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**Query for December: Meetings for Business**

**Are our Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business held in the spirit of worship, seeking the guidance of God? In what ways do we each take our right share of responsibility in the service of the Meeting?**

**December 2019 Calendar**

**Meeting for Worship is held at 11:00 a.m. every First Day.**  
**The meeting room is also available for worship at 9:30 a.m., except on the first First day of the month, when Meeting for Business is held at 9:00 a.m.**  
**The Meeting Room is available for worship at BFM on Wednesdays, at 7:30 p.m.**  
**A worship group meets in Boyds the second Sunday of the month at 11:00 a.m.**

<b>1</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>9:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Meeting for Business (Child Care is Provided)</b>
		<b>11:00 a.m.</b>	<b>FDS: Worship &amp; "Let's Put on a Show!"</b>
		<b>12:15 p.m.</b>	<b>Holiday Book Sale, Literature Table</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>9:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Christmas Celebration Orchestra Rehearsal, Groome Bldg.</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>11:00 a.m.</b>	<b>FDS: Worship &amp; "Let's Put on a Show!"</b>
		<b>12:15 p.m.</b>	<b>Holiday Book Sale, Literature Table</b>

		<b>7:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Experiment with Light</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>	<b>ARE Committee Meeting at Bernie Benson's</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>7:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Christmas Celebration Orchestra Rehearsal, Groome Bldg.</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>8:30 p.m.</b>	<b>January Newsletter Deadline</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>1:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Quaker Book Group in the BFM Library</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>9:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Committee Day: Pastoral Care and Ministry &amp; Worship</b>
		<b>9:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Committee Day: Outreach &amp; Communications</b>
		<b>9:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Christmas Celeb. Orch. Rehearsal, Music Room, SAM Bldg.</b>
		<b>10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>FDS: Christmas Celebration Dress Rehearsal</b>
		<b>12:00 noon</b>	<b>Christmas Celebration &amp; Holiday Book Sale, Groome Bldg.</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>8:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Candlelight Meeting for Worship</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>BFM Service Day: A Wider Circle</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>12:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Coordinating Gathering</b>
		<b>12:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Spring Fling Meeting</b>

Details are available on our web site: [www.bethesdafriends.org](http://www.bethesdafriends.org)

**The Social Concerns Box**

A Wider Circle is the recipient for the Social Concerns Box in December. It is a local non-profit organization that assists individuals and families moving out of shelters to more stable living situations. A Wider Circle also offers intensive courses on job skills, financial planning, stress management, nutrition, and parenting. Its mission is to end poverty. Anyone in need of help can find it there. Each year, A Wider Circle furnishes the homes of more than 4,000 families (through donated items), helping to create the stability and dignity that everyone deserves. They also provide more than 400 educational programs per year. After A Wider Circle receives or picks up your donated item, it only takes about 24 to 48 hours for it to find a new home. More than 30,000 volunteers come to serve at A Wider Circle every year, including members of BFM three times a year. For more details: [www.awidercircle.org](http://www.awidercircle.org)

On a sunny but cool day, on November 3, 16 children and BFM adults joined the annual BFM walkathon to support 25 homeless mothers and their children who are helped by Interfaith Works social workers as the families work toward economic independence and acquire skills to support their families in the future. The walkathon raised \$520 that will be added to the \$424 from the October social concerns box on the credenza and the \$1,000 allocated in the BFM budget for a total of \$1,944. The total will be matched by the Cafritz Fund.

**Religious Education for Children**

The Religious Education Committee aims to assure that children are full participants in the Meeting Community. We hope to achieve this through a robust First Day School (FDS)

program, encouraging children to participate in Meeting for Worship, and helping children and adults in the community to get to know each other better.

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

The December theme is “Let’s put on a show!” Join us for another fun year of creating an original play for BFM’s holiday celebration on December 15. As we practice the script, we will learn also about the birth of Jesus, the Nativity story, and the experience of young Quakers. Children can join the play at any point; someone will teach children who do not want to be in the play, or who have small parts, i.e., will participate the “day of” the play.

Dec. 1st: Introduction of the script. Children will confirm their parts, and develop their lines.

Dec. 8th: We will try an initial run-through of the production.

