



ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING NEWS, Web Edition for September, 2020

THE AUTHENTIC SELF



VOICES:

To be nobody-but-yourself in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody but yourself - means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight- and never stop fighting. *e.e. cummings*

The true and durable path into and through experience involves being true...to your own secret knowledge. *Seamus Heaney*

We cannot change the past, but we can change our attitude toward it. Uproot guilt and plant forgiveness. Tear out arrogance and seed humility. Exchange love for hate; thereby making the present comfortable and the future promising. *Maya Angelou*

Remember: if you want to make progress on the path and ascend to the places you have longed for, the important thing is not to think much but love much, and so to do whatever best awakens you to love.

St. Teresa of Avila, The Interior Castle

Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into friend. *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Accepting what's dished up as truth without discernment or questioning is not authenticity. It is conformity. *Anon*

ADVICES:

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered; forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish ulterior motives; be kind anyway. If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies; be successful anyway. If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; be honest and frank anyway. What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; build anyway. If you find serenity and happiness, others may be jealous; be happy anyway. The good you do today, people will forget tomorrow; do good anyway. Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; give your best anyway. For you see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

Mother Teresa

Quaker testimonies bear witness to the truth as perceived by Friends IN COMMUNITY and known through relationship with God. They do not exist in any rigid, written form, NOR ARE THEY IMPOSED in any way. Quakers search for how testimonies can be expressed in his or her life and are tender with each other in the searching.

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QUERIES:

Quakers are not prone to judge, rebuke, chasten, or scold. But are inclined to finding that of God in everyone. It is not true to Quakerism to change the world by slashing, burning, and tearing down but by love, peace, and building up. How will you strive to be true to your authentic self? To your authentic Quaker self? Who in your life do you view as “the real deal”? Authentic? Integrated in thought, word, and deed and unwavering in the face of dissent, differences, contradiction, confrontation? Will you choose a way forward guided by truth and love, even if it means travelling that road alone? Or will you follow the crowd and those who claim authority and wisdom despite your misgivings?



ANNOUNCEMENTS

GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING



VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR, SUNDAY 9/6/20, AT RISE OF MEETING: Do you miss catching up with Friends at our Coffee Socials? Care and Oversight Committee invites you to stay online at the rise of Meeting on 8/2/20 for some casual social time using the breakout room feature of Zoom. Our first virtual Coffee Social in July got a thumbs up from those attending -- and we hope that you will join us for this next one! (BYO coffee, tea and/or snack.)



**NEXT WORKING GROUP ON STEWARDING OUR VISION (WGSV) MEETING:
TUESDAY, 9/8/20, 4:30-6:00 PM VIA ZOOM:**

The Working Group on Stewarding our Vision (WGSV) is charged with naming and supporting future Meeting aspirations. The next meeting of the WGSV will be held on Tuesday, September 8th, via Zoom, 4:30-6:00pm. We will continue planning a forum and a follow up session about the longstanding query regarding stewardship of the Meetings resources and the related

matter of how we will move forward in putting our vision and values into action. 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



FORUM: SUNDAY 9/13/20, RISE OF MEETING: Financial Literacy for GFM, hosted by the WGSV. See WGSV article in this newsletter for more information.



SPIRITUAL FORMATION, THURSDAY, 9/17/20, 7PM, VIA ZOOM::

On Thursday, September 17th, Gunpowder Friends will gather via Zoom in our Spiritual Formation “large group” to organize ourselves for the year ahead. Many of us will be participating in the Spiritual Formation Retreat sponsored by Baltimore Yearly Meeting on September 18th-19th (via Zoom) to experience the spiritual community of the wider Yearly meeting and to set our intentions for the year ahead. Even if you cannot attend the retreat, we invite you to participate in Gunpowder’s Spiritual Formation Program. On the 17th, we’ll talk about how we will form the smaller

“spiritual friendship” groups that anchor our experience in the program and what readings or shared experiences we want to plan for our “large group” meetings each month. If you would like more information about the Spiritual Formation program at Gunpowder, please email Amy Schmaljohn (amy@schmaljohn.com) or Rebecca Richards (rebeccaruth48@comcast.net). For information about how to register for the BYM Spiritual Formation Retreat, please go to the BYM website: <https://www.bym-rsf.org/events/spiritform/>. Spiritual Formation is a wonderful way to deepen your relationships with Friends at Gunpowder as we share our spiritual journeys with one another.



