

BETHESDA FRIENDS MEETING

Religious Society of Friends

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NEWSLETTER

January 2016

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Query for January: Simplicity

What in my present life most distracts me from God? What am I ready to release so that I can give my attention to what matters most? How do the ways in which I choose to use my time, my possessions, my money, and my energy reflect my most deeply held values? How do we support one another in our search for a simpler life?

January 2016 Calendar

Meeting for Worship is at 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. every First Day (except for January 10, when Meeting for Business is held at 9:15 a.m. and Meeting for Worship at 11:00 a.m.).

4	Mon	7:30 p.m.	Peace & Social Justice Committee
9	Sat	10:00 a.m.	MD Alliance for Justice Reform: Legislative Planning
		3:00 p.m.	Quaker Book Group at the Bethesda Library
10	Sun	9:15 a.m.	Meeting for Business: All are Invited to Participate!
		11:00 a.m.	Qkr Values & Leadership: Worship & Qkr Camp Expo
		12:00 noon	Welcome to New Members
		12:15 p.m.	Potluck: Please Bring a Dish to Share

		12:30 p.m.	Spring Fling Leadership, Groome Bldg, behind stage
		1:00 p.m.	Library Committee, BFM Library
		6:30 p.m.	WPH Potluck: (topic and presenter to be determined)
		7:30 p.m.	Experiment With Light
11	Mon	8:00 p.m.	Committee Night for M & W and S & F
13	Wed	8:30 p.m.	February Newsletter Deadline
14	Thurs	7:30 p.m.	Ad Hoc Com. on Discerning Our Future
15	Fri	5:00 p.m.	Deadline for Registration for the Women's Retreat
		7:00 p.m.	BYM Camp Enrollment Opens
17	Sun	9:15 a.m.	Discerning BFM's Future, Meeting Room
		9:30 a.m.	Meeting for Worship, Teachers' Lounge
		9:30 a.m.	Advancement & Outreach, Teachers' Lounge Annex
		11:00 a.m.	Quaker Values & Leadership: Worship & Classes
		12:30 p.m.	P&SJ Forum: Beyond Mass Incarceration
		12:30 p.m.	ARE Committee, Teachers' Lounge
		12:30 p.m.	Pastoral Care Committee, Music Room
		12:30 p.m.	Religious Education Committee, Teachers' Lounge Annex
		6:30 p.m.	Friendly Eights: Adults
24	Sun	9:15 a.m.	Peace & Social Justice Committee, Teachers' Lounge
		9:30 a.m.	ARE: Spiritual Journey: Bernie Benson, Music Room
		11:00 a.m.	Quaker Values & Leadership: Bethesda Shelter Meal Prep.
		12:30 p.m.	Spiritual State of the Meeting Worship Sharing, Mtg Rm.
		7:30 p.m.	Experiment With Light
29	Fri	4:00 p.m.	BYM Women's Retreat (www.bymwomensretreat.org)
30	Sat	5:00 p.m.	Friendly Eights: Families
31	Sun	9:30 a.m.	Spiritual State of the Meeting Worship Sharing, Music Rm.
		11:00 a.m.	Quaker Values & Leadership: Worship & Classes
		12:30 p.m.	Coordinating Gathering, Meeting Room

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Social Concerns Box

The Social Concerns Box for January is the Smart Card Fund of Montgomery County's One-Stop Career Center for ex-offenders. This center within the County Correctional Facility offers a comprehensive program for returning citizens to help them find gainful employment and reduce the chance of re-offending. It is linked to a reentry Employment Program at the One-Stop Centers within Montgomery County. A member of Bethesda Friends Meeting, works for this program and will distribute the Smart cards as needed. The Smart cards give the ex-offenders an immediate way to access public transportation. Please be generous with your contributions.

In November, the Social Concerns Box had \$76 for Action in Montgomery.

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Religious Education for Children

The Quaker Leadership & Values program begins at 11:00 a.m. with children attending the first 15 minutes of Meeting for Worship with their parents. The Camp Expo on the 10th and the meal preparation on the 24th will be in the Lower Level Lounge of the Groome Building.

3rd: The Child Care Room will be open. The provider and volunteer can absorb a few children up through age 11 with supervised play.

10th: Camp Expo. There will be a Quaker Camps showcase for parents and children and potential camp counselors in the lower level lounge of the Groome Building. Please spread the word

about the camps to friends and neighbors. The camps are open to all! Please encourage former campers and camp families to come. Brochures and applications will be available for our local BYM camps (Shiloh, Opequon, Catoctin), Journey's End in PA, Camp Celo in NC, Friends Music Camp in OH, and Camp Onas in PA. (Snowdate: January 24).

