

A Guide to What's Inside!

Calendar

Queries re Our Spiritual State

Social Concerns Box

Events

Into the Future

Committee Notes

Peace & Social Justice

Meeting Notes

### January 2021 Calendar

**Our Meeting House remains closed for the foreseeable future due to the COVID-19 pandemic but our Meeting continues its worship and other activities, relying principally on meeting via Zoom. Sunday Meeting for Worship is held at 11:00 a.m., with opportunities to socialize before and after Meeting. It is a joy that Zoom and other technologies allow Friends living afar to participate in our gatherings.**

3	Sun	9:00 a.m. Meeting for Business (All are invited via Zoom) 11:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship (via Zoom)
6	Wed	8:00 p.m. Mid-Week Worship (check in by e-mail)
7	Thurs	7:00 p.m. Bible Study (via Zoom)
9/10	Sat/Sun	10:00 a.m. Junior Young Friends Conference (via Zoom)
9	Sat	1:30 p.m. Quaker Book Group (via Zoom)
10	Sun	11:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship (via Zoom) 1:00 p.m. Library Committee 7:30 p.m. Experiment With Light (via phone/e-mail, Zoom sharing)
13	Wed	8:00 p.m. Mid-Week Worship (check in by e-mail) 8:30 p.m. February Newsletter Deadline
14	Thurs	7:00 p.m. Bible Study (via Zoom)
15	Fri	7:00 p.m. BYM Camp Enrollment Opens, see: <a href="https://bymcamps.org">https://bymcamps.org</a>
16	Sat	1:30 p.m. Spiritual Formation Program Gathering (via Zoom)
17	Sun	9:00 a.m. Committee Day: Ministry & Worship; Pastoral Care 9:15 a.m. Committee Day: Stewardship & Finance (via Zoom) 11:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship (via Zoom)
20	Wed	8:00 p.m. Mid-Week Worship (check in by e-mail)
21	Thurs	7:00 p.m. Bible Study (via Zoom)
24	Sun	9:00 a.m. Peace & Social Justice Committee (via Zoom) 11:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship (via Zoom) 7:00 p.m. Anti-Racism, Social Justice, and Good Food (via Zoom) 7:30 p.m. Experiment With Light (via e-mail/phone, Zoom sharing)
27	Wed	8:00 p.m. Mid-Week Worship (check in by e-mail)
28	Thurs	7:00 p.m. Bible Study (via Zoom)
31	Sun	11:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship (via Zoom) 1:00 p.m. Coordinating Gathering (via Zoom)

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

## **Queries for January: What is the Spiritual State of Our Meeting**

**In the life of our Meeting, how are our deliberations and actions loving, caring, and Spirit led? Does our life in the Meeting leave us feeling loved, cared for, and led by the Spirit? What challenges us to be loving, caring, and Spirit led? How might there be more actions that are loving, caring, and Spirit led?**

## **Social Concerns Box**

The Social Concerns Box in January is for CCAN, the Chesapeake Climate Action Network. CCAN has only a few paid staff (and a lot of volunteers), yet they do an impressive amount of organizing, lobbying, and legal work to promote the vital switch to clean energy, and related programs. Their major fundraiser for years has been donations to people who take a plunge into the Chesapeake Bay in the midst of winter. This year, one of us will take a “brrr-tual” (virtual) plunge at home on Saturday, February 13, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. The event will begin by hearing from some inspiring speakers via Zoom, and then all take the plunge at home. Participants choose how to participate: jumping into an icy cold kiddie pool, dumping a bucket of ice water over themselves or going to a nearby body of water. The most important thing is that participants and icy water come together for a brief moment on February 13. Perhaps others would like to join the plunge this year. If so, here is the link:

<https://us-p2p.e-activist.com/4544/brrrrtual-polar-bear-plunge> This is about protecting the home of all life. Please support the effort.

To donate to the Social Concerns Box, please go to: [www.bethesdafriends.org](http://www.bethesdafriends.org) 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.

In November, the Social Concerns Box received \$825 for A Wider Circle, and the First Day School's toy drive for A Wider Circle was a huge success: elves visited more than 40 households to collect donated more than 180 items for their holiday program. Many thanks to all who made the effort possible!

## **Events**

### **3rd: Meeting for Business**

On Sunday, January 3, 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 Ministry & Worship, Child Care, the ad hoc Nominating Committee, and BYM Interim Meeting. Please join us if you can.

### **3rd/10th/17th/24th/31st: Meeting for Worship**

Bethesda Friends continue to worship together each Sunday via video conference using Zoom. Meeting for Worship begins at 11:00 a.m.

### **6th/13th/20th/27th: 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.

### **7th/14th/21st/28th: Bible Study**

Bible Study will meet on Thursdays in January at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom with the Great Courses series, Understanding the Old Testament. The lectures cover Samuel, Kings, Ruth, Esther, and Amos. Newcomers are welcome.

### **9th/10th: Junior Young Friends Conference**

Middle School-aged youth are invited to a Junior Young Friends Conference via Zoom on the weekend of January 9 and 10. Here is the link to register: [www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/jyfs/](http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/jyfs/) There may be as many as 60 kids from local Meetings hanging out and having a good time, getting to know one another, learning something, and sharing activities. For details, contact Sunshine Klein, Youth Programs Manager (301-774-7663, [youthprograms@bym-rsf.org](mailto:youthprograms@bym-rsf.org))

### **9th: Quaker Book Group Meeting**

The Quaker Book Group meets monthly, via Zoom from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. In January, it meets on January 9 to discuss *Black Fire: African American Quakers on Spirituality and Human Rights* (edited by Harold Weaver). The book is a remarkable collection of writings by (and about) African-Americans who were associated with Quakerism from before the Civil War until about 1930. 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.

