

BETHESDA FRIENDS MEETING

Religious Society of Friends

P.O. Box 30152, Bethesda, Maryland 20824

301-986-8681 • e-mail: bethesdafrm@igc.org • www.bethesdafriends.org



Bethesda Friends Meeting Newsletter for November 2015

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Query for November: Meetings for Worship

In what ways do I prepare my heart and mind to receive the power of God's presence and love? How does worship deepen my relationship with God? How is this inspiration carried over into my daily life? Are our meetings for worship held in expectant waiting for Divine guidance? How do activities of our Meeting find their inspiration in worship? In what ways does worship uphold Meeting activities?

November 2015 Calendar

Meeting for Worship is 11:00 a.m. every First Day. It is also held at 9:30 a.m. every First Day except for the first First Day of the month, when Meeting for Business is held at 9:15 a.m.

| | | | |
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| 1 | Sun | 9:15 a.m. | Meeting for Business (All invited! Child Care is Provided.) |
| | | 11:00 a.m. | Quaker Values & Leadership: Worship & Coat Drive |
| | | 6:30 p.m. | WPH Potluck: Stress Management for Returning Citizens |
| 7 | Sat | 9:30 a.m. | Couples Enrichment Day, Langley Hill Meeting, VA |
| 8 | Sun | 9:30 a.m. | P&SJ: Black Lives Matter & Ending Mass Incarceration |
| | | 11:00 a.m. | Quaker Values & Leadership: Worship & Classes |
| | | 12:15 p.m. | Potluck (Please Bring a Dish to Share) |
| | | 7:30 p.m. | Experiment with Light |

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| 9 | Mon | 8:00 p.m. | Committee Night |
| 12/13 | Th/Fri | 8:30 a.m. | Qkr Public Policy Institute (202-547-6000, www.fcnl.org) |
| 13 | Fri | 8:30 p.m. | December Newsletter Deadline |
| 14 | Sat | 10:00 a.m. | Friends Wilderness Center: Poetry to Warm the Soul |
| | | 2:00 p.m. | Quaker Book Group at the Bethesda Library |
| 15 | Sun | 9:30 a.m. | Religious Education Committee, Teachers' Lounge Annex |
| | | 9:30 a.m. | Advancement & Outreach Committee, Teachers' Lounge |
| | | 11:00 a.m. | Qkr Values & Leadership: Worship & Let Your Life Speak |
| | | 12:15 p.m. | Book Table Holiday Sale |
| | | 12:15 p.m. | ARE Committee Meeting, Teachers' Lounge Annex |
| | | 6:30 p.m. | Adult Friendly Eights Dinners |
| 21 | Sat | 5:00 p.m. | Family Friendly Eights Dinner |
| 22 | Sun | 9:15 a.m. | Peace & Social Justice Committee, Teachers' Lounge |
| | | 9:30 a.m. | ARE: Margaret Fell Speaking |
| | | 11:00 a.m. | Qkr Values & Leadership: Worship & Pageant Casting |
| | | 12:15 p.m. | Book Table Holiday Sale |
| | | 12:30 p.m. | Christmas Program Orchestra Rehearsal, Music Rm., SAM |
| | | 7:30 p.m. | Experiment with Light |
| 24 | Tues | 6:30 p.m. | SFS All Community Meeting for Worship, Upper School |
| 27 | Fri | 7:00 p.m. | Young Friends Conference, probably Stony Run Mtg |
| 28 | Sat | 11:00 a.m. | Friends Wilderness Center: Cold Turkey Hike |
| 29 | Sun | 9:30 a.m. | ARE & A&O: Experiment with Light Music Room |
| | | 11:00 a.m. | Qkr Values & Leadership: Worship & Supervised Play |
| | | 12:30 p.m. | Coordinating Gathering |

Social Concerns Box

Action in Montgomery (AIM) is the recipient for the Social Concerns Box for November. AIM, of which BFM is a member congregation, continues its advocacy for more affordable housing in the county and has an exciting new initiative to establish after-school programs in low-income neighborhood schools, among other actions.

The September Social Concerns Box for the Mary Jane Simpson Scholarship Fund received \$10,174.

Message from the Clerks

We are moving into a time of change for our Meeting. As with many things, this change begins with an unexpected event that affects us. What we decide will certainly be an important part of our story. How we move forward will be our deeper story. If we truly listen to one another with love and hope and vision, we will be able to look back on this time of change as an opportunity we used well, to grow as a community in the Light.

