

Bethesda Friends Meeting December 2020 Newsletter

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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 2020 Calendar

Our Meeting House remains closed for the foreseeable future due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During November, there was some in-person worship in tents, but now that the tents have been taken down, that option is no longer there. In the meantime, creative responses to continuing Sunday Meeting for Worship at 11:00 a.m. include an opportunity to socialize before and after Meeting for Worship, committee meetings, and other activities via Zoom. We have a stay-at-home mid-week worship on Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m.

2	Wed	8:00 p.m.	Mid-week Worship (check by e-mail)
3	Thurs	7:00 p.m.	Bible Study (via Zoom)
6	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Meeting for Business (All invited, via Zoom)
		11:00 a.m.	Meeting for Worship (via Zoom)
		7:30 p.m.	Experiment with Light (via e-mail/phone, Zoom Sharing)
9	Wed	8:00 p.m.	Mid-week Worship (check by e-mail)
10	Thurs	6:00 p.m.	Black Caucus Healing Space (via Zoom)
		7:00 p.m.	Bible Study (via Zoom)
12	Sat	1:00 p.m.	Black Caucus Healing Space (via Zoom)
		1:30 p.m.	Quaker Book Group (via Zoom)
13	Sun	11:00 a.m.	Meeting for Worship (via Zoom)
		8:30 p.m.	January Newsletter Deadline
16	Wed	8:00 p.m.	Mid-week Worship (check by e-mail)
17	Thurs	7:00 p.m.	Bible Study (via Zoom)
20	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Committee Day: Pastoral Care and Ministry & Worship
		11:00 a.m.	Meeting for Worship (via Zoom) (No Christmas Celebration)
		1:00 p.m.	Coordinating Gathering (via Zoom)
22	Tues	8:00 p.m.	Candlelight Meeting for Worship (via Zoom)
23	Wed	8:00 p.m.	Mid-week Worship (check by e-mail)

27 Sun 11:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship (via Zoom)
30 Wed 8:00 p.m. Mid-week Worship (check by e-mail)

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

The Social Concerns Box

The Social Concerns Box for December is Bread for the City. Bread for the City is a major provider of food, clothing, medical care and legal and social services for thousands of low-income DC residents. Its greatest pandemic-period surge, as reported by its centers in Shaw and Anacostia, is a 400 percent increase over last year in families needing free food. Also up sharply: demand for legal services involving evictions, debt disputes and withheld government benefits. Bread for the City also provides free COVID tests on demand for walk-ins. Its advocacy unit last month won a federal lawsuit restoring for 20,000 DC residents SNAP (food stamp) benefits that the U.S. Department of Agriculture planned to eliminate in April. To donate to the Social Concerns Box, please go to: www.bethesdafriends.org and clearly designate that your contribution is for the Social Concerns Box. If you prefer, you may send your check, made payable to Bethesda Friends Meeting, to Assistant Treasurer, Bethesda Friends Meeting, 3050 Military Road, NW, Apartment 834, Washington DC 20015.

The First Day School Walkathon raised \$625, and the October Social Concerns Box received \$100 for the Interfaith Works program for the homeless.

Religious Education for Children

Thank you to everyone who participated virtually and in person on Sunday, November 1 for our annual Walk-a-thon to raise money for the Interfaith Works Help the Homeless program. Sixteen people representing eight families walked in Bethesda on a lovely fall day, holding signs and banners high while staying physically distant. (Photos are online.) Generous donations from those who walked and those who joined in spirit totaled \$635 giving Bethesda Friends Meeting second place in overall donations!

The Religious Education Committee continues to work together and with FDS teachers to think about ways for children, families, and the Meeting to stay connected to each other during this time when we're not meeting for classes in person. Please continue to check the weekly bulletin for updates.

Events

3rd/10th/17th: Bible Study

Bible Study will meet the first three Thursdays in December at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom with the Great Courses series, Understanding the Old Testament. The lectures cover Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Judges. We will not meet on December 24 or 31.

6th: Meeting for Business

On Sunday, December 6, at 9:00 a.m. Bethesda F(f)riends will consider various business items at its Zoom Meeting for Business. 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. Meeting for Business will include reports from Nominating, Outreach & Communications, Fellowship & Hospitality, and BYM Interim Meeting. Please join us if you can.

6th/13th/20th/27th/: Meeting for Worship

BFM Friends continue to worship together each Sunday, either by entering into silent worship at home, and then joining on the listserv for Joys and Sorrows, or by worshipping via Zoom, where we can see one another. It has been a real joy to see so many people, including out-of-town Friends, and some families with kids, joining us each week. The following link will be opened at 10:45 a.m. every First Day to allow friends to socialize a bit before the beginning of worship at 11:00 a.m. After worship and announcements are concluded, Friends are invited to linger for informal conversation for 15 to 20 minutes. Many of us have missed the chance to connect after worship with our weekly coffee hour. To fill this gap, Fellowship & Hospitality and Outreach & Communication will host a “chat time” each Sunday before the Zoom meeting is ended.

