

Conflict is a regular part of our life in community. Leaning into it, instead of avoiding it, can be the key to making our workplaces more productive, our worship communities deeper and more faithful, and our social change organizations more effective. We know we are called to be just peacemakers, but often we just don't know how. Learn to engage conflict courageously, compassionately, and creatively. Pendle Hill's 18-day Institute for Conflict Transformation will equip you with the skills and tools to help create justice and peace confidently in your communities. Concentrating less on interpersonal conflict, and focusing more on conflict in our organizations, our workplace, and our meetings, participants will pay particular attention to the processes that Quakers have developed to navigate the tension between "speaking truth to power" and "answering that of God in everyone."

### **July 17th: Meeting for Business**

Meeting for Business will take place at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, July 17. It is an opportunity to meet worshipfully and for business in a special way. On the agenda are the annual reports of the Book Table and Religious Education Committees. We will also hear a report on the June 18 BYM Interim Meeting. We will also discuss the future of the Friendly Eights program. A more detailed agenda will be e-mailed a few days before July 17. Please note that child care is provided for children up through age 11.

### **July 24th & 31st & August 14th & 28th: 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.

The first session in July will be on Sunday, July 24 at 7:30 p.m. The second July session will be on Sunday, July 31, at 9:30 a.m., in the Music Room (basement) of the SAM Building across the patio from the Meetinghouse. The sessions in August will be on Sunday, August 13, and Sunday, August 28.

## **August 2nd to 7th: Baltimore Yearly Meeting Annual Session**

Quakers from the 52 Meetings in Baltimore Yearly Meeting will gather from August 2 to 7 this year at Hood College in Frederick MD. The theme is “Discernment and Action in Spiritual Community.” Some of us come to feel at home with Friends through worship first, some through social activism, and some through community. As we continue on our path with Friends, we inevitably encounter the other two and perhaps integrate all three into our Quaker experience. What has your experience been? Have you discovered how all three of these interact with each other as essential elements of the Quaker way? Join us at Annual Session this year to share in our exploration of this question. Through a truly exciting variety of plenaries, workshops, interest groups, Junior Yearly Meeting, through fellowship at meals, worship sharing, and other times, and also through our business sessions, we will have an opportunity to live out all three of these core elements of our faith. For further details: [www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession](http://www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession)

Baltimore Yearly Meeting offers each Meeting the opportunity to send three Friends for two days at no cost. This is for people who have not yet attended Annual Session, or haven't attended in over 10 years. Attenders at Annual Session over the years have found it to be an enriching experience. Even if you have been before, Pastoral Care has some funds to support attendance at this and other conferences.

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### **Committee Notes**

#### **Hospitality in July & August**

We thank the Peace & Social Justice Committee for providing hospitality at the rise of meeting in July. The committee promotes peace and social justice and encourages others in Meeting to participate in a wide variety of peace and social justice activities. Advocacy, education, vigils, and financial support of community groups are among the ways the committee does its work, as well as through its liaison with the American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on National Legislation, the Quaker UN Office, and other like-minded groups. It meets on the fourth Sunday of the month (September through June), at 9:15 a.m., in the Teachers' Lounge. Visitors are very welcome!

We thank the Pastoral Care Committee for providing refreshments at the rise of Meeting in August. The committee is concerned primarily with the spiritual well-being of the Meeting's individual members. The committee receives, considers, and recommends Meeting action on membership applications; arranges clearness committees for membership, marriages, and personal concerns; responds to ill, troubled, or needy Friends; assists individuals who have a death in the family; offers need-based financial assistance for attending Quaker camps, participation in a Quaker activity, or personal emergencies; and provides a Friendly Ear each week at the rise of Meeting to hear concerns and questions about personal issues, BFM, or the Society of Friends. The committee also links each of us with a “personal friendly ear” who is in touch at least once a year and is always available to respond to concerns.

#### **Friendly Eights**

What's in the Future for Friendly Eights? On Sunday, June 5, the Friendly Eights Committee presented its annual report for the 2015 – 2016 year to the Business Meeting. The committee noted that participation in the program was much reduced from the previous year, with fewer people signing up for dinners, difficulty recruiting hosts, and guests dropping out at the last minute, creating problems for hosts. Therefore, the committee is considering either a re-structuring of the program or

a laying down of the committee. We are soliciting suggestions and comments from the Meeting as a whole and are also investigating practices implemented by other Meetings for Friendly Eights.

## **Meeting Notes**

### **Peace Notes**

As we suffer ever more violence around us, let us heed William Penn's call to "Let us then try what love will do." Let us put our faith in action and trust Mother Teresa's words, "Love has to be put into action and that action is service" and Cornel West's words, "justice is what love looks like in public." A summer query: How do our actions speak to the strength of our love?

### **Thinking About Race**

A Scholarship of Belonging. "For far too long, society has treated minority groups from a deficit analysis, focusing on what they lack rather than what they add. Institutions have reacted to racial tensions instead of proactively creating inclusive spaces. We have taught people how to adjust to an unacceptable status quo instead of sharing the legitimate means to challenge injustice. By not taking the time to listen to people, we have let efficiency trump listening and allowed limited diversity to supplant real equity at the table, at the lectern, and in the boardroom....

"We all have good will, but we must move beyond good will. Universities can help improve a sense of belonging by setting clear goals, fostering inclusive environments, and challenging negative stereotypes about certain groups. We have to create structures that ensure participation of minority groups in decisions. We need to model and teach the competencies of deep listening and respectful dialogue across differences. We must also determine how to work cooperatively to transform deeply embedded practices that have created barriers to belonging." From "Why We Need a 'Scholarship of Belonging'," by Julio Frenk, published in the May 20, 2016, *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

### **Pendle Hill**

"Exploring the Quaker Way" is [Pendle Hill's new Quaker Studies Online initiative](#). This new twelve-week course, running from June 5 to August 28, has received a very positive response from many individuals and local meetings. As one person wrote to Pendle Hill, "Our Meeting is one of several that find it hard to offer basic Quaker studies. I think you are meeting a need." Another person wrote, "This sounds wonderful. I am ready to start already." Another wrote, "I just wanted to let you know that reading about Pendle Hill online has just made my day. I live in southern New Mexico, far from Pendle Hill, and am so happy to see this initiative." Since that first article's publication, Pendle Hill has posted a detailed course description page, including an online registration form and has been responding to interested people's questions.

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