

Bethesda Friends Meeting April 2021 Newsletter for the website:

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Query for April: Integrity

How do we seek truth by which to live? How do we know it when we find it? In what ways does my life speak of my beliefs and values? In what ways is my life out of harmony with the truth as I know it? Why?

April 2021 Calendar

Our Meeting House remains closed 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. Tents on the grounds of the Sidwell Friends Lower School enable a few people in masks and socially distanced to meet in person. (See sign up information below.) Unless otherwise indicated, all of the following events are virtual.

1	Thurs	7:00 p.m.	Bible Study
4	Sun	12:30 p.m.	Nominating (every Sunday)
5	Mon	7:00 p.m.	Anti-Racist Declaration Explored
		7:30 p.m.	Pendle Hill: The Gathered Meeting & Quaker Voices
7	Wed	11:00 a.m.	Anti-Racist Declaration Explored
		8:00 p.m.	Mid-Week Worship (check in by email, every Wednesday)
8	Thurs	7:00 p.m.	Bible Study (Final Session)
9	Fri	7:00 p.m.	Pendle Hill Weekend Workshop on Accompaniment
10	Sat	9:15 a.m.	Youth Peace Conference
		3:00 p.m.	Memorial Meeting
		3:00 p.m.	Anti-Racist Declaration Explored
11	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Meeting for Business
		4:00 p.m.	Pendle Hill: Fierce Biblical Women Speak Power Today
		7:30 p.m.	Experiment with Light (via phone/email, Zoom sharing)
13	Tues	8:30 p.m.	Deadline for the May Newsletter
16	Fri	6:00 p.m.	Young Friends Conference
17	Sat	1:30 p.m.	Spiritual Formation Program Gathering
18	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Committee Day: Pastoral Care
		9:15 a.m.	Committee Day: Ministry & Worship, Stewardship & F.

		11:00 a.m.	Worship & Outdoor First Day Class (in person)
		12:00 noon	Reflections on Quaker Committees for Clearness
25	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Peace & Social Justice Committee
		1:00 p.m.	Coordinating Gathering
		7:30 p.m.	Experiment with Light (via phone/email, Zoom sharing)
29	Thurs	7:00 p.m.	Radical Spirituality: The Early History of Quakers
30	Fri	7:00 p.m.	Junior Young Friends Conference

Social Concerns Box

The Social Concerns Box for April is Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR). RSWR is a Quaker micro-credit organization that supports grassroots income-generating projects led by women, many of whom are making less than a dollar a day. Their mission statement 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. In 2019, RSWR made 41 grants totaling \$453,550 to fund groups which supported 1,092 women to start small businesses in India, Kenya and Sierra Leone. To learn more, see: www.rswr.org

To donate to the Social Concerns Box, please go to: 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, 3050 Military Road, NW, Apartment 834, Washington DC 20015.

Contributions in February for TASSC (Torture Abolition and Survivors’ Support Coalition) came to \$105.

Religious Education

On Sunday, April 18, at 11:00 a.m., children are invited to attend outdoor Meeting for Worship with their families. At 11:15 a.m., there will be an outdoor First Day School class for children ages 5 years and older. Please watch for more details in the weekly bulletin.

Summer Camping Program. Enrollment for the BYM camping programs (at Catocin, Opequon, Shiloh, and Teen Adventure) began on January 15. The camps are residential for children ages 9 to 17. Anyone may apply online (please do!). Spaces are available first-come, first-served, so please register as soon as you can if you need a particular session. To register, go to: www.bymcamps.org

Why consider a sleep-away Quaker camp for your children? For most children, at first, Quakerism and Meeting for Worship are seen as a “grownup” religion and experience. At camp, however, children experience the Inner Light in a natural setting, in outdoor silent worship, and in community with their peers and well-trained, talented counselors, many of whom were once campers themselves. Campers detach from electronics and social media to have fun playing and participating in camp activities; they gain the confidence that comes from learning practical life skills through daily camp chores; they make lasting friendships with children from other parts of the area or country. The Quaker camp setting and program afford opportunities for experiential, multi-sensory learning that weekly First Day School and traditional school cannot provide. All Quaker camps are open to children whether they come to BFM or not, so please share this information with others who might be interested.

