

## Bethesda Friends Meeting Newsletter for July/August 2019:

### A Guide to What's Inside!

Social Concerns Box

Religious Education

Events

Committee Notes

From the Clerks: Who Are We?

Hospitality in July & August

Publications

Digitization Committee

Meeting Notes

### 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 2019 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 worship, except on Sunday, July 14, when Meeting for Business is held at 9:00 a.m. The meeting room is available for worship on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m.

June 30 to July 6			Friends General Conference, Grinnell IA
July 7	Sun	12:30 p.m.	Coordinating Gathering, Meeting Room
July 8 to 12			AFSC's South Region Youth Summit, Howard University
July 13	Sat	1:30 p.m.	Quaker Book Group, BFM Library
July 14	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Meeting for Business (Child Care is Provided)
		11:00 a.m.	Up-County Worship Group, Boyds MD
July 21	Sun	9:30 a.m.	ARE: Spiritual Coffee House, Music Room
		7:30 p.m.	Experiment with Light
July 27	Sat	2:00 p.m.	Memorial Meeting for Susan Lepper, FMW
July 29	Mon	2:30 p.m.	BYM Retreat, Hood College, Frederick MD
July 29 to August 4			BYM Annual Gathering, Hood College, Frederick MD
August 10	Sat	1:30 p.m.	Quaker Book Group, BFM Library
August 11	Sun	11:00 a.m.	Up-County Worship Group, Boyds MD
		1:00 p.m.	Library Committee

<b>August 13</b>	<b>Tues</b>	<b>8:30 p.m.</b>	<b>September Newsletter Deadline</b>
<b>August 18</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>9:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Pastoral Care Committee</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). More than 50 years ago (in 1967), Friends World Committee for Consultation organized RSWR 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. RSWR 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 fiscal year 2017, RSWR was able to give 55 grants totaling \$447,000 to fund 55 groups, which supported 1,290 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: [www.rswr.org](http://www.rswr.org)

In May, the Literacy Council of Montgomery County received \$105.

### **Religious Education for Children**

During the summer months, there will be Supervised Play for elementary school aged children. If the children need to be indoors, supervised play will be in the Groome Building (either the lower level classroom or in the cafeteria). Child care will continue during the summer for children who are 6 months through pre-K in the child care room, in the Meeting House. NOTE: Usually the two groups will combine and play as a group together. For this reason, a BFM volunteer is helpful to assist. If you can volunteer, please sign up at: <https://www.bethesdafriends.org/Child-Care>

### **Events**

#### **June 30 to July 6th: Friends General Conference (FGC) Gathering**

The FGC Gathering this year will be at Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa. The theme is "Peace in our Hearts, Justice in the World." 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](http://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. There are both half-gathering and part-time attender options for adults. Financial aid is available. Due to a generous donation, there are no program fees for children and high school students and more scholarships for families.

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 volunteer-led 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](http://www.fgcquaker.org) If you would like assistance with expenses, please contact the Pastoral Care Committee.

### **July 7th: 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, July 7, at the rise of Meeting.

### **July 8th to 12th: AFSC’s South Region Youth Summit**

American Friends Service Committee’s South Region Youth Summit is an opportunity for youth aged 14 to 22 from across the region (West Virginia; Atlanta, GA; Washington, DC; North Carolina; New Orleans, Louisiana; Baltimore, MD; Miami, FL) to come together across communities and learn about the lives and experiences of one another. Over the course of a week, youth will learn about and participate in youth-led advocacy; receive a baseline foundational education of racism, colonialism, and imperialism; and have the opportunity to network with other youth, and DC-based and AFSC-staff activists and organizers. This year, AFSC’s South Region Youth Summit will take place from July 8 to 12 here in Washington, DC, at Howard University. All costs will be covered by AFSC. The summit is a 24/7 commitment Monday to Friday. Youth based in DC will be expected to stay with the youth traveling from other states at Howard University. Commuting from home will not be an option. For details: Rachel Bergsieker at [rbergsieker@afsc.org](mailto:rbergsieker@afsc.org)

### **July 13th/August 10th: Quaker Book Group**

The Quaker Book Group meets monthly, in the BFM Library from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. 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. For details:

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/bfm-book-group>

### **July 14th: Meeting for Business**

On Sunday, July 14, 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. All who come to Meeting for Worship are welcome and encouraged to participate in our worship. On the agenda are the annual report of the Book Table and a report on the June 15 BYM Interim Meeting. The ad hoc Committee to Nominate the Nominating Committee will be bringing its recommendations for persons to serve on the Nominating Committee. Child care up to age 12 is provided.

### **July 14th/August 11th: Up-County Worship Group**

Live up-County? The Up-County Worship Group would welcome our attendance at 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.

### **July 21st: Spiritual Coffee House**

Please gather with other Friends for a “Spiritual Coffee House,” on Sunday, July 21 at 9:30 a.m. Participants are encouraged to bring writings, poems, songs, music, artwork, photography, and anything else that speaks to your heart and your spirit. These can be your own creations, or the creations of others. Even if you choose not to bring anything, please feel welcome to join us and experience the joy of sharing what inspires us and opens our hearts. This is becoming a beloved tradition of gathering twice a year to share delight and inspiration from the arts. Weather permitting, we will meet outside on the patio between the Meeting House and the SAM Building. If there is rain, we will meet in the Music Room.

### **July 21st/August 18th: 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. We will be meeting on Sunday evenings, at 7:30 p.m., on July 21 and August 18. Please come if you can!