17th: Worship and classes

24th: Multi-Age Activity: Children and adults will cook an entree for the Bethesda Homeless Shelter supper. Showing up without notice is fine. Held in Lower Level Lounge of the Groome Building.

31st: Worship and classes

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Events

Spiritual State of the Meeting Month

In preparing the annual report on the Spiritual State of the Meeting, the Ministry & Worship Committee invites you to reflect on your spiritual experience in the Meeting over the last year and to share your thoughts and concerns. To help focus (but not rigidly control) this process, the committee has articulated queries that arise out of the proposed sale of the Sidwell Friends Lower School property. Friends may reflect on any or all of these queries, as they are led:

1. What does it mean to be a spiritual community?
2. What is our responsibility to one another as members of the same spiritual community?
3. What can I bring to the Meeting in this time of transition to support all of us?
4. What are the opportunities to strengthen our spiritual community as we reflect on this transition? What is my role in identifying these opportunities?

The committee also plans to hold a variety of sessions in which people might develop and share their thoughts, specifically:

- January 10: SSOM conversation tables at potluck
- January 24, 12:30 p.m.: worship sharing (Meeting Room)
- January 31, 9:30 a.m.: worship sharing (Music Room)

Quite apart from these planned sessions, your reflections are welcome at any time and can be conveyed in any format to any member of the committee.

The committee expresses its deep gratitude to everyone for participating in this moment of communal discernment.

9th: Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform Legislative Planning Session

On Saturday, January 9, Stony Run Friends Meeting will be hosting the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) Legislative Planning Session from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Stony Run Friends is at 5116 North Charles Street in Baltimore. Last year the group was successful in getting a bill passed which established the Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council, which has been holding hearings around the state, looking at best practices from other states, and looking at current practices in Maryland. What needs to be changed? They issued a preliminary report at the end of December. This gathering will look at the proposals and other proposals from other organizations concerned with justice reform to discern the legislative agenda for the session which begins in January and ends in March. For details, see www.MA4JR.org Members of the Peace & Social Justice Committee have been involved from the beginning.

10th: Meeting for Business

Meeting for Business will take place at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday, January 10. It is open to all who attend BFM. It is an opportunity to meet worshipfully and for business in a special way. On the agenda are reports from the American Friends Service Committee's DC Peace & Economic Justice Program and the AFSC Regional Program. Please come if you can!

10th: Welcome to New Members & New People

On Sunday, January 10, at rise of Meeting, Pastoral Care will welcome and reintroduce our new members since May 2015. We have one newborn that we know of. Please join us in giving them a warm formal welcome.

10th: Potluck: Please Bring a Dish to Share

Please join us for potluck at the rise of Meeting on Sunday, January 10. Potluck is a good way to make connections with people you don't know so well (newcomers and others), so bring a dish to share and be ready to make some new friends. We gather in the Groome Building multipurpose room at the rise of Meeting for feast and fellowship. Your contribution of a dish to share with others adds greatly to the occasion.

10th: Spring Fling Review

Those involved in Spring Fling will meet to review the Meeting's commitment to it, especially in relation to finding leadership for key aspects of it. Are there changes which might make it more appealing? Are there other ways to raise the money for Ramallah Friends School? How does responsibility for Spring Fling leadership get passed from one set of organizers to the next? The meeting will be at potluck on Sunday, January 10, in the small room behind the stage of the multipurpose room (where potluck is held) of the Groome Building. All are welcome to join the discussion.

10th: WPH Potluck & Dialogue

F(f)riends are invited to a potluck and Quaker dialogue at William Penn House on Sunday, January 10, at 6:30 p.m. The topic and presenter are to be determined. Bring a dish to share; family members and friends are always welcome. WPH is at 515 East Capitol Street SE. WPH is an alcohol and tobacco-free facility. For details: byron@WilliamPennHouse.org, 202-543-5560. Also see: www.WilliamPennHouse.org

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. This is an invitation to two sessions. One will be on Sunday, January 10, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. The second will be on Sunday, January 24, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Please come if you can.

14th: Ad Hoc Committee Meeting on Discerning our Future

On Thursday, January 14, at 7:30 p.m., the Ad Hoc Committee on Opportunities for Our Future will meet. All are welcome.