We thank Bryan Garman, the new Head of Sidwell Friends School, for attending the October Meeting for Business and for his warm invitation to our Meeting to move with the Lower School to the Washington DC campus in 2019. For details, please click this link:

http://www.sidwell.edu/about_sfs/one-campus/index.aspx. Bryan has said that he will be happy to stay involved in conversations with us as we seek unity on whether to accept that invitation or make a different decision.

We are in the process of thinking through immediate next steps. To help us, we consulted the Meeting's officers and committee clerks. As Susan mentioned at the October Meeting for Business,

we think that an ad hoc committee would be helpful, and we have looked at the draft 2013 *Faith and Practice* for guidance. We are in the process of writing a charge with a timetable to share at Meeting for Business in November. Our initial thoughts are that such a committee could help collect our questions and organize information sessions, threshing sessions, and follow up meetings with SFS.

Rather than asking the ad hoc committee to make a recommendation, we think the Meeting will be best served if the Meeting as a whole is the center of the spirit-led discernment process. We (Gail and Susan) as co-clerks (and eventually, the newly appointed 2016 co-clerk) will facilitate the process of discerning “sense of the Meeting.” Because of the role we envision for the committee in information collection and organizing conversations, our thought is to keep it small.

Change can be difficult, especially one this large. However, we hope and believe this change can unfold into new opportunities for us as Way Opens.

Religious Education for Children

To highlight Quakerism in action and to help make faith and practice meaningful for the children in our Meeting, the Religious Education Committee has changed the name of the children’s program, from First Day School, to Quaker Values and Leadership.

The program begins at 11:00 a.m. with children attending the first 15 minutes of Meeting for Worship with their parents.

- On the first and third Sundays of each month, children in grades K-8 meet for large group, multi-age activities. Parents are welcome to join their children.
- On the second and fourth Sundays of each month, after attending Meeting for Worship with their parents for the first 15 minutes, children will meet in smaller groups by age/grade.

The program for November and December is as follows:

Nov. 1: Coat drive for Syrian refugees. Please go through your closets to see if any coats are now outgrown or not used much. It might be an opportunity to talk about what it could be like to be a refugee. Please bring the coats to the Meeting on Sunday, November 1. There will be a brief discussion of human rights. If you or your children are high school or junior high age, we are particularly eager to hear your/their thoughts about refugees and to help move coats to and from cars. The coats will go to the Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution Center, George Mason University in Virginia, which works directly with the Syrian refugee camps.

Nov. 8: Mtgs for learning by age/grade groups

Nov. 15: Let your Life Speak: Rosa Greenberg

Nov. 22: Casting for the Christmas Pageant

Nov. 29: Thanksgiving Holiday. Supervision for K-5th will be provided; older children are encouraged to worship in Meeting

Dec. 6: Pageant Practice

Dec. 13: Pageant Practice (not individual classes)

Dec. 20: Christmas Pageant

Dec. 27: Holiday Break. (Supervision for K-5th will be provided; older children are encouraged to worship in Meeting.)

Jan. 3: Holiday Break. (Supervision for K-5th will be provided; older children are encouraged to worship in Meeting.)

A signup sheet for parent and Meeting volunteers is posted on the BFM bulletin board. We invite you to join the RE committee, parents, and Meeting volunteers to help make the RE Quaker Leadership & Values program meaningful for children growing up in our Meeting. Are you interested in co-teaching meetings for learning for 4th/5th grade or 6th to 8th grade children? The Religious Education Committee is looking for volunteer teachers who will share teaching

responsibilities twice a month. We are also looking for substitute teachers.

Events

1st: Meeting for Business

On the agenda for Meeting for Business this month are reports from Nominating, Peace & Social Justice, Child Care, the auditors, and Yearly Meeting Interim Meeting. All who attend Meeting for Worship are welcome to participate. Child care is provided for children up through age 11. Please come if you can, at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday, November 1, in the meeting room.