For details about the camps, visit www.bymcamps.org or contact Brian Massey (301-774-7663).

For an extended list of Quaker camps, see: <http://quakersdc.org/node/912>

Our Meeting would like to support our children going to camp to the extent of \$500 each, on a first-come first-served basis. When you apply, please contact the co-clerk of Pastoral Care. Parents may also offset tuition by volunteering at one of the camps during the summer.

Events

1st & 8th: Bible Study

Bible Study will meet on two Thursdays in April (1 and 8) at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom with the Great Courses series, Understanding the Old Testament. The final class in this lecture series will occur on April 8. The lectures cover Ecclesiastes and a Conclusion. Newcomers are welcome.

4th/11th/18th/25th: Meeting for Worship

Bethesda Friends continue to worship together each Sunday at 11:00 a.m. Friends can participate by videoconference using Zoom, or join a socially distanced group meeting outside under a large tent on the Sidwell Friends Lower School campus.

Zoom meeting for worship. Friends who will be joining worship via Zoom are invited to log on beginning at 10:45 a.m. for the chance to chat before settling into silence around 10:55 a.m. There will be another opportunity to chat with one another at the rise of Meeting for Worship. For the Zoom link, send an email to contact. It is a real joy to see so many out-of-town Friends joining us each week.

Opportunity to worship outside. Friends have the option to worship together outside under a large, open-sided tent at the Sidwell Friends Lower School. Friends participating in this in-person worship must wear a face mask at all times and maintain social distancing. If you would like to participate in person, you must register in advance.

5th, 7th, & 10th: Anti-Racist Declaration Explored

In 2017, Baltimore Yearly Meeting adopted a Declaration stating that we are an anti-racist community. The Growing Diverse Leadership Committee invites Friends to join us for a conversation to more deeply understand the Declaration and how best to use it as we worship and work together. Sign up below to select one of the three dates. Each conversation will be the same; please only sign up for one.

Links to sign-ups:

April 5, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.:

<https://www.bym-rsf.org/events/yevents/yeventscal.html/event/2021/04/05/anti-racism-declaration-conversation/329087>

April 7, 11:00 a.m. to 12 noon:

<https://www.bym-rsf.org/events/yevents/yeventscal.html/event/2021/04/07/anti-racism-declaration-conversation/329088>

April 10, 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.:

<https://www.bym-rsf.org/events/yevents/yeventscal.html/event/2021/04/10/anti-racism-declaration-conversation/329089>

5th: Pendle Hill: The Gathered Meeting & Embodied Quaker Voices

There are many upcoming virtual events at Pendle Hill this spring. For details, see: <https://pendlehill.org> or contact John Meyer, the Communications and Outreach Director at 610-566-4507, ext 129. On Monday, April 5, at 7:30 p.m., the topic will be The Gathered Meeting and Embodied Quaker Voices. This lecture presents a 17th Century perspective about the gathered Quaker experience from Francis Howgill and then explores the three themes about the centrality of

knowing through an integrated embodiment, the place of Jesus in the gathered meeting, and the presence of the Spirit and the Light. Here is the link to register:

<https://pendlehill.org/events/the-gathered-meeting-and-embodied-quaker-voices/?bblinkid=249303712&bbemailid=29667691&bbejrid=1892637409>

7th/14th/21th/28th: 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.

9th to 11th: Pendle Hill Weekend Workshop on Mutual Accompaniment

On the weekend of April 9 to 11, there will be a weekend workshop on Mutual Accompaniment and the Creation of the Commons Online. It is described as follows: Let us take a step back and discern our direction going forward. We invite you to retreat from your usual activities to listen to our histories of mutual accompaniment and to open a space where we can enter more deeply and consciously into accompaniments that call for our presence. If you are interested in working to uproot oppressive systems in a way that reweaves human connection and a sense of belonging to one another and to the earth, please join us. For details, see:

<https://pendlehill.org/events/mutual-accompaniment-and-the-creation-of-the-commons-online/?bblinkid=249283195&bbemailid=29667691&bbejrid=1892637409> or <https://pendlehill.org> or contact John Meyer, the Communications and Outreach Director at 610-566-4507, ext 129.