15th: BYM Camp Enrollment Opens

Enrollment for the Baltimore Yearly Meeting camping programs (at Catoctin, Opequon, Shiloh, and Teen Adventure) begins January 15, at 7:00 p.m., for returning campers and February 1, at 10:00 a.m., for new campers. 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: www.bymcamps.org

16th: Protest Vigil of the Lee-Jackson Statues in Baltimore

On Saturday, January 16, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., the Working Group on Racism (of the Yearly Meeting) will meet at Homewood Friends Meeting in Baltimore and participate in a protest vigil across from the Lee-Jackson statue where the Sons of Confederate Veterans will be honoring

Confederate Generals Robert E. Lee and Thomas Jackson during the Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday weekend. For those interested in the vigil part only, it will begin at 11:00 a.m. and last about an hour.

17th: Discerning Our Future Threshing Session

On Sunday, January 17, at 9:15 a.m., in the Meeting Room, there will be a threshing session on choices for the meeting in light of Sidwell Friends School's decision to move the Lower School to their Upper School campus. All are welcome and encouraged to participate. Meeting for Worship that day will be in the Teachers' Lounge. The Advancement & Outreach Committee, which normally meets there then, will meet in the Teachers' Lounge Annex.

17th: Beyond Mass Incarceration

On Sunday, January 17, at 12:30 p.m., in the Meeting Room, there will be a presentation on programs in two local county jails that provide people who are about to be released with the skills they need to successfully reintegrate into society.

We will here about stress management classes at the Arlington County Jail as part of the services offered though the outside non-profit group, Offender Aid and Restoration.

One of our members is an administrator at the Montgomery County Jail in Boyds where she earlier taught in the jail's GED program. She will discuss the One Stop program that offers people GED and ESOL education, job training skills, and how to search for a job. Once released, returning citizens frequently lack transportation to get to a job interview, doctor appointments, etc. Donations to the January Social Concerns Box will be used to purchase Metro Smart Cards to help with former offenders' reintegration. The presentation is being sponsored by the Peace & Social Justice Committee.

17th: Adult Friendly Eights Dinners

Adult Friendly Eights are potluck dinners for approximately eight adults in the homes of folks in the BFM community. In January, they will be on Sunday, January 17. If you wish to join a group, a sign-up sheet is available at www.bethesdafriends.org

24th: ARE: Spiritual Journey

At the request of the Adult Religious Education Committee, a Bethesda Friends Meeting member will talk about his spiritual journey. Spiritual Journeys are occasional talks sponsored by Adult Religious Education to provide insight into how some of our members have come to embrace Quakerism, what influenced them most, and how they see Quakerism in their personal and spiritual development. The session will take place on Sunday, January 24, at 9:30 am in the Music Room (Lower Level) of the SAM building at Sidwell Friends Lower School.

29th to 31st: BYM Women's Retreat

The BYM Women's Retreat will be held on the weekend of January 29 to 31 with the theme of "Lighten Up: Sharing Light, Love, and Laughter." It will be held at a new location in 2016: Pearlstone Retreat Center in Reisterstown MD, about an hour from Washington. If you have never been to the Women's Retreat, ask anyone who has. It is a totally great weekend. Registration is now being accepted at www.bym-rsf.org For details, see: <http://bymwomensretreat.wix.com/bymwr> Please note that registrations close on January 15.

30th: Family Friendly Eights Dinner

Family Friendly Eights are a potluck dinner with children in the home of folks in the BFM community. People learn when and where through an Evite. In January, families will gather on Saturday, January 30, at 5:00 p.m. To be added to the Evite list, please e-mail friendly8s@bethesdafriends.org

31st: 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, January 31, at the rise of Meeting in the meeting room.

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Into the Future

February 1st: BYM Camps Registration Opens for New Campers

One of the most popular programs of Baltimore Yearly Meeting is the camping program at Catoctin, Opequon, Shiloh, and Teen Adventure Quaker Camps. Kids have a wonderful time in the natural world and in getting to know one another. For details, see www.bymcamps.org

February 5th to 7th: Dayspring Silent Retreat

The purpose of silent retreat is the deepening of communion with God, with other persons, and with oneself. The point is to “make space for...a time of waiting in silence, in solitude, to hear the voice of the One Who speaks in everything that is, and who, most of all, speaks in the depths of our own being.” (Thomas Merton)

The retreat is at Dayspring in Germantown MD, and sharing the warmth of spiritual community in the heart of winter, amid nature’s beauty, is a great blessing! It is a wonderful opportunity for spiritual refreshment.