BIBLE STUDY: SUNDAY, 9/27/20, 9AM: VIA ZOOM

We’re studying the “Psalms of Ascent” to glean their ancient wisdom that feels very applicable today. We gather via Zoom to hear the Psalm read aloud and then spend time reflecting individually on a few queries: What is the main point of the text?; What new Light do I encounter in the text today?; How is the text true to my experience?; What implications are there for further study/response/action?; and What problems do I encounter in the

text? After a period of quiet response and reflection, we share our responses with one another. What emerges is a deeper understanding of the text and a sense of how sacred texts speaks to our individual and collective lives today. **Join us for Bible Study the fourth Sunday of each month, from 9-10 a.m. via Zoom.**

GUNPOWDER
FRIENDSHIP NIGHTS



EVERY WEDNESDAY
7-8PM, ONLINE

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

Looking for a lighthearted way to stay connected with Gunpowder Friends during this time of physical distancing? **Join us each Wednesday evening from 7-8 via Zoom.** Our host Jeremy Funk always has a “light and lively” question to get the conversation going, and it flows from there. In recent weeks, we’ve shared on topics as varied as our favorite Broadway Musicals and our experiences with big storms and power outages. Join us for a time of free-ranging conversation, laughter, and surprising connections (who knew that two Gunpowder Friends actually sang the lead role in the musical “Brigadoon”?). The link for each week’s Friendship Night is sent out by the Clerk. 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. The Clerk will send out a link each week.



NEW FORUM SERIES ON QUAKER FAITH: The Ministry and Counsel Committee

will once again **host a series of forums this fall on our Quaker faith** and practice. This ongoing learning is foundational to our mission, vision, and values as a spiritual community. Our mission affirms that we are “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.” Our vision calls us to “remain grounded in Spirit,” and to “live and share our Quaker faith and its practices.” We value being “a Quaker community connected to the wider Quaker world.” To support our living of this mission, vision, and values, M&C will be hosting several forums based on

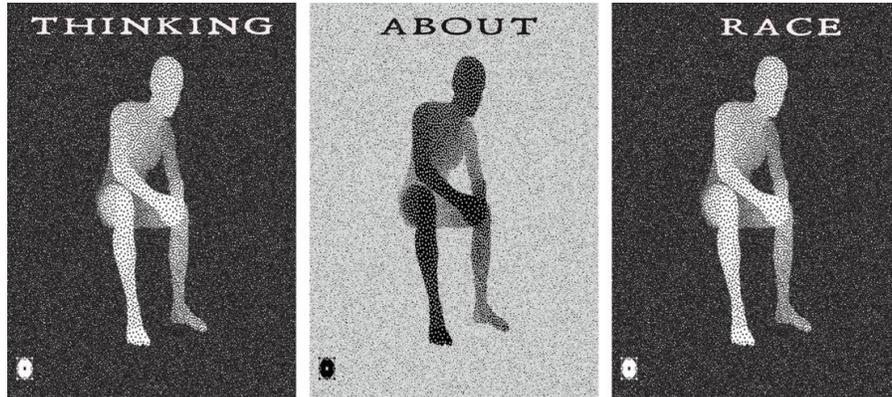
Marcelle Martin’s book *Our Life is Love: The Quaker Spiritual Journey* (2016). Those of us who have learned with and from Marcelle (and have read her books) know the wisdom she helps us to glean from the study of our Quaker history and the journeys of Friends who have gone before us. We know from experience that our learning about Quakerism never comes to a close—our study of history and our attentiveness to how the spirit and truth are being revealed to us in our own time keep this learning ever fresh and vital. We welcome you to join in the learning and discussion this fall on the **second Sundays of the months of October, November, and December at the rise of Meeting for Worship (11:30 - 12:30)**. We’ll have a more focused topic listed in each of those month’s newsletters. Enjoy the reading!