10th: Youth Peace Conference

The 5th Annual Youth Peace Conference will be held virtually on Saturday, April 10, from 9:15 a.m to 4:30 p.m. Youth from grades 8 to 12 are welcome to register at: <http://www.youthpeaceconferencemd.org> The Sandy Spring Friends Meeting Peace Committee supports this student-run social justice and community building summit in honor of the legacies of Lee Stern and Bayard Rustin. A team of teens in Howard County are organizing this year's conference. The theme is "Resistance and Radical Reform." Youth are coming together across the world to organize in support of causes and movements such as the Black Lives Matter movement and the fight for environmental awareness, among many others. At the Conference, students will gain resources on how to peacefully organize, resist injustice, and create change within their communities.

11th: Meeting for Business

On Sunday, April 11 (because of Easter on April 4), at 9:00 a.m., Bethesda F(f)riends will consider various business items via Zoom. 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. We will hear the final version of our Spiritual State of the Meeting report, have a second reading of the Racial Justice Donations Committee's recommendation, the preliminary budget, and a report from Baltimore Yearly Meeting Interim Meeting. All who come to Meeting for Worship are welcome and encouraged to participate in our worshipful sharing of Meeting for Business.

11th: Fierce Biblical Women Speak Power

For five Sunday afternoons, from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. from April 11 to May 9, there will be workshops on Fierce Biblical Women Speak Power Today. The sessions are described this way: In the Hebrew and Christian Bible, many women – sometimes nameless and often forgotten – use their strength to challenge systems and claim justice. Whether covert and quiet or bold and public, most seem fearless! We will draw upon the stories of fierce biblical women and the fierce women of our own lives. What made them fierce and how did they ground their power? Through collage, journaling, sharing, and listening, we open space for these women to empower us today. In doing so, may we dare to find our own fierce place in the world. Here is the link:

<https://pendlehill.org/events/fierce-biblical-women-speak-power-today-2/?bblinkid=249303711&bbemailid=29667691&bbejrid=1892637409> or <https://pendlehill.org> or John Meyer, the Communications and Outreach Director at 610-566-4507, ext 129.

11th/25th: 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. There will be two Sunday evening sessions in April, on April 11 and 25, 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 Zoom link. Contact Jane M.C. if you wish the links or see the recent Bulletin. We anticipate that part of the gathering could go until 9:15 p.m.

16th: Young Friends Conference

Baltimore Yearly Meeting hosts a gathering of high school folks from Friends Meetings in this area three or four times per year. This is a fun way to see friends from other Meetings or camp, make new friends, and retreat from the pressures of teenage life, while still developing skills around living in community and having a lot of fun. There will be a conference from Friday, April 16 to Sunday, April 18, probably virtual. Please register as soon as possible:

https://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/yutes/yfs/yfcon.html For more details: Sunshine Klein (301-774-7663, youthprograms@bym-rsf.org)

17th: Spiritual Formation Program Gathering

The current Spiritual Formation program underway at Bethesda Friends will hold its seventh gathering on Saturday, April 17, at 1:30 p.m. by Zoom. The group will select a reading at the March meeting to share in preparation. (Prior readings have included *Meditations of the Heart* by Howard Thurman; *Four Doors to Meeting for Worship*, by William Taber; and *Love Poems from God: Twelve sacred voices from East and West*, ed. by Daniel Ladinsky.) Smaller friendship circles of program participants meet between the gatherings to share personal support on the spiritual journey. The program is led by Margaret B. For details, please be in touch with Leslie S.

18th: Reflecting on Committees for Clearness

Patapsco Friends Meeting invites us to join them on Sunday, April 18, at noon, via Zoom to view a short QuakerSpeak video on a Quaker Clearness Committee, followed by a discussion to hear

what experiences and reflections Friends are led to share. When Quakers have a tough decision to make, we help each other listen by holding a clearness committee. Please register in advance at: <https://patapsco.bym-rsf.net/contact/>
Here is a link to the video: <https://quakerspeak.com/video/quaker-clearness-committee/>

25th: Coordinating Gathering

Representatives of most BFM committees meet during the week before Meeting for Business to discuss the upcoming agenda and to share our reflections on the spiritual state of our community, specific tasks, and Quaker processes. These meetings are open to all who wish to attend. There will be one at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 25.