February 12th to 14th: BYM Young Friends Conference

Although the location is still to be determined, Young Friends (high school age) should plan to begin arriving at 7:00 p.m. on Friday. For details, https://bym-rsforg.presencehost.net/what_we_do/yfs/yfcon.html Please remember that the deadline to register and be guaranteed a slot is two weeks before the conference (January 28). Anyone registering after that date will be placed on a waiting list and may not be able to attend.

February 15th: Deadline for Workshop Proposals for BYM Annual Sessions

It may seem early to be thinking of a workshop you might lead at the Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) Annual Sessions, from Monday, August 1, to Sunday, August 7, at Frostburg State University in Frostburg MD. But the deadline for proposals is Sunday, February 15. The time between now and then can go by very quickly.

The BYM Program Committee is looking for inspiring leaders for topical workshops to attract new attendees and to keep our community involved. The 2016 theme is “Discernment & Action in Spiritual Community.” The pre-session retreat will be led by the author of *Decision Making and Spiritual Discernment*. The plenary speakers include someone from Quaker Voluntary Service, service learning opportunities, and the Movement for a New Society. Of course, workshops on other topics of interest to Friends are also accepted. Workshop sessions are held during three time slots at Annual Session, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., with 10 to 15 workshops during each time slot. Proposals can be submitted through the BYM website (www.bym-rsf.org)

Friends Committee on National Legislation Opportunities for Young People

Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) has lots of opportunities coming up for young adults. FCNL connects historic Quaker testimonies on peace, equality, simplicity, and truth with peace and social justice issues. It is nonpartisan and multi-issue and effective in changing US policy. Application deadlines are:

Young Fellows Program, February 15

Summer Internships, March 1

Spring Lobby Weekend, March 12-15

Advocacy Corps, April 1

For details: www.futureadvocate.org

Committee Notes

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Nominating

Thank you. On December 6, Meeting for Business approved the Nominating Committee's nominations for committee members, officers, and liaisons to other organizations for 2016. The Nominating Committee thanks everyone who has agreed to serve. We are grateful for the continuing service of so many. Your experience and wisdom serve us well. And we are excited about the involvement of those who are new to committee work. Your enthusiasm greatly enriches our Meeting.

Transitions to new positions. As of January 1, the newly named committee members assume their new assignments. Clerks of committees in 2015 should facilitate this transition by contacting the new members, welcoming them to the committee, letting them know the January meeting time and place, and orienting them to the work and responsibilities of their committees.

At that meeting, they should select the clerk or co-clerks for the coming year. It is important that all clerks are confirmed by mid- January 2016, in order for committees to begin working on behalf of the BFM community. Once your new clerk or co-clerks are named, please make sure to pass the names on to the editor.

So far, Pastoral Care is the only one to have selected their clerks for the next year:

Alex Bell and Peirce Hammond

Hospitality. The Nominating Committee is happy to provide hospitality at the rise of meeting and to serve potluck in January. The committee's principal function is to nominate Meeting officers, members of committees, and representatives to other organizations. It typically meets once a week from late August through October, and other times as the need arises.

Pastoral Care

Financial Aid. BFM offers financial aid for those seeking to participate in workshops or seminars that aim to help them grow as Quakers or as BFM committee members, clerks, or teachers. Pendle Hill (www.pendlehill.org) offers a number of pertinent seminars, for instance.

The Meeting offers financial aid for BFM children who would like to attend Quaker summer camps. Registration for Baltimore Yearly Meeting summer camps begins in mid-January for returning campers and February 1 for first-timers. (See www.bymcamps.org)

Finally, the Meeting offers a limited amount of financial aid for those suffering from personal emergencies in which money is a factor.

All aid is provided confidentially via the Pastoral Care Committee. For inquiries about financial aid, contact your personal friendly ear or Pastoral Care clerks.

Pastoral Care Resource List. The Pastoral Care Committee seeks to connect those requesting assistance or counsel on particular issues with those in the Meeting who have offered to share relevant skills or life experiences. PC maintains a confidential referral list for this purpose.

If you are a regular participant in BFM, please contact the Pastoral Care Committee to express a need, or to offer referrals or assistance based on your experience and current availability. PC will ask for your consent before sharing your name with those requesting assistance. All such conversations are confidential.

The topics below reflect the offers of knowledge and experience received thus far from members of our community. This list evolves over time. A more detailed list of topics is available from Pastoral Care.

