

ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING NEWS, Web Edition for May, 2020



Queries:

In what ways do I show respect for that of God in every person?

Do I reach out to those in distress? If I find this difficult, what holds me back?

Am I comfortable making my own needs known to my meeting?

How do we share in the diverse joys and transitions in each other's lives?

Advices:

Friends are concerned about the welfare of every member of the Meeting community. While we need to guard against prying or invasion of privacy, it is nevertheless essential that Meetings be aware of the spiritual and material needs of members of the community and express caring concern in appropriate ways. To this end, we are to live affectionately as friends, entering with sympathy into the joys and sorrows of one another's lives.

As we are willing to offer help, so should we be willing to make our needs known and to accept help. In bereavement, give yourself time to grieve. When others mourn, let your love embrace them with the simple things of life: praying together, talking, planning meals, caring for children, and otherwise being of comfort. In offering pastoral care, it is not necessary to find the right words; it is important to be present.

Just as we do not leave pastoral care to a pastor, so we may not leave this most essential function to a committee alone. It is also important to recognize when it may be appropriate to reach within or beyond the community to involve persons with special expertise.

Voices:

In a true community we will not choose our companions, for our choices are so often limited by self-serving motives. Instead, our companions will be given to us by grace. Often they will be persons who will upset our settled view of self and world. In fact, we might define true community as the place where the person you least want to live with always lives!

Parker J. Palmer, 1977

Forgiveness does not mean “forgive and forget.” It stares the beast in the eye, names the hurt, and refuses to return it, seeking not to punish but to heal.

Desmond Tutu, 2007

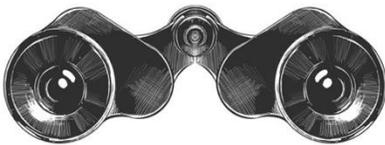
Loving care is not something that those sound in mind and body “do” for others but a process that binds us together. God has made us loving and the imparting of love to another satisfies something deep within us. It would be a mistake to assume that those with outwardly well-organized lives do not need assistance. Many apparently secure careers live close to despair within themselves. We all have our needs.

Britain Yearly Meeting, 12.01



ANNOUNCEMENTS

GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING



NEXT WORKING GROUP ON STEWARDING OUR VISION (WGSV) MEETING: TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2020, 4:30-6:00 PM VIA ZOOM

The Working Group on Stewarding our Vision is charged with naming and supporting future Meeting aspirations. The next meeting of the WGSV will be held on Tuesday, May 5th via Zoom, 4:30-6:00pm. We will continue our work of applying our Appreciative Inquiry process to the Meeting Practices map. Friends are most welcome to join us. If you plan to attend please contact Greta Kirk-Mickey at greta.mickey@gmail.com or Anita Langford at amlangfo@verizon.net

Announcements, continued...



FORUM: WHERE DOES IT HURT?: SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2020, 11:30 AM – 12:30PM

VIA ZOOM: We will hear from civil rights legend Ruby Sales using excerpts from an audiotaped *On Being* interview of Ms. Sales by Krista Tippett entitled "Where Does It Hurt?". This interview explores the spiritual origins of the civil rights movement, brings that tradition into conversation with the Black Lives Matter movement, and explores the importance of articulating a public theology for all, including poor white people. In our forum we will play excerpts from the interview followed by a time of response in a worship sharing format. For those who would like to listen ahead of the forum, here is a link to the entire interview and transcript:

<https://onbeing.org/programs/ruby-sales-where-does-it-hurt/>



BIBLE STUDY: SUNDAY MAY 24, 9AM: VIA ZOOM

We invite you to join in our continuing engagement with the Bible, a complex, rich, and challenging compilation of texts that were so formative for our early Quaker ancestors. Using the Spears method, we read aloud a short passage and settle into a time of quiet reflection on five simple prompts: what is the main point of the passage?; what new Light do I

encounter in this passage today?; how is the passage true to my experience?; what implications are there in this passage for further thought or action?; what problems do I have with this passage? After quiet individual reflection on these prompts, we open up for a worshipful discussion in the hope of receiving what wisdom the passage has to offer.



RICHARD ROHR DISCUSSION GROUP MAY 24, 11:30 VIA ZOOM

No advance preparation is required. We will read a short passage aloud and then settle into a worshipful discussion. A link to the session will be sent closer to the date.