MEETING FOR WORSHIP ANCHORS NEEDED: Interested in anchoring Meeting for Worship at the Meeting House? We’re encouraging Friends to stay connected to our beautiful Meeting House and grounds by volunteering to be among a small group of Friends each week anchoring our worship through a live Zoom link from the worship room or porch. We ask that no more than 5 Friends support this ministry each week. For more information about how to anchor worship at the Meeting House or to sign up for a time, please contact Rep Pickard (deathquaker@gmail.com) or sign up via the link provided by the Meeting Clerk in each week’s Monday message. We ask that all Friends interested in this ministry sign up in advance.



CROP WALK DONATIONS NEEDED: Because of social distancing this year's Crop Walk will be virtual and we will be relying on online donations. To donate, go to the website: www.crophungerwalk.org/glenarmmd. Click on "Donate" and our local walk should come up. Don't worry about filling out the "team" part. Just complete the form and send. Credit card or Pay Pal may be used. Contact Tina Rives for further information: steve.tina.rives@gmail.com



**CONVERSATIONS WE'RE SEEKING:
RACE, INEQUALITY, AND OUR SOCIETY**

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FIRST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH

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7-8:30 PM

Please join us for a series of eight conversations around race. In these fraught, exciting, and disorienting times, many of us are seeking places to sort out our own responses to and participation in the global movement for racial justice. Gunpowder will host a series of conversations to help each of us find listening ears and helpful Friends.

At our first gathering, we will generate a list of topics related to race that Friends feel drawn towards; at subsequent meetings, we will choose a topic from that list, and break into small groups of three people each to discuss that topic. These are meant to be spacious, spiritually-grounded conversations among Friends. We hope to also find time for Friends to explore leadings and receive feedback on those leadings.

We hope that you will be able to join us for as many of these evenings as possible. **We will gather from 7 - 8:30 pm on the first Thursday of each month, from September 3 – April 1.**

Please email Anita Langford at amlangfo@verizon.net if you are interested in joining us!

Also on race: If you are interested in other viewpoints on the racism issue, consider reading: https://www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun_-_white_sup_culture.pdf. From *Dismantling Racism: A Workbook Social Change Groups*. The selection is offered by the BYM Working Group on Racism.

REFLECTIONS

*The following are reflections offered by Friend, Rebecca Richards,
on the Carey Lecture given by Bridgette Moix at Annual Session.*

First, Friends, let me take full responsibility for hearing and remembering this lecture through my own filters and quite possibly not getting anyone's, let alone Bridgette's, sense of it correctly. Part summary, and part disjointed bits, I want to share what moved me.

The Carey Lecture is given each near the end of Annual Session usually focused on the Annual Session theme. Bridgette Moix was invited to be this year's speaker nearly a year ago, before Covid, before George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Traversing months of upheaval and many rewrites, she chose to focus on the paroxysm of attention we are all experiencing on the woeful state of racial justice in our land – the demand by many for it and the denial of many others that injustice even exists.

Starting with this year's Annual Session theme, "Finding the Courage, Faith and Hope to Love Across Our Differences," Moix raised three questions: What is ending? What is essential? What is external?

What is ending? Many African American commentators including John Lewis, have found hope in the number of white faces to be seen among those demanding change. Moix posits what is ending, then, is white silence, complacency and denial. No, not all whites have been complicit or silent. But too often, public outrage over yet another act of violence against black bodies, is soon followed by a return to "normal." Protests die down, the "news" moves on to other fascinations, and we forget the names. Nothing changes. "Normal" in our culture means our black siblings suffer for the color of their skin.

Moix told a story from what she referred to as the "theatre of transformation" (I have forgotten the reference given). It is the story of a female slave, a woman who awakened John Woolman. He wrote the bill of sale transferring her body from one owner to another. But on reflection he could not live peacefully with this transaction and the realization changed his life... and the lives of many Quakers. This unnamed black woman, said Moix, is the Christ figure here. Her life on the block, she redeemed Quakers. The language of theatre, while dramatic, speaks truth to me. Perhaps George Floyd, is the Christ figure for our times, or for the transformation of some folk.