29th: Radical Spirituality: The Early History of the Quakers

Once again, Lancaster University and the Woodbrooke Quaker Center in England are offering an on-line course on early Quakers, starting Sunday April 25 and lasting three weeks. You do each week's work on your own at your own pace. To register for the course, go to:

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/quakers>

In addition to taking the on-line class, you can join a group from the Meeting to talk about what we have learned each week, using the Bible Study time slot of Thursdays at 7:00 p.m., starting April 29.

30th to May 2nd: Junior Young Friends Conference

Baltimore Yearly Meeting hosts a gathering of 6th to 8th graders from Friends Meetings in this area three or four times per year. This is a fun way to see friends from other Meetings or camp, make new friends, and retreat from the pressures of teenage life, while still developing skills around living in community and having a lot of fun. There will be a conference at or near Camp Catoctin on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, April 30 to May 2. Please register as soon as possible:

https://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/yutes/jyfs/jyregister.html For more details: Sunshine Klein (youthprograms@bym-rsf.org, 301-774- 7663).

Into the Future

June 27th to July 3rd: Friends General Conference (FGC) Gathering

The FGC Gathering this year will be virtual. The theme is “Way Will Open.” 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.FGCCGathering.org Early registration for the Gathering opens April 15.

Here is the letter of invitation: On behalf of the 2021 Gathering Committee, we invite you to join us for a Spirit-filled week of workshops, plenaries, worship, music, fun, fellowship and more as we come together virtually for FGC’s annual Gathering June 27 to July 3, 2021. When the Gathering theme Way Will Open came to us in 2019, we could not know that our familiar way of Gathering, a way we have known and taken for granted for years, was about to close, not once, but twice!

Neither could we have imagined the kinds of openings - transformations even - such closings would make possible; that over 1,000 Friends from all over the world could come together by simply opening a link; that we could make the Gathering more affordable, more accessible, and more environmentally friendly by having everyone stay home; that deep worship, tender intimacy, and covenant community could happen online.

Many months of pandemic isolation and social upheaval have taught us that Spirit cannot be limited by geography or fear; that, in the midst of the unthinkable, Way Will Open in ways that will challenge, inspire and astonish us.

Come experience a Gathering of Friends like no other, a Gathering that speaks to the needs of our beloved community and answers the call of our time.

If you would like assistance with expenses, please contact the co-clerk of the Pastoral Care Committee.

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

350th Quaker Anniversary & 100th Quaker Camps Anniversary

In 2022, Baltimore Yearly Meeting will celebrate 350 years, and its camping program 100 years. How do we best celebrate these anniversaries? The hope is to have a fun and meaningful commemoration and to preserve our past while envisioning our future. A number of Meetings already have representation on the Ad Hoc 350th/100th Anniversary Committee. So far, areas of interest have resulted in the following subcommittees: BYM History; Quaker Witness; Outreach beyond the Religious Society of Friends; Intervisitation; Youth; BYM Camps 100th Anniversary; Representatives to 2022 Annual Session Program Committee; and Communication.

This spring, be thinking about other ways to help celebrate the anniversaries. Would your Meeting like to host an event or offer ongoing activities throughout the year? The planning committee hopes to be able to provide speakers and programs for such occasions.

Committee Notes

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is entering the time of the year when we make recommendations to the Business Meeting to fill the openings of the Meeting’s officers, committees’ members, and liaison positions with Quaker organizations. During March and April, the Nominating Committee will identify nominees to begin serving in July 2021. Members typically serve for a two-year term, renewable for another two years.

We would like to learn about the interests of members who are interested in participating in the life of the Meeting. For people who have not been involved in committee work recently, we strongly encourage you to join a committee. We have found that working with others on committees is one of the most rewarding ways of deepening our relationships within the Meeting community and putting our Quaker principles into practice. BFM committees are always eager to have new faces,

new ideas, and new energy. We hope that you will respond positively when we contact you, as we need to have all hands on deck to prepare the Meeting to get back to “normal.”