### **10th/24th: Experiment With Light Sessions**

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 two sessions, one on Sunday, January 10, and the other on January 24, 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://experiment-with-light.org.uk/meditations/> We usually use the meditation on the individual in modern language, full length, 37 minute version. 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, please use the links below (remember to "unmute" your device). We anticipate that part of the gathering could go until 9:15 p.m.

### **15th: BYM Camp Enrollment Opens**

One of the most popular programs of Baltimore Yearly Meeting is the camping program at Catocin, Opequon, Shiloh, and Teen Adventure Quaker Camps. Kids have a wonderful time in the natural world and getting to know one another. Enrollment for Baltimore Yearly Meeting camping programs begins Friday, January 15, at 7:00 p.m. 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: Jane Megginson (717-481-4870) or: [www.bymcamps.org](http://www.bymcamps.org) For details about Quaker camps, see: <http://quakersdc.org/node/912>

### **16th: Spiritual Formation Program Gathering**

The current Spiritual Formation program underway at Bethesda Friends will hold its fourth gathering on Saturday, January 16, at 1:30 p.m. by Zoom. The group will select a reading at the third gathering to share in preparation. (Prior readings have included *Meditations of the Heart* by Howard Thurman and *Four Doors to Meeting for Worship*, a Pendle Hill Pamphlet by William Taber). Smaller friendship circles of program participants will meet between the gatherings to share personal support on the spiritual journey.

### **24th: Anti-racism, Social Justice, and Good Food**

Please join this Zoom event at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 24. Najjha Wright-Brown and Crystal Forman from the Black Vegetarian Society of Maryland will give a presentation followed by discussion on the interconnectedness between social justice movements, including resisting food colonialism; the vegan movement in African-American culture; and adopting a plant-based diet. Register here for the Zoom link. <https://tinyurl.com/y2mt4z76>

The event is sponsored by two Baltimore Yearly Meeting committees: the Working Group on Right Relationship with Animals and the Working Group on Racism.

### **31st: Coordinating Gathering**

Representatives of most BFM committees meet during the week before Meeting for Business to discuss the upcoming agenda (via Zoom). These meetings are open to all who wish to attend. There will be one on Sunday, January 31, at 1:00 p.m., via Zoom, in preparation for the Meeting for Business on February 7.

## **Into the Future**

### **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 for 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](mailto:womensretreat@bym-rsf.org)

## **Committee Notes**

### **Peace & Social Justice**

Back from the Brink and nuclear abolition activists throughout the world will hold a day of action on January 22, 2021 to celebrate the U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons'

entry into force. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons calls this “the beginning of the end of nuclear weapons.” The TPNW makes it illegal under international law for nations that are party to the treaty to “develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess, or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.” It was adopted by 122 nations in July 2017 and to date has been signed by leaders of 85 countries and ratified by 50 nations. Activists and advocates are urged to participate on January 22 by demonstrating support for nuclear abolition. Many activists will hold banners near prominent locations, such as city halls, local landmarks, nuclear facilities, and universities or financial institutions involved in the nuclear enterprise. Consider writing a letter to the editor of your local paper. Additional ideas for action can be found on a Nuclear Ban Treaty Entry Into Force Facebook group. For more details: [info@preventnuclearwar.org](mailto:info@preventnuclearwar.org) or <https://preventnuclearwar.org/>

## Meeting Notes

### Thinking About Race: A Justice Testimony

In his recent Pendle Hill Pamphlet (#465), *Race, Systemic Violence, and Retrospective Justice: An African-American Quaker Scholar- Activist Challenges Conventional Narratives*, Harold D. Weaver, Jr., makes the case for “a more robust, active justice testimony.” Starting in 2008, through his ministry, the Black Quaker Project, an ad hoc Working Group within New England Yearly Meeting, took up this concern. They formulated these queries, which appear in the pamphlet (pp. 29-30):

- Do we need a Justice testimony in the Religious Society of Friends? Why and how might a Justice testimony help Friends in our spiritual and temporal practices?
- What does “justice” mean to Friends? How does our meeting respond to the need for justice?
- If we disregard justice, what impact does it have on our spiritual lives and on our connection with the Divine?
- What is the relationship between love and justice? Between living in the Spirit and seeking justice? If compassion is love in action, what is justice in action?
- How does oppression dehumanize and dim the Light, both in oppressor and oppressed?

### Peace Notes

FCNL asks us to take a minute to send an important message to our legislators. September 2021 will mark 20 years of war justified by the 2001 and 2002 Authorizations for the Use of Military Force (AUMFs), which have allowed three administrations to authorize more than 40 military actions in 19 countries without congressional approval. This rampant war-making is an affront to the Quaker peace testimony and to FCNL’s vision for a world free of war and the threat of war. 2021 is the year to end endless wars once and for all. FCNL asks Quakers to write or call their legislators to ask them to repeal the 2002 Iraq AUMF within the first 100 days of Congress and support repeal of the 2001 AUMF. Information and a template can be found at this link:

[https://fcnl.quorum.us/campaign/29832/?utm\\_campaign=contacts&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=ak&utm\\_term=15116.1479.1P11Wx](https://fcnl.quorum.us/campaign/29832/?utm_campaign=contacts&utm_medium=email&utm_source=ak&utm_term=15116.1479.1P11Wx)