Moix spoke of the "refiner's fire." Marcelle Martin ([Our Life is Love](#)) also wrote extensively of this way in which early Quakers allowed awareness of their sins and their failings to humble and teach them how to live in right relationship with one another and with Spirit. I do not believe that Quakers, individually or structurally, practice much *intentional* racism. Still, I am not naïve enough to believe that we don't have a thing or two to learn in this area. And I don't think "refiner's fires" are cozy places to be! But the point of the "refiner's fire" is not to be burned by its guilt, but to allow its Light to illumine our lives. Will we invite that reckoning into our lives? How do we live life differently in the light of this fire?

Well, Moix did speak to the final two questions, but with less time and specificity. The crux of it may be in a quote from Thomas Merton: "Courage is love made real." What is essential is for us is to "live AS IF the Beloved Community IS here and IS now." What is external is to make that love real in the world. To meet the needs around us, to love who and what is in our sphere NOW...and NOW, and NOW!



FORUM: FINANCIAL LITERACY FOR GFM SEPTEMBER 13, 11:30 to 12:30

Our Meeting's Visioning Process, from its inception, has held a concern over how to use and steward our financial resources at its center. The WGSV has planned a forum to provide a detailed financial picture of the Meeting's resources currently and over the last several years. This will provide background information for more extensive discernment as to the ways these resources might be used to both sustain our future and do work in the world which reflects our values.

Our able and creative Treasurer, Kerry Zimmerman, has produced a slide show we believe you will find both clear and inspiring. The first part of the Forum will be that presentation followed by a time of Q&A. Following that, we will introduce a second set of queries designed to help each of us prepare for the deeper discernment ahead.

The queries, below, will help you prepare for the Financial Literacy Forum on September 13th.

- Do you endeavor to understand how the Meeting establishes its annual budget and meets its various obligations?
- How would you characterize your role in our collective stewardship?

Before the close of this Forum, a second set of queries will be shared. These will be based on the five Values found in the GFM Mission, Vision, and Values Statement and will set the stage for a longer workshop (mini-retreat) to be held later this Fall.

As Quakers we are called to steward our resources so that we might do more than take care of ourselves: to both contribute and, when possible, take action to heal what is broken in the world. We acknowledged that our Visioning Process did not reach unity on actions. We hope the next process will move friends to dream, imagine, and vision specific actions and/or work that Gunpowder Friends might be led to as we strive to live into our Values.

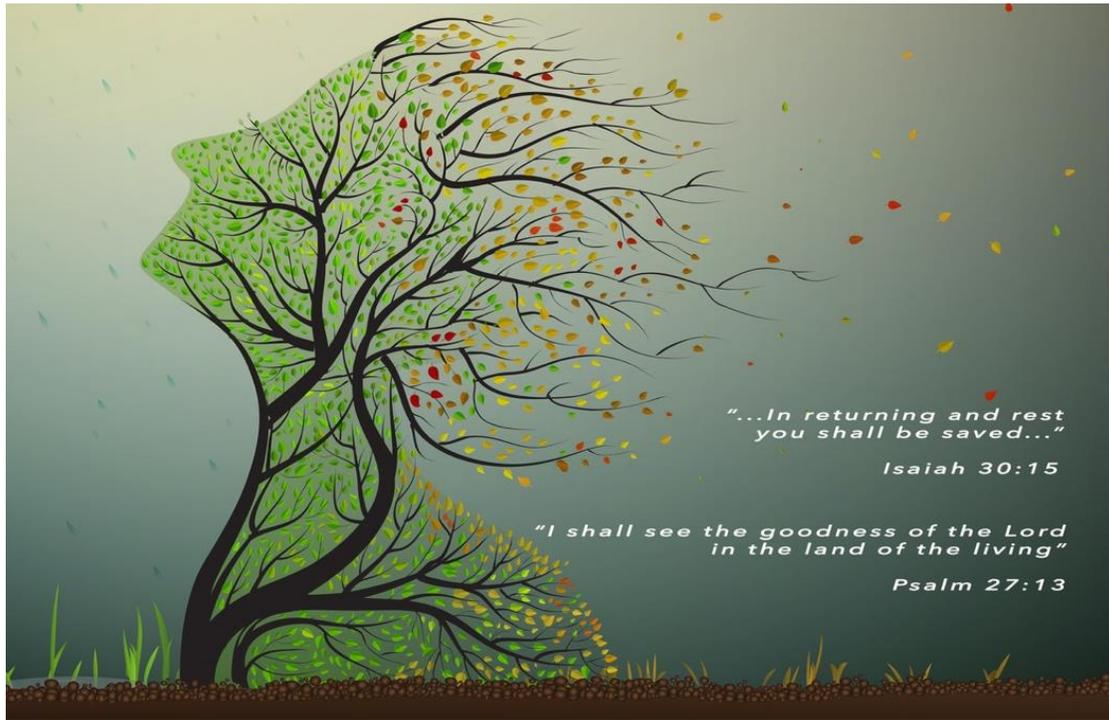
Further announcement and a Zoom link will be sent to all.