Joys and Sorrows. For those Bethesda Friends worshipping by Zoom, there will be an opportunity to share joys and sorrows with one another in the Zoom meeting. Bear in mind that other Bethesda Friends are worshipping at home on their own, without connecting to Zoom, and then sharing joys and sorrows on the listserv. You may want to check the listserv after the Zoom meeting is over and see what other Friends have said; you might want to add your own joys and sorrows to the listserv as well.

2nd/9th/16th/23rd, 30th: Mid-week Worship

Over-zoomed? Join BFM Friends’ “low tech” email mid-week worship on Wednesdays from 8:00 to 8:30 p.m. Each of us worships in our homes without video or audio. While some simply join in spirit, those wishing to touch base with the others receive emails at the start and end of worship. At rise of meeting, email participants are invited to worship-share via reply-all with the evening’s email group.

6th: 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 6, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Starting at 7:30 p.m., you can follow the prompts at home and write or draw responses you have experienced during those prompts. Here is the link to the prompts: <https://www.experiment-with-light.org.uk/modindos.mp3> Then around 8:30 p.m., if you would like to worship-share from your meditation experience and want to join in a Zoom gathering, there will be one.

10th/12th: Black Caucus Healing Space

The Reparations Working Group will be hosting two age-cohort Black Caucus healing spaces for the BYM community. These events are specifically designed to create a respite, space to share thoughts, ideas, and experiences with one another, and a safe space to heal. This caucus will provide a space to understand each of our unique experiences and will help ensure that the Reparations Action Working Group centers Black voices and does its work in an anti-racist way.

The gatherings will be on Thursday, December 10, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. for those born after 1980 and Saturday, December 12, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. for those born before 1980. Please only sign up for one! Ideally, these groups would be divided by age, however if only one date works for you and it does not correspond to your age group, please still sign up.

Anti-racist work is about making space for marginalized groups. This group is for Black Friends and People of Color only. White people may not join this conversation. We will allow all BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) to join us. However, we will center the stories and experiences of Black People. For details:

<https://www.bym-rsf.org/events/ymevents/ymeventscal.html/event/2020/12/10/reparations-working-group-black-caucus-healing-space/312179> or Nikki Richards (nikkirichards1993@gmail.com) or Khalilalomax (khalilalomax@bym-rsf.org.) To register:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdMkOYfAToHYTeIobR4IUAMoExleg_az0jTGQuKBz-hcYNdUw/viewform

12th: Quaker Book Group Meeting

The Quaker Book Group meets monthly, via Zoom from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. In December, it meets on December 12 to discuss *Black Fire: African American Quakers on Spirituality and Human Rights* (edited by Harold Weaver). 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 invited to share announcements, summaries, and thoughts about the readings through an online mailing list.

20th: Christmas Celebration Cancelled

Normally we would have our wonderful Christmas Celebration the Sunday before Christmas, when the children put on a play and an orchestra performs and leads us in song. We are not able to do that this year, because of the restrictions caused by the pandemic. We suggest that you attend the Candlelight Meeting on the 22nd. Children are warmly invited (in pajamas if you like!)

20th: 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, December 20, at 1:00 p.m., via Zoom, in preparation for the Meeting for Business on January 3.

22nd: Candlelight Meeting for Worship

Please join us for our annual Candlelight Meeting for Worship at 8:00 p.m., on Tuesday, December 22. For more than 25 years, Friends have gathered for a peaceful hour of respite from the holiday rush. Now, after a year of anguish and uncertainty that has kept families and friends apart, we gather together once again: this time via Zoom. Light your own candles to shine in the darkness! Please be on time.

Into the Future

Planning Ahead

For those who are already planning for the new year, Meetings for Business in the first half of 2021 will be: January 3, February 7, March 7, April 11, May 2, June 6, and July 18. Coordinating gatherings will usually be at the rise of Meeting on the Sundays before Meeting for Business, (January 31, February 28, March 28, April 25, May 23, and July 11). Although meeting times may change, at this point many committees meet on the third Sunday: Pastoral Care meets 9:00 a.m.; Ministry & Worship and Stewardship & Finance meet at 9:15 a.m. Peace & Social Justice meets the fourth Sunday at 9:15 a.m. Other committees meet as the way opens.