1st: WPH Potluck & Dialogue

F(f)riends are invited to a potluck and Quaker dialogue at William Penn House on Sunday, November 1, at 6:30 p.m. David Connell will talk about his class at the Arlington County Jail on stress management as part of the Offender AID & Restoration (OAR) program. 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, contact byron@WilliamPennHouse.org, 202-543-5560, or www.WilliamPennHouse.org

7th: Couples Enrichment Day

There will be a Couples Enrichment Day from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., on Saturday, November 7, at Langley Hill Meeting, 6410 Georgetown Pike (Route 123), McLean VA. Couples from area Meetings and elsewhere are invited to attend. Learn couple dialogue and communication skills, deepen your connection with your partner, and consider forming or joining an on-going enrichment group. Bring your own lunch and nurture your relationship, too.

8th: P&SJ Forum on Black Lives Matter & Ending Mass Incarceration

During the summer, many of us were able to participate in the discussion of David Hunter's book on Building a Movement to End the New Jim Crow, which stimulated our thinking about next steps we might take. On Sunday, November 8, at 9:30 a.m., in the Music Room, we hope to gather the ideas people have and make a plan for who is willing to do what, when, and where. There is excitement about providing money for Smart Cards so returning citizens can get to job interviews; participating in legislative reform efforts through the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (www.MA4JR.org); and hosting or joining Black Lives Matter vigils.

8th: Potluck

Please join us for feast and fellowship in the Groome Building at the rise of Meeting on Sunday, November 8. Potluck is a good way to make connections with people you don't know so well (newcomers and others), so please bring a dish to share and be ready to make some new friends.

8th/22nd/29th: 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 on 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 three sessions. One will be on Sunday evening, November 8, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. The second will be on Sunday, November 22, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. The third will be at BFM on Sunday, November 29, at 9:30 a.m., in the Music Room (basement, across the courtyard from the meetinghouse). It is sponsored by the Adult Religious Education Committee and Advancement & Outreach Committee as a way of deepening our experience of Meeting for Worship.

12th/13th: Quaker Public Policy Institute

Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) is sponsoring a Public Policy Institute on Building Pathways to Peace on Thursday and Friday, November 12 and 13. You can register now at: www.fcnl.org/annualmeeting

Last year, we were over 430 strong as we lobbied for diplomacy with Iran. And it worked. You made a difference. Join FCNL as we continue our Quaker witness and lobby to build a pathway to peace.

On Thursday morning, the president of the US Institute for Peace will talk about current structures within the US government for building peace. At noon, a Congressional panel will discuss peacebuilding in Congress. The plenary that evening will be given by Bridget Moix, who now works for the Genocide Prevention Program at George Mason University. It is a wonderful opportunity to connect with Friends from around the country who care passionately about the issues of the day. On Friday, the emphasis is on lobby visits to members of Congress, with an evening panel on building structures for peace. The registration fee is \$50.

See www.fcnl.org/annualmeeting or call 202-547-6000 for details. The event will be held at the Washington Court Hotel (525 New Jersey Avenue, NW, between 1st and North Capitol and between E and F Streets).

14th/28th: Friends Wilderness Center Events

The Friends Wilderness Center invites us to two events in November.

On Saturday, November 14, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., a FWC Board Member will facilitate Poetry to Warm the Soul. This program will be in essence a poetry pot luck - sharing poems and the richness they carry in their images. Bring poems that you have written as well as poems that have special depth and meaning for you. Please RSVP to reserve your spot in this program and a chair at the dinner table.

On Saturday, November 28, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., come join the Benson Family on a Cold Turkey hike on FWC trails and then share leftovers from your Thanksgiving in a potluck dinner after the hike. This hike is an ideal opportunity to give thanks for the many blessings in your life, to walk off a few of the holiday calories, and to share in the fun and fellowship. Please RSVP to reserve your spot in this program. For details: www.friendswilderness.org

FWC is just 1.5 hours from Bethesda on a 1,400-acre tract of land which backs up to the Appalachian Trail in West Virginia.

Although the Friends Wilderness Center does not charge for any of its programs, we are asked to make a suggested donation of \$10 per person for the programs (\$25 for a family of 3 or more), or more if you would like, to help continue the upkeep of the facilities and the land. Donations can be made using a personal check or cash at FWC or by credit card via the FWC website.

14th: Quaker Book Group

The Quaker Book Group meets monthly, normally on the second Saturday at 2:00 p.m. at Bethesda Public Library (not at Meeting). This month's meeting is scheduled for Saturday, November 14, and we will continue the discussion of Matthew Fox's *Original Blessing*. Newcomers are always welcome!