Dec. 15th: Final dress rehearsal and the play at the rise of Meeting.

Dec. 22nd & 29th: There is no FDS, but child supervision is available.

For information about Quaker summer camps, see: <http://quakersdc.org/node/912>

Fall Update for the 2019-20 school year.

Our curriculum in 2019-20 will focus on New Testament stories, Quaker leaders, and Quaker testimonies. Many of our traditional activities and annual community service projects are already on the calendar. Also, we are testing a new initiative this year. During the school week, recess, neighborhood play, and time in nature are in very short supply for our children. To address this gap, on the third and fifth Sundays of the month, the multi-age group activity will be unstructured free play outdoors. We expect children to come dressed for the weather, but if it is raining hard or icy cold, we will move indoors.

## Events

### **1st: Meeting for Business**

On Sunday, December 1 at 9:00 a.m., Bethesda Friends Meeting 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 for Meeting for Business this month are reports from Nominating (final), Outreach & Communications, and Fellowship & Hospitality. All who come to Meeting for Worship are welcome and encouraged to participate in our worship. Childcare to age 12 is provided. Please join us if you can.

### **1st/8th/15th: Holiday Book Sale**

The BFM book table staff will hold a special holiday sale in the meeting library at the rise of the 11:00 a.m. meeting for worship on Sunday, December 1 and 8, and at the Christmas Celebration on Sunday, December 15. We will offer a variety of specially selected new titles for both children and adults that we hope will delight the eye and engage the imagination. Please stop by the table if you can. You may find a holiday gift for a friend, a family member, or even yourself.

Palestinian olive oil will also be on sale in the Meetinghouse on the same days. A bottle of olive oil makes a great gift and supports Palestinian farmers.

Also on sale are Ramallah Friends School tee shirts and sweatshirts. Cost: \$20 for T-shirts, \$40 for hoodies. All proceeds go to Ramallah Friends School.

#### **4th/11th: Mid-week Meetings for Worship**

On Wednesday evenings, at 7:30 p.m., Meeting Room is available for worship. All are welcome! This is an opportunity for some to come for whom Sundays are just too busy. Others may appreciate the additional time for communal worship. Please come when the Spirit moves you. Child care is not available. Please note that the meeting on Wednesday, December 18, will begin at 8:00, not 7:30 p.m., and will be the very special Candlelight Meeting for Worship (see under the 18th, below).

#### **7th/11th/15th: Christmas Pageant Orchestra**

Orchestra rehearsals are:

- Saturday, December 7, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. (Groome Building multipurpose room).
- Wednesday, December 11, 7:30 p.m. (t.b.d.)
- Sunday, December 15, 9:30 a.m. (SAM Building basement); then 11:00 a.m. “dress rehearsal” (Groome Building multipurpose room); and noon performance.

#### **8th: Up-County Worship Group**

Live up-County? Our participation is welcome at the Up-County Meeting for Worship at Breezy Hollow Farm (19701 Bucklodge Road, Route 117) in Boyds MD at 11:00 a.m., the second Sunday of the month. Worship is followed by a potluck lunch.

#### **8th: Experiment With Light Session**

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

This is an invitation to a session on Sunday evening, December 8, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

#### **14th: Quaker Book Group Meeting**

The Quaker Book Group meets monthly, in the BFM Library from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. on the second Saturday of the month (December 14). 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 managed through an online mailing list to share announcements, summaries, and thoughts about the readings.

#### **15th: BFM’s Christmas Celebration**

This year's Christmas Celebration, which is a continuation of Meeting for Worship, will be held on Sunday, December 15 at approximately 12:00 noon. At the appropriate time, F(f)riends will be led from the Meeting room into the Groome Building. Our orchestra will accompany carols and play festive music. All are welcome. Because there will be an unusually large number of people coming, your contributions of refreshments and goodies will be greatly appreciated.

### **18th: Candlelight Meeting for Worship**

Please mark your calendars for our annual Candlelight Meeting for Worship at 8:00 p.m., Wednesday, December 18. For more than 25 years, Friends have come to appreciate, in the midst of non-stop holiday activity and anxiety, this peaceful hour together. People of all ages are most welcome. Please invite friends, neighbors, and colleagues to join us. This is a refreshing way to celebrate the season, so please join us.