- Health (specific health issues; nutrition, etc.)
- Family (challenging teens, separation & divorce, elder care, etc.)
- Home (decluttering, carpenter, computer help)
- Learning & Education (tutoring, alternatives)
- Spiritual exploration
- Legal & Financial Matters
- Language & Culture (cultural shock, language help)
- Gift of time (driving, cooking, pet care)

Stewardship & Finance

Reimbursement for Meeting Expenses. Our Treasurer would like to remind everyone that if you make a purchase in support of your committee's activities, or other purpose for the Meeting, you can be reimbursed by filling out this form:

<http://www.bethesdafriends.org/expense-reimburse-form.pdf>

Then e-mail it to the assistant treasurer. Paper forms are also available in the Treasurer's pocket in the Meetinghouse. If you prefer that your purchase be considered a donated expense, please let us know via the form or by e-mail so we can record it. Any committee expense should also have the approval of, or at least a copy of the request to, the clerk of that committee.

Friendly Eights

At the rise of Meetings for Worship in January, a member of Friendly Eights will be available for you to sign up for the potluck dinners, known as Friendly Eights, in Friends' homes in February, March, and April. Friendly Eights provides an opportunity for everyone in the BFM community to get to know one another better by gathering for casual monthly dinners. Two types of dinners are offered: one for families with children and one for adults without children. Family Friendly Eights will be held at 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. on Saturday evenings on February 27, March 19, and April 30. Adult Friendly Eights gatherings will be held on Sundays from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m., on February 21, March 20, and April 17. If you wish to join a group, a sign-up sheet is also available at www.bethesdafriends.org

Ministry & Worship

Please be mindful of hearing-impaired Friends. M&W would like to encourage all Friends to please be mindful during Meetings for Worship of those Friends who are hearing impaired by: (1) speaking clearly and with full voice when delivering messages, and (2) turning off cellphones.

What do we do when it snows?! In general, there will be Meeting for Worship if the Sidwell Friends Lower School is open. Check Sidwell Friends' website (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.

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Meeting Notes

Bethesda Shelter Supper Group

For many many years, BFM has been taking supper once a month to the Bethesda Shelter. Last year we lost a number of participants; next year more people are moving on. We are under 'staffed' and really need more hands on deck for this project. Please consider joining. It is not a big commitment.

The Bethesda Shelter is run by Catholic Charities. It is now located on Marinelli Road in Rockville. It provides transitional housing to homeless people with chronic mental illness.

The BFM supper group has six teams; each team provides supper two times a year. There are traditionally four people on a team. On the first Saturday of the month, members of a designated team bring a meal for 15 men consisting of a main dish, a vegetable side or salad, a dessert, and a gallon of milk/soy milk.

Might you be interested in participating in this project in 2016? Participating is a great way for a family to do a service project together. Also, some months, the children in the youth program do a portion of the cooking. If you are a parent or an adult who would like to do some cooking with them, join us! Or, if you want to cook all by yourself, that can work too. You arrange your contribution with your team.

Peace Notes

Does your New Year's resolution include advocating for peace? If so, think about joining an area peace group. BFM is a member organization of Action in Montgomery (AIM), which works specifically on social justice within Montgomery County. Their website is: actioninmontgomery.org. To work in Montgomery County on national and international peace issues, consider joining Peace Action Montgomery, which has initiated some of the events that BFM Peace & Social Justice Committee co-sponsors. Their website is: www.peaceactionmc.org If you are a DC resident, you may be interested in the DC Peace Team, which offers monthly training in elements of nonviolence (particularly communication, peacekeeping, and restorative justice). Their website is www.dcpeaceteam.com

Thinking about Race: “Being in a White Garden”

“Being in a white garden means that we hold the accumulation of centuries of wealth, power, and privilege. Some of us may come with personal trauma or gender, sexuality, or class struggles. However, race is the number one predictor of housing values, health outcomes, employment, educational success, and incarceration. We are the inheritors of tremendous power and privilege just because of our white garden-ness. Once we acknowledge this, many of our first feelings may be guilt, followed by shame, anger, and fear. To change we need to do the hard spiritual work of leaning into those uncomfortable feelings. These emotions are our tools. They are the hoe, shovel, and rake we need to clear out the unhealthy aspects of our privileged identities rooted in white supremacy and begin to replant a healthier garden. I thank God that my Friends of color put up with my racial ignorance and arrogance. As a community, we are not going to grow a more inclusive garden by sitting around in silence, waiting for more African Americans to walk in the door or our meetinghouses.” From “Waking Up in the White Garden,” by Scott Holmes of Durham (NC) Meeting and professor of law at the North Carolina Central University School of Law, published in *Friends Journal*, October 2015, p. 6. Holmes uses the metaphor of a “white garden,” prompted by his walks through a section of the Duke Gardens where all the flowers are white.

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