GUNPOWDER
FRIENDSHIP NIGHTS



EVERY WEDNESDAY
7-8PM, ONLINE

GUNPOWDER FRIENDSHIP NIGHTS, WEDNESDAYS, 7-8PM, VIA ZOOM:

On behalf of the Ministry and Counsel Committee, you are cordially invited to our weekly "Gunpowder Friendship Night," via Zoom every Wednesday evening from 7-8 p.m. These gatherings are a way to stay connected socially and to check in with one another each week. You can drop in for a few minutes or stay the hour. Whatever suits your needs. Members of Ministry and Counsel and, we expect, Care and Oversight will be present to ensure that we are receiving the support we need from Meeting--and that our ministries in support of Meeting continue to be affirmed and nurtured. The Clerk will send out a link each week.



REMEMBRANCE DAY: MONDAY, MAY 25: In lieu of our traditional gathered meeting and picnic, Friends are invited to remember loved ones now gone by visiting the Gunpowder Friends Meeting cemetery and/or cemeteries where loved ones are buried, holding those cherished ones in quiet contemplation while there, and perhaps, if so moved, placing flowers at the site(s).



A NOTE FROM CARE & OVERSIGHT: We are pleased to see so many Friends joining Zoom Meeting for Worship and it is heartening to know that others are with us in spirit even if not connected via a device. If you find yourself having a hard time connecting to the Gunpowder community in a virtual way, we are available to talk with you about a way that would better meet your needs, such as phone calls for support. If you find yourself in need of practical support, such as grocery shopping, a trip to the pharmacy, or assistance with finding items that may be hard to come by, we have community members who can help you with such tasks. Please contact any member of our Care and Oversight committee to share your needs and concerns so we can work together and care for each other. (C&O Clerk, LouAnne Smith, 443-595-8292, louannesmith2@gmail.com)



Day 45....



THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF SLAVERY

From an interview with Anne C. Bailey by Adeel Hassan in the **New York Times**, February 29, 2020

Why does it matter so much to preserve these [slave auction] sites, many of which have already been built over?

If in 2020, we agree that all lives matter, then all lives mattered then, too, so we should find a way to demonstrate that. One way is to democratize our landscape. At present, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, there are over 1,800 Confederate monuments and memorials; at the same time we have found fewer than 50 marked auction sites.

If we are a nation committed to justice and a sense of fairness, this should bother us. We ought to balance the scales and acknowledge what these people endured yet still contributed to this country.

Adeel Hassan interviewed Ann C. Bailey, Professor of History at Binghamton University, who wrote a **New York Times Magazine** article, "The Sold Human Beings Here," part of the Times' **The 1619 Project**. Hassan's interview with Bailey appeared on February 29, 2020, entitled "The Hidden History of Slavery That Surrounds us." <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/29/us/the-hidden-history-of-slavery-that-surrounds-us.html?searchResultPosition=4>

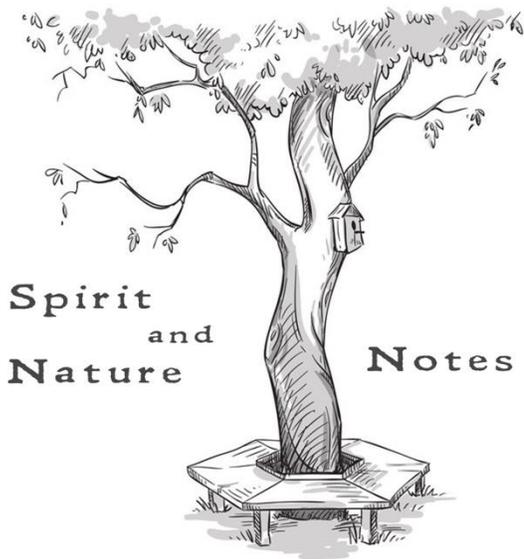
QUERY: How do I work to recognize and remove barriers individual people of color may encounter in becoming involved in our activities?

*This column is prepared by the **BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR)** and sent to the designated liaison at each local Meeting. The BYM WGR meets most months on the third Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Locations vary to allow access to more Friends. If you would like to attend, on a regular or a drop-in basis, contact clerk David Etheridge, david.etheridge@verizon.net.*

Food for Thought

From *The Moth Snowstorm: Nature and Joy*, by British naturalist and environmental writer Michael McCarthy:

The natural world can offer us more than the means to survive, on the one hand, or mortal risks to be avoided, on the other: it can offer us joy. There can be occasions when we suddenly and involuntarily find ourselves loving the natural world with a startling intensity, in a burst of emotion which we may not fully understand, and the only word that seems to me to be appropriate for this feeling is joy. What it denotes is a happiness with an overtone of something more, which we might term an elevated or, indeed, a spiritual quality.