### **21st: BFM Service Day at A Wider Circle**

On Saturday, December 21, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, please join BFM's Peace & Social Justice Committee in our seventh annual volunteer day during A Wider Circle's December Holiday Giving Program, called Give Love for the Holidays. A Wider Circle (AWC) is a non-profit organization that assists individuals and families transitioning out of shelters to more stable living situations by providing "basic need items" such as furniture. During the month of December, AWC seeks to make the holidays a time of joy for these families by providing new holiday gifts to them. Part of our group will work in the "North Pole" area (where clients choose gifts) and others will help wrap gifts or help with the important work in the other areas of the warehouse.

Please join us to help during this holiday season. Individuals and families are welcome! Students are especially welcome to help and can get SSL (student service learning) hours for volunteering here. A Wider Circle is at 9159-C Brookville Road, about half-way between Silver Spring and Bethesda, near Grubb Road and East-West Highway. For details about the organization: [www.awidercircle.org](http://www.awidercircle.org) This is a great opportunity to get to know others at BFM while helping out a great cause!

If you are unable to join us but would like to contribute, please consider donating money to the December Social Concerns Box. Or you can take new unwrapped toys and other items to AWC's North Pole (the earlier in the month, the better). Needed items (new) for the Holiday Program are games, books, dolls; hats, gloves, and scarves; body lotion, soaps; and gift cards. You can learn more at <http://awidercircle.org/holidays/>

### **22nd: 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. On Sunday, December 22, at 12:30 p.m., we will meet in the Meeting room.

## **Into the Future**

### **Planning Ahead**

For those who are already planning for the new year, Meetings for Business in the first half of 2020 will be: January 5, February 2, March 1, April 5, May 3, and June 7. Coordinating gatherings will usually be at the rise of Meeting on the Sundays before Meeting for Business, (January 26, February 23, March 29, April 19, and May 31). Committee meeting times are determined by what suits most members of the committee, and a regular time for meeting can be determined at the first meeting of the committee. Although meeting times may change, at this point many committees meet on the third Sunday: Pastoral Care meets 9:00 a.m.; Ministry & Worship meets at 9:15 a.m.; and Outreach & Communications and Stewardship & Finance meet at 9:30 a.m. Peace & Social Justice meets the fourth Sunday at 9:15 a.m.

At this time of transition of committee membership, it is very important for committee clerks to reach out to newly nominated members and invite them to the next committee meeting. It is also very important to designate the new clerks for each committee on or before January 13, so that this information can be included in the new directory and the February newsletter. For those uncertain about taking on the responsibility of being a clerk, fear not! We have a BFM resource guide for clerks that will answer all your questions, as well as past clerks who will be happy to give guidance to you when you may need it. It is on pages 47 to 52 of the 2019 directory. There are funds available for scholarships to Pendle Hill, which often offers excellent workshops on clerking and Quaker leadership.

### **January 4th: Wedding**

Bethesda Friends Meeting is hosting a wedding under its care in the Meeting Room on January 4, at 2:00 p.m. All are welcome.

### **January 12th: Held in the Light for Transformative Conversations about Race**

On Sunday, January 12, at 9:15 a.m., we are invited to participate in transformative conversations about race. The location is to be decided. While we wish to be more inclusive and more sensitive to the social construct of race (and other differences) at BFM, it is often uncomfortable to have honest explorations of the topic for all kinds of reasons. The BFM Diversity Change Group wishes to create a safe space to have uncomfortable conversations about our white-dominant culture, as white-majority Quakers. Please join us to learn more about how the system of white dominance works and how to get used to difficult conversations that are needed to move forward and become more anti-racist as individuals and as a community.

### **February 7th to 9th: BYM Women's Retreat**

The 2020 Baltimore Yearly Meeting Women's Retreat will be held the weekend of February 7 through February 9 at the Pearlstone Conference Center in Reisterstown MD. The theme is Diligence in Love, Overcoming Isolation. Spend time relaxing, reconnecting, and restoring your joy with workshops, chanting, worship, long walks, and delicious meals. Registration is now open through this link:

<https://womensretreat.bym-rsf.net> For the best rate, register by December 27. Registration ends January 23.