15th & 22nd: Book Table Holiday Specials

The Christmas selections for the Book Table Holiday Specials will begin on Sunday, November 15, and continue on November 22, and Sundays in December. We will be offering new items, seasonal books, and selections particularly appropriate for gifts to children and adults.

15th: Adult Friendly Eights Dinners

Adult Friendly Eights are potluck dinners for approximately eight adults in the homes of people in the BFM community. In November, they will be on Sunday, November 15, at 6:30 p.m. Please note future dates for Adult Friendly Eights are:

January 17

February 21

March 20

April 17

21st: Family Friendly Eights Dinner

Family Friendly Eights are potluck dinners with children in the home of someone in the BFM community. People learn when and where through an Evite. In November, families will gather on Saturday, November 21, at 5:00 p.m. Please note that future dates for Family Friendly Eights are:

January 30 (not the 23rd)

February 27

March 19 (not the 26th)

April 30 (not the 23rd)

Send an e-mail to friendly8s@bethesdafriends.org to be added to the Evite list.

22nd: ARE: Margaret Fell Speaking

On Sunday, November 22, at 9:30 a.m., in the Music Room of the SAM Building, a member of the Adult Religious Education Committee will lead a session exploring the spirituality and practicality of the "Mother of Quakerism" with the help of Pendle Hill pamphlet *Margaret Fell Speaking*. This pamphlet is a short collection of key extracts from Margaret's writings compiled by the eminent Quaker historian Hugh Barbour. They include her own description of her life and conviction, social commentary on her turbulent political times, and the many problems, disagreements, and triumphs of the earliest Quakers. Of particular interest are her views on the religious – if not social and economic – equality of women, and the need to petition government for the redress of injustices. These are highly relevant topics for us today! Copies of *Margaret Fell Speaking* will be available at rise of meeting from the book table.

22nd: Christmas Pageant Orchestra Rehearsal

If you play a musical instrument, consider playing in the Meeting's Christmas Celebration Orchestra and letting Ross Capon know of your interest, preferably by Tuesday, November 17. All ages are welcome to participate. Orchestra rehearsals are:

- Sunday, November 22, 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. (Music Room, in the basement of the SAM Building, across the courtyard from the meetinghouse).
- Saturday, December 5, 10:30 a.m. to noon (Groome Building multipurpose room).
- Wednesday, December 16, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. (SAM music room).
- Sunday, December 20, 9:30 a.m. (SAM); then 11:00 a.m. "dress rehearsal" (Groome Building multipurpose room); noon performance.

24th: All Community Meeting for Worship

The Sidwell Friends School is hosting three all-community Meetings for Worship in the Robert L. Smith Meeting Room on the Upper School campus at 3825 Wisconsin Avenue, NW. BFM F(f)riends are cordially invited to participate. The dates are:

- Tuesday, November 24, at 6:30 p.m.
- Sunday, March 13, 10:30 a.m.
- Sunday, June 5, 10:30 a.m.

27th to 29th: Young Friends Conference

On the weekend of November 27 to 29, there will be a Young Friends Conference for high-school-aged Quakers probably at Stony Run Friends Meeting, 5116 North Charles Street, Baltimore MD 21210. For information, check the Young Friends website:

(https://bym-rsforg.presencehost.net/what_we_do/yfs/yfcon.html) or call 301-774-7663. Please remember that the deadline to register and be guaranteed a slot is two weeks before the conference (November 13). Any one registering after that date will be placed on a waiting list and may not be able to attend.

29th: 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. On Sunday, November 29, at 12:30 p.m., we will meet in the Meeting room.

Into the Future

FMW Shoe Box Project

Each year, Friends Meeting of Washington hosts the Shoe Box Project, typically a week or two before Christmas. The committee usually decides the date by early November, and you can see the FMW web site (www.quakersdc.org) for the date. Volunteers fill about 1,000 boxes with practical items for vulnerable people (hats, gloves, and lip balm, and candy, books, and toys for children). These go to shelters throughout D.C., which distribute them to men, women, and children. An information card which lists every shelter, soup kitchen, clinic, etc., in the city is included. On Saturday, the Young Adults at FMW are in charge of putting the boxes together and organizing the stuff to be distributed; on Sunday, the boxes are filled and distributed. All are welcome on either or both days.