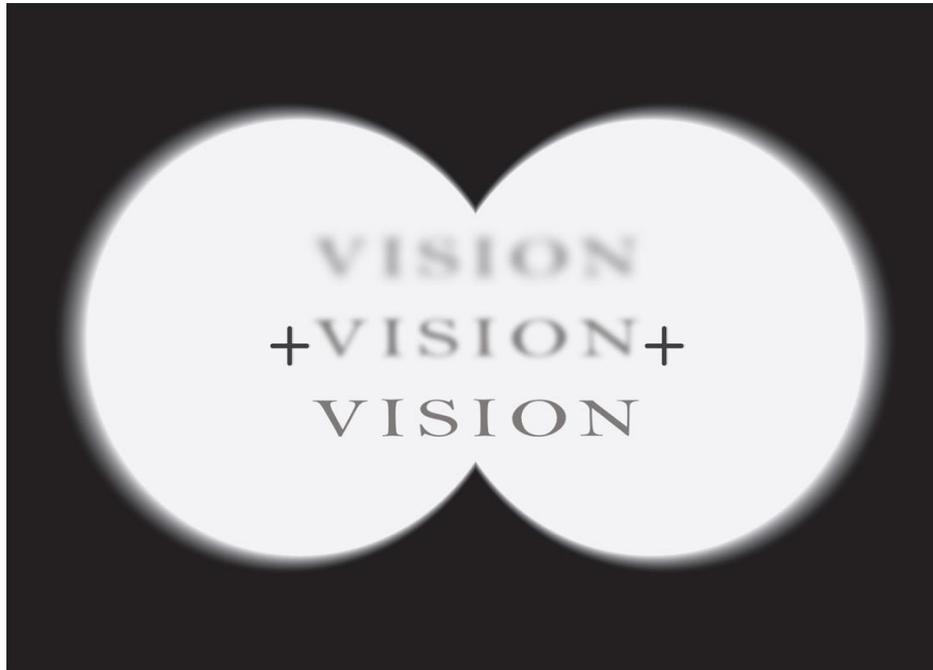
They are surely very old, these feelings. They are lodged deep in our tissues and emerge to surprise us. For we forget our origins; in our towns and cities, staring into our screens, we need constantly reminding that we have been operators of computers for a single generation and workers in neon-lit offices for three or four, but we were farmers for five hundred generations, and before that hunter-gatherers for perhaps fifty thousand or more, living with the natural world as part of it as we evolved, and the legacy cannot be done away with. It is time for a different, formal defense of nature. We should offer up not just the notion of being sensible and responsible about it, which is sustainable development, nor the notion of its mammoth utilitarian and financial value, which is ecosystem services, but a third way, something different entirely: we should offer up what it means to our spirits; the love of it. We should offer up its joy. And it seems to me the wholly appropriate name for the sudden passionate happiness which the natural world can occasionally trigger in us, which may well be the most serious business of all.

The natural world is not separate from us, it is part of us. It is as much a part of us as our capacity for language; we are bonded to it still, however hard it may be to perceive the union in the tumult of modern urban life. Yet the union can be found, the union of ourselves and nature, in the joy which nature can spark and fire in us.

You can savor Krista Tippett's beautiful *On Being* conversation with McCarthy at: <https://onbeing.org/programs/nature-joy-and-human-becoming-may2018/>

*I am thankful that in a
troubled world, no calamity
can prevent the return of spring.*
Helen Keller





WORKING GROUP ON STEWARDING OUR VISION: UPDATE

For over a year, Gunpowder Friends journeyed together to discern a vision for our future as a Meeting community. Careful listening, joyful creativity, and heart-filled collaboration guided our journey; these gifts of Spirit continue to be present as we live into our vision. At our December Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business (business meeting), a Working Group for Stewarding our Vision (WGSV) was charged with supporting Friends as we live into our vision, but the journey remains all of ours. Anita Langford and Greta Kirk Mickey are clerking the working group and are joined thus far by Charlie Davis, Rebecca Richards, Jennifer Robinson, Alan Schmaljohn, Amy Schmaljohn, and Heather Sowers. The WGSV will meet monthly and all are welcome to the meetings.