The WGSV, Greta Kirk-Mickey and Anita Langford Co-clerks



LIKE YOUR LIFE DEPENDED ON IT.

Friends: If you or someone you know needs help in getting an absentee ballot or in getting to the polls on election day, please contact Claire@exit24.net or 410-336-6380 for help.



FALL SPIRITUAL FORMATION

RETREAT

via Zoom

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 - SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2020

How can I see "goodness"? Where is the "land of the living"? Am I there? Or have I allowed myself to be overtaken by worry amidst uncertainty, confusion amidst perplexity, and despair amidst suffering? The prophets and mystics of the world's wisdom traditions would recognize the times in which we are living - they lived them too. But they knew the pathways of returning, rest, quietness, and trust. Perhaps these are our way back to the land of the living?

~

Join with Friends across Baltimore Yearly Meeting for a weekend retreat that offers time for reflection and renewal, quiet and spiritual friendship, chanting and celebration. We'll gather via Zoom for times of whole group listening, small group sharing, and encountering wisdom in and with one another.

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We'll gather as a whole group on Friday evening from 6:30 - 8:30; on Saturday morning, we'll have some guided reflections to prepare us for a gathering from 1:00 - 3:00 in the afternoon. An optional session on Saturday from 4:00 - 5:00PM will provide a Q&A session for Friends planning to begin or renew a local Spiritual Formation Group. The retreat will close with a final whole-group gathering Saturday evening from 7:00 -9:00PM.

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To register, visit <https://www.bym-rsf.org/events/spiritform/>. We will follow the "pay as lead" model utilized at Annual Session. The suggested contribution is \$50/person, which will cover the costs of participation.

SUPPORT UCAN

Welcome to UCAN!
(Beginning 26 August 2020 UCAN is serving clients online only.)



Rent, BGE Bills and All Other Needs

Residents in zip codes:
* 21030 * 21031 * 21071 * 21093 * 21111 * 21131 * 21152 *

 Preventing Evictions

 Preventing Turn-offs

 Cards & Certificates

Contactless Assistance (online only)* - please send name and documentation of need, one of the following ways:

- email: help@ucanmd.org
- fax: 410-628-6831
- JotForm: <https://form.jotform.com/202204648732148>

What You Can Expect from UCAN:*

- Immediate confirmation of your email or JotForm (confirmation of faxes can take up to a week)
- Follow-up email/phone call from a UCAN Volunteer to discuss your situation and if UCAN can help*

* Volunteers will only be working one day per week, so please be patient.

For food, please leave a message at 410-472-3379.
A Cockeysville Food Pantry volunteer will contact you.



Support UCAN.
United Churches Assistance Network
Providing food assistance to needy families in Baltimore County.
To volunteer or donate:
410-628-2102

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.