January 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>

Committee Notes

Stewardship & Finance

We thank the Stewardship & Finance Committee for providing refreshments at the rise of Meeting and for managing potluck in November. S&F is responsible for preparing the annual budget, raising the funds to meet the approved budget, providing guidance and support to the Treasurer, and ensuring proper care and use of Meeting investments and property. It meets on Committee Night.

The committee encourages you to support Bethesda Friends Meeting. Each year, the Meeting makes a collective commitment to provide financial support through its adoption of a budget in Meeting for Business.

S&F has mailed the BFM community its first appeal letter for the July 2015-June 2016 budget period. The appeal includes both a stamped addressed return envelope for your convenience to send a check (payable to Bethesda Friends Meeting), and a form for setting up a periodic automatic donation. You also can donate online at:

www.bethesdafriends.org or put a check (or cash) in the BFM box on the hall table.

The committee will make only two appeals for this fiscal year, yet the budget relies on donations of \$116,000 that are 98% of the Meeting's income. It's your contributions that generate the funds which make possible the Meeting's activities and its contributions to Quaker causes and peace and social justice concerns, so it's important that you participate with contributions that are generous in relation to your means.

Peace & Social Justice

Hope for the Holidays: Be a part of A Wider Circle's Holiday Giving Programs. A Wider Circle has several opportunities for holiday giving for the upcoming holiday season. While the Peace & Social Justice Committee is planning a third annual BFM volunteer opportunity as part of A Wider Circle's Holiday Giving Program in December (date TBA soon!), the organization also has several other ways to get involved. Consider donating items for Thanksgiving dinner, including the following grocery items: low sodium stuffing and gravy, canned vegetables (including canned sweet potatoes), canned fruit and cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, and chicken broth, as well as gift cards for perishables. Or sponsor a family in December. You will receive information about the number of children and adults in the family, along with their wish list of requested items. Or donate new toys, stocking stuffers, and other items to A Wider Circle's North Pole, where clients are able to select Christmas gifts for family members. For further information, e-mail the volunteer coordinators at jingle@awidercircle.org

Meeting Notes

Peace Notes

Syrians have been suffering for over four years now. This month our Religious Education programming will focus on the situation of the Syrian refugees and how to support them (including a coat drive on November 1), and the rest of our community is invited to join our youth in this focus. Much can be learned from the US Holocaust Museum website:

<http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/cases/syria>

An article from the Holocaust-education organization Facing History and Ourselves details the connections between what is happening to Syrians today and the conditions that Jews suffered leading up to and during the Holocaust:

<http://facingtoday.facinghistory.org/refugee-crisis-in-europe>

We know that in times of global crisis, it is essential for each of us to raise our voices before it is too late. The Huffington Post recommends seven ways to help: learn more, donate, fundraise, advocate, use social media to speak out, pray, and support refugees in the US:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/catholic-relief-services/7-ways-you-can-help-syria_b_8124792.html.

For tips about organizations doing the important work of supporting these refugees, check out: <http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/06/world/iyw-how-to-help-syrian-refugees>.

As always, you can also use the Charity Navigator to evaluate organizations to which you are considering donating.

Green Notes

Jessica Yu's video, *Last Call at the Oasis* (see <http://www.takepart.com/lastcall>) shows how the global water crisis will be the central issue facing our world this century. We can manage this problem, but only if we are willing to act now. *Last Call at the Oasis* is a powerful new documentary that shatters myths behind our most precious resource. This film exposes defects in the current system, shows communities already struggling with its ill-effects, and highlights individuals championing revolutionary solutions during the global water crisis. Firmly establishing this crisis as the central issue facing our world this century, the film posits that we can manage this problem if we act now. It is an eye-opener and well worth the time (approximately one and a half hours) to view it.

Thinking about Race

Ta-Nehisi Coates' recent book, *Between the World and Me*, is written as a letter to his 15-year-old son. In an allusion to the fact that "race" is a social construct, he refers to white people as those "who believe themselves to be white," and also refers to them as "Dreamers."

From page 107: "Part of me thinks that your very vulnerability brings you closer to the meaning of life, just as for others, the quest to believe oneself white divides them from it. You have been cast into a race in which the wind is always at your face and the hounds are always at your heels. And to varying degrees this is true of all life. The difference is that you do not have the privilege of living in ignorance of this essential fact."