### **July 27th: Memorial Meeting for Susan Lepper**

The memorial meeting for Susan Lepper will take place on Saturday, July 27, at 2:00 p.m. in the Meetinghouse of the Friends Meeting of Washington, 2111 Florida Avenue, NW, with a reception to follow in the Assembly Room at rise of meeting.

### **July 29th to August 4th: Baltimore Yearly Meeting Annual Session**

Friends from across the region will gather from July 29 to August 4 at Hood College in Frederick MD to consider “Quaker Tools for the Journey.” The session opens with a one-day retreat Monday during which attendees will hear from Marcelle Martin, author of the widely acclaimed “Our Life of Love: The Quaker Spiritual Journey.” Patricia Nesbitt, a member of Sandy Spring Friends Meeting, an environmental consultant, and most recently a palliative care nurse, will be the Tuesday evening plenary speaker. The Wednesday afternoon plenary program will feature a discussion by Young Adult Friends on some tools that Friends can use when confronting racism in their daily lives. The program is planned for ages 10 and up and will be led by Dr. Jennifer DeLorge-Mckeown. Jennifer also will conduct a parallel program for K to 3rd/4th graders. Eileen Flanagan will be the Saturday evening Carey Lecturer. Eileen worshiped regularly with us at BFM a number of years ago and is now a member of Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting in Pennsylvania. She is a Quaker author, activist, and teacher. A wide range of workshops and interest groups will also carry out various aspects of this year’s theme or give us a chance to experience listening for new ideas and making connections.

PRICE TO ATTEND: <https://www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession/rates.html#costs>

--All children from birth through 8th grade can attend at no cost.

--Up to three individuals from BFM who have never attended or want to participate after a long absence can receive a voucher from BFM good for attending for up two days at no cost. (Contact a member of Pastoral Care).

**--New for 2019! All *First Time Attenders* May Come on Saturday for Free! Stay for the day! Stay the night and join us for worship on Sunday!**

You can learn more about workshops and interest groups in the Spring Interchange which arrived in early May or at Find event details on the links at this URL: <https://t.e2ma.net/message/gn24bg/8sdriuc> or at [www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession](http://www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession)

## **Committee Notes**

### **From the Clerks of BFM: Who Are We?**

Baltimore Yearly Meeting has again asked us to gather data about the racial/ethnic and generational composition of our BFM community. At the April Meeting for Worship with attention to Business, BFM approved the Co-Clerks' recommendation that a survey be carried out in a way that is in harmony with a similar exercise in 2017. We do this with the understanding that it is only one step in our communal reflections on the opportunities and challenges of becoming the diverse community we wish to be. Accordingly, beginning on June 16 and continuing through the end of September, all who attend our Meeting for Worship will be invited and encouraged to answer three questions on a postcard as they are led (or to decline to answer some or all of the questions). The first question is worded as follows: "We understand that race and/or ethnic identity is a social construct and that all human beings share a common ancestor; nevertheless how would you describe your race and/or ethnic identity?" The second question is worded "Are you between the ages of 18 and 35 inclusive?" A third question has been added since 2017 at the suggestion of the Ad Hoc Committee on Inclusion and is worded as follows: "Do you consider yourself a Person of Color?" The cards will be collected in a box on the credenza and will be anonymous. Thank you for your participation in this endeavor.

### **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 well-being, both physical and spiritual, of individuals within the Meeting. 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.

## **Digitization Committee**

The BFM ad hoc Digitization Committee has worked hard this past year to set up the new Wild Apricot (WA) software system that was approved last June 2018. The team formatted, matched, and merged all the information about BFM members, attenders, and donors from BFM's three, long-term data repositories (directory, recorder, and donor files). The data were loaded into the WA system in May in preparation for a July 1 launch date.

The “people” database has contact and historical information. The team will update it in parallel to all the current record keeping during a 9 to 12 month trial period.

On July 1, donations made online will be recorded in the WA system and will then be exported to QuickBooks. Checks and cash will mostly continue along the current procedures.

The new website will have similar content to the current one, but an updated look and features that are more easily customized.

Over the summer, the team will add secure login areas for committees or clerks who want to post their minutes, annual reports, budgets, etc.

## **Meeting Notes**

### **Peace Notes**

Many people in our community travel over the summer. To learn how to be a conscientious traveler, see: <https://epicureandculture.com/ethical-travel>. As we journey around the region, the country, or the world, let us be the change that we wish to see.

### **Thinking About Race**

From *Race and Privilege in Europe*, published by the Quaker Council on European Affairs (QCEA), *Anti-racism as a spiritual practice* (p. 65):

Anti-racism activities will offer our communities opportunities for connection and growth. In her chapter ‘Not Somewhere else, but here: the struggle for racial justice as a struggle to inhabit my country’ Rebecca Parker imagines anti-racist activism as a spiritual practice that can enable us to reclaim our humanity from a life of “numbness and disengagement.”

This challenge may feel overwhelming, but it is necessary and presents opportunities for growth. We need to unlearn behaviours and assumptions we have as part of a group with privilege. We need to discover seeking racial justice as a spiritual practice.

QCEA Assistant Clerk (vice-chair) and Swiss Quaker Rorie Nazareth says, “It would be interesting to think of the spiritual practice in two ways. One way is developing the capacity of self-awareness ... about racism, [which] makes me deeply uncomfortable, defensive, angry, etc. Second is looking at working toward the structures that enforce equality as well as the internal, unconscious biases that drive the attitudes of racism that can persist even when there are laws against it.”