February 6th: BYM Women's Retreat

The BYM Women's Retreat will not be in person this year. Although this comes as no surprise, we will greatly miss our annual winter opportunity to gather in fellowship. Friends Meeting of Washington, which was lined up to plan the 2021 retreat, has graciously agreed to plan 2022 with the hope that we will be able to meet in person by then. In lieu of a retreat in 2021, the Women's Retreat Working Group will offer an online Meeting for Worship and time for connection on Saturday, February 6, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. The Zoom link will be sent out closer to the date. For details: womensretreat@bym-rsf.org

Committee Notes

Nominating

The roster of officers and committee members for the first half of 2021 is at the end of the newsletter. Most who were nominated and approved in December 2019 are continuing until the end of June 2021, when the Nominating Committee will present a slate for July 2021 to June 2022.

Stewardship & Finance

Financial support for our Meeting's routine activities, as well as for our contributions to Quaker organizations and others, comes almost entirely from our members and attenders. Some of us have limited income, heavy expenses, or both, but small, as well as large, contributions are appreciated. All contributions help us maintain our practical, as well as spiritual, connection to the Meeting and all it represents. Please donate as generously as possible either online at: <https://www.bethesdafriends.org/Donate-Online-Now> or by check. Checks should be made payable to Bethesda Friends Meeting and mailed to BFM Assistant Treasurer, 3050 Military Road, NW, Apt. 834, Washington, DC 20015.

Library Committee

The following newly purchased books are available to borrow by mail from the BFM Library. Please email your request via the BFM web site.

- Klug, Ron, *How to Keep a Spiritual Journal: A Guide to Journal Keeping for Inner Growth and Personal Discovery* (Spirituality, Writing)
- Kavanagh, Jennifer, *Practical Mysticism: Quaker Faith in Action* (Religious Society of Friends, Mysticism)
- Langford, Michael, *Becoming Fully Human: Writings on Quakers and Christian Thought*, (Religious Society of Friends, Christianity)
- Erlbruch, Wolf, *Duck, Death and the Tulip*, (Parenting Shelf, Death)
- Irving, N. J., *Dance Like a Leaf*, (Parenting Shelf, Death of Grandmother)
- Hoover, Nadine Clare, *Walking in the World as a Friend: Essential Quaker Practices* (Religious Society of Friends, Quaker Practice)
- Kester-McCabe, Dana, *The Seeker's Field Guide to Exploring Spirituality* (Spirituality, Spiritual Guide)
- Wise, Tim, *Dear White America: Letter to a New Majority*, (Race Identity, Racial Disparity)
- Jewell, Tiffany, *This Book is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do the Work* (Anti-Racism, Race Relations)
- Menakem, Resmaa, *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* (Race Relations, African-American Social Conditions, Racialized Trauma)
- Gottman, John M., PH.D., *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* (Marriage, Communication, Psychology)

- Norris, Zach, *We Keep Us Safe: Building Secure, Just, and Inclusive Communities* (Human Security, Public Safety, Polarization-United States)
- Kemp, Amanda, PH.D., *Say the Wrong Thing: Stories and Strategies for Racial Justice and Authentic Community* (Racial Justice-United States)
- Kemp, Amanda, PH.D., *Stop Being Afraid-A Workbook Series for Racial Justice Advocates* (Racial Justice-United States)
- Harvey, Jennifer, *Raising White Kids: Bringing Up Children in a Racially Unjust America* (Race Awareness in Children)
- Angel, Stephen W. and Pink Dandelion (Editors), *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies* (Religious Society of Friends, Quaker Studies)
- Nye, Rebecca, *Children's Spirituality: What It Is and Why It Matters* (Spirituality-Children)

Meeting Notes

Supporting Ramallah Friends School

Palestinian olive oil is available for sale at \$20 per bottle. A bottle of olive oil makes a great gift and supports Palestinian farmers and Ramallah Friends School. Also on sale are Ramallah Friends School tee shirts and sweat shirts. Cost: \$20 for T-shirts, \$40 for hoodies. All proceeds go to Ramallah Friends School.

Thinking about Race

Black homeowners face discrimination in appraisals that can make it dramatically harder for them to buy, sell, or refinance a home, said Debra Kamin in The New York Times. The bias is so pervasive that some have turned to hiding their race from appraisers. Abena and Alex Horton in Jacksonville FL were looking to refinance their four-bedroom, four-bathroom house in a mostly white neighborhood and expected it to appraise at about \$450,000. It came in at just \$330,000. When they asked to have it reappraised, Abena took down all the photos of her family; instead, the Hortons “hung up a series of oil paintings of Alex, who is white, and his grandparents that had been in storage.” The couple edited holiday postcards so “only those showing white families were left on display.” Then Abena left the house on the day of the appraisal. The new appraisal, for exactly the same house, was \$465,000. See Kamin’s full article at:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/25/realestate/blacks-minorities-appraisals-discrimination.html?referrerSource=articleShare>