At its meeting in late March, the WGSV spent time reflecting on the wider social moment we find ourselves in: the global pandemic caused by the novel Coronavirus, bringing sickness, death, and upheaval to so much of our daily lives. Do we have the energy--perhaps even the luxury--of stewarding a vision for our future in the midst of such uncertainty? As we sat in worship and discernment, we realized that we had, indeed, already begun to live into our vision as we made decisions about how to care for and sustain our community during this time of physical distancing. We might have been hesitant to experiment with a distance-mediated Meeting for Worship using a video conferencing technology (Zoom) only a few months ago; now we are gathering this way weekly and coming to appreciate how it helps us to connect with Friends (from Broadmead and places more distant) whom we haven't seen at the Meeting House in a while. Our availability as a community worshipping in this new way has even drawn some newcomers in recent weeks. Transcriptions of messages, joys and sorrows, and announcements (approved by those who spoke them) are being shared through our Gunpowder listserv, thereby sustaining and deepening connections. Our now weekly "Gunpowder Friendship Nights" (also via Zoom) bring fellowship and laughter into our homes. Spiritual Formation, Bible Study, First Day School, and other forums and discussion groups are gathering via Zoom and providing spiritual nurture for Friends.

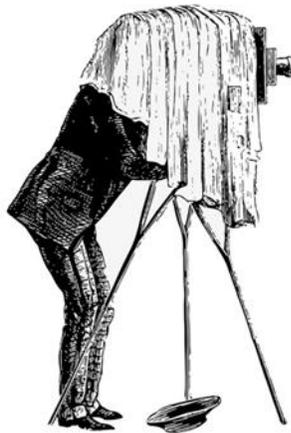
Stewarding Our Vision, continued...

This--and all--visioning work has been guided by a Spirit-led process of Appreciative Inquiry, one in which we collectively notice where and how energies arise for our work, and then focus our discovery and design efforts around these positive directional energies. Going forward, we will be guided by the charge approved for the WGSV at April's business meeting: to help name, prioritize, support, and organize the resources and energies needed to realize the Meeting's aspirations toward our vision.

Friends, when we gave voice to our mission as a "spiritual community in the tradition of the Religious Society of Friends sustaining and bearing witness to our faith and its practice in an ever-evolving world," we may not have imagined how prophetic those words would prove to be. Together, we can take steps each day, each week, and each month to "remain grounded in Spirit in all we do for one another and for the wider world" and to "know and care for one another during all stages and circumstances of our lives." (Gunpowder Friends Mission, Vision, and Values Statement, December 2019). The WGSV is clear that our work is to help the Meeting community see where and how we are living into our vision and to help prioritize that work given the resources available to us. The unfailing and seemingly limitless resource available to us is the love we give and receive in community. Bob Fetter shared a message during worship on Easter Sunday that has arisen for him regularly over the years: among the many miracles of Jesus of Nazareth, the one we can experience again and again is the miracle of community. In this spirit, the WGSV celebrates the living into our vision that is happening through this miracle even in uncertain times.

The next WGSV meeting will be Tuesday, May 5th from 4:30 - 6:00PM via Zoom. Friends who would like to join can reach out to Anita Langford or Greta Kirk Mickey.

Greta Kirk Mickey & Heather Sowers, Co-Clerks



"A Vision of Love-liness."

Calendar

May – 5th Month

Sunday, 5/3

10:00 AM - Meeting for Worship via Zoom

11:30 - First Day School Family Story-time

11:30 AM - Letter-writing at home

Wednesday, 5/6

7:00 PM - Gunpowder Friendship Night via Zoom

Sunday, 5/10

10:00 AM - Meeting for Worship via Zoom

11:30 AM - Forum: Where Does It Hurt? Civil rights legend, Ruby Sales interview*

Wednesday, 5/13

7:00 PM - Gunpowder Friendship Night via Zoom

Sunday, 5/17

10:00 AM - Meeting for Worship via Zoom

11:30 AM – Meeting for Business via Zoom

Wednesday, 5/20

7:00 PM - Gunpowder Friendship Night via Zoom

Thursday, 5/21

7:00 PM - Spiritual Formation via Zoom

Sunday, 5/24

9:00 AM - Bible Study via Zoom

10:00 AM - Meeting for Worship via Zoom

11:30 AM - Richard Rohr Discussion Group via Zoom

Monday, 5/25

Remembrance Day*

Wednesday, 5/27

7:00 PM - Gunpowder Friendship Night via Zoom

Sunday, 5/31

10:00 AM - Meeting for Worship via Zoom

**See announcements and articles for further details*

The Web Edition of the Newsletter does not include minutes from Gunpowder's Meeting for Business. Personal Information has been redacted. The full newsletter, complete with minutes, is available at the Meetinghouse – attenders may also request the electronic or print edition.

Please feel free to inquire with Gunpowder's Clerk at gunpowderclerk@gmail.com.