Nominations will be presented at the May Meeting for Business and approved at the June Meeting for Business.

To learn more about your joining at least one committee, please see the list of committees on pages 2 to 10 in the BFM Directory or go to:

<https://www.bethesdafriends.org/Officers-&-Committees>

Stewardship & Finance

Urgent Plea to Contribute to Bethesda Friends Meeting. 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. It is one of the ways that we give material reality to the movements of the Spirit. The Stewardship & Finance Committee reports that in the first half of this fiscal year, unrestricted contributions were the lowest in twelve years and covered only 40 percent of projected total actual expenses. **The consequence is that we as a community now have four months to raise approximately \$60,000.** Contributions both large and small are always appreciated. Please donate as generously as you can and are led, 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.

Outreach & Communications

Friends Journal Subscriptions. Would you like to receive *Friends Journal*? One underutilized Bethesda Friends Meeting resource is money to give gift subscriptions to *Friends Journal*. Our initial outreach is to young adult F(f)riends and to those who have come to Meeting in the last few years. You can learn more about Friends Journal at: www.friendsjournal.org

Here are some comments from others in Meeting: “Having a digital subscription to *Friends Journal* means it arrives in my inbox with a couple of intriguing paragraphs from the lead stories; just enough to get you to click it open and scan the article. I love that the contributions have depth, but can also be read quickly in five to ten minutes. There are three stronger hooks that always get to me: (1) The listing of two or three “related articles” that are posted at the end. Someone is linking articles in a way that rivals Google’s algorithms. I click on one with a fascinating title, which leads to two more, which lead to two more. (2) The articles are not designed to comfort you. They come from alternative frames of reference, and my first thought is often “Wow, a Quaker thinks that? So, what is my opinion about it?” (3) Finally, the comments at the end of many articles are usually short, pithy, and useful points of view. They add to the challenge originally presented by the article’s author.”

“When I started attending Friends Meeting of Washington many years ago, they highly recommended subscribing to *Friends Journal*, which I continue to read and enjoy. The articles and book reviews stand out. I also like the letters to the editor. In other words, I read it from cover to cover. Plus, it keeps me informed about the latest in the world of Friends.”

“I have and enjoy a hard copy subscription to the *Friends Journal* and recommend it. I try to read the issues cover to cover each month but I especially value reading the letters to the editor and the obituaries. The individual voices and life stories make me feel connected to and inspired by others. The articles in the *Friends Journal* bring to my attention both everyday moments I’d like to pay more attention to and historical events I wasn’t aware of. I appreciate that there is usually at least one poem, too. It is a low-pressure exposure to a style of art I’d like to be more comfortable with. It’s also nice just to have the Journal come in the mail; when I receive it, I am excited and positively reminded to think about my faith, spirituality, and how I want them to influence my choices and

behaviors... I think families with children might be interested in or benefit from a subscription... If kids are exposed to Quaker activities or publications when young, they might be more curious as they get older.”

Peace & Social Justice

BFM Postcard Initiative. In the last Congress, the House passed the Justice in Policing Act following widespread public outcries for racial justice and policing reform. In November 2020, more than 800 advocates joined FCNL to lobby Congress to pass the Justice in Policing Act as part of our Annual Meeting. The bill stalled in the Senate, and now, nine months after the police murdered George Floyd, the House has once again passed the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act (H.R. 1280). This is an important step to reform how police operate in 18,000 jurisdictions nationwide. If enacted, this bill would hold police accountable and save lives by banning chokeholds and no-knock warrants, limiting the transfer of military-grade weapons to local police departments, raising the standards for the use of force, and reforming qualified immunity. Please raise your voice through email, a letter or a phone call asking your senators to swiftly pass the meaningful police reforms included in the Justice in Policing Act (H.R. 1280). For details: https://fcnl.quorum.us/campaign/31408/?utm_campaign=contacts&utm_medium=email&utm_source=ak&utm_term=16205.209196.yH2Mlc