### **February 9th: End of Life Care: Five Wishes**

Following up on two presentations on Living in the Gift of Presence and In the Light of Death in September and November, the Pastoral Care Committee will be hosting a session on making our end of life care wishes known well ahead of the time they might be needed. Five Wishes is a very helpful way to alert medical professionals and loved ones about what is important to you in your care. Please come to the Music Room on Sunday, February 9, at 9:15 a.m. to learn more about Five Wishes. Copies of the Five Wishes booklet are available in the BFM Library (southwest corner, near the Pendle Hill pamphlets) or see: <https://fivewishes.org/#>

### **Committee Notes**

#### **Fellowship & Hospitality**

We thank Fellowship & Hospitality for providing refreshments at the rise of Meeting in December. The committee oversees hospitality after Meetings for Worship and potlucks, although direct responsibility rotates among all committees. F&H provides hospitality for special occasions, such as memorial meetings.

#### **Ministry & Worship**

What Do We Do When It Snows? In general, there will be Meeting for Worship if the Sidwell Friends Lower School is open. To find out, check: [www.sidwell.edu](http://www.sidwell.edu) If the meetinghouse is open, whoever comes will hold Meeting for Worship. Those without computers can call someone else who does have one, or the school security office: 202-537-8197.

#### **Nominating**

The proposed roster of officers and committee members for 2020 will be presented for approval at Meeting for Business on December 1.

Current committee clerks are encouraged to welcome new committee members and inform them of the time and place of the first committee meeting of 2020. At that meeting, the agenda should include orientation of new members and selection of the clerk (or co-clerks) for the new year. Please submit the names of the new clerks no later than mid-January. For information on choosing a clerk and other committee functions, please see the Committee Resource Guide beginning on page 47 of the 2019 Directory.

#### **Stewardship & Finance**

**End of Year Giving.** In this season of sharing and giving thanks, let us all remember Bethesda Friends Meeting with our contributions. Our community and work depend on our combined financial support. As we approach the half-way point in our fiscal year, we need to pay our obligation to our regional Quaker organization, the Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Also, the Quaker and other nonprofit groups that we support are counting on our annual donations. You

can slip your check into the collection box outside the meeting room or mail it to our assistant treasurer. If you prefer online credit card transactions, go to: [www.bethesdafriends.org](http://www.bethesdafriends.org)

Or consider setting up automatic transfers from your bank account. Talk to your local branch bank about how to do this. Automatic contributions have the advantages of being convenient for the giver and giving BFM a degree of income predictability.

We welcome all contributions, large or small!

### **Meeting Notes**

#### **Thinking about Race**

“More of Maryland’s prison population is black than in any other state in the nation,” reports the Justice Policy Institute. More than 70% of Maryland’s prison population was black in 2018, compared with 31% of the state population, according to the report. That rate far surpasses the next closest states (Mississippi, South Carolina and Georgia), researchers found.

“The national average is 32% of a state’s prison population is black. The rates of incarceration for young black males is the highest of anywhere in the country,” said Marc Schindler, executive director of the Justice Policy Institute, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit, that aims to reduce incarceration. On Wednesday, the group released a report on the racial disparities in Maryland prisons. Maryland Public Defender Paul DeWolfe called the report’s findings “shocking, but unfortunately not surprising. We see these racial disparities in who our clients are and how they are treated every day,” DeWolfe said, “and we are constantly challenging exceptionally lengthy sentences that are imposed on black and brown youth.” DeWolfe said the state’s prison population is larger than it should be partly because of policies that allow for racial disparities in sentencing. “Hopefully, this report will encourage meaningful reform to provide Maryland with a more just system,” he said. See:

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/crime/bs-md-cr-black-prison-population-report-20191106-k4frv4ksfbfgrj6rnwt4biflua-story.html> This story, of which excerpts appear above, was reported by Jessica Anderson in the November 6, 2019, edition of the *Baltimore Sun*. The article contains a link to the full report by the Justice Policy Institute.

### **Directory**

The BFM 2020 Directories will be sent to the printer and mailed out to people the third or fourth week of January 2020.