



ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING NEWS, Web Edition for October, 2020

MEETING FOR WORSHIP



QUERIES:

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?

ADVICES:

The heart of the Religious Society of Friends is the Meeting for Worship. In worship we are called to seek God's will with our entire being: body, mind, and soul. We treasure silence as a path towards inspiration and guidance that leads to communion with God.

In our Meetings for Worship, we are called to listen with a willingness to give as well as to receive. In speech or in silence, each person contributes to the Meeting.

Prepare for worship. Be mindful that worship is the fusion of individual and collective waiting to experience the love of God. In the silence ask for and accept the prayerful support of others joined with you in worship.

During the Meeting for Worship, Friends may be led by the Spirit to testify, to share an insight. When speaking, we should do so clearly and simply, using as many words as necessary and as few as possible. When another speaks, listen with an open spirit, holding the speaker in love. Rest with the message, recognizing that even if it is not God's word for you, it may be so for others.

VOICES:

What is the ground and foundation of the gathered meeting? In the last analysis, it is, I am convinced, the Real Presence of God.

Thomas R. Kelly, 1940

Group, like individual worship, is an offering; and let none think that because he comes to meeting dry and empty or in great perplexity or need of help, he has “nothing to offer.” He has not only his “outward testimony” to bear, but he has his weakness itself to lay before God in trust and love; and if the meeting is truly “gathered,” that offering may bring it to a deeper place than any surface happiness and praise could do.

Beatrice Saxon Snell, 1965



ANNOUNCEMENTS

GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING



VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR, SUNDAY 10/4/20, 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 10/4/20 for some casual social time using the breakout room feature of Zoom (BYO coffee, tea and/or snack!)



NEXT WORKING GROUP ON STEWARDING OUR VISION (WGSV) MEETINGS/GATHERINGS: TUESDAY, 10/6/20, 4:30-6:00 AND SATURDAY, 10/17/20, 10AM-1PM PM. BOTH VIA ZOOM: The Working Group on Stewarding our Vision (WGSV) is charged with naming and supporting future Meeting aspirations.

The next committee meeting of the WGSV will be held on Tuesday, October 6th, via Zoom, 4:30-6:00pm. We will share our thoughts around the financial literacy forum which the committee presented on September 13th and hear about the work of the small group that is charged with planning our **October 17th gathering (see following pages)**. Friends are most welcome to join us for both. If you plan to attend please contact Greta Kirk-Mickey at greta.mickey@gmail.com or Anita Langford at aclangfo@verizon.net



FORUM, SUNDAY 10/11/20, RISE OF MEETING: ON QUAKER LIFE AND PRACTICE VIA ZOOM: Join Friends in some reading, reflection, and discussion of Marcelle Martin's book *Our Life is Love: The Quaker Spiritual Journey*. In this month's forum (the first of a series of three), we'll explore the section on "Awakening." You do not need to have read in advance, as we'll read aloud particular passages and discuss what insights we can glean from the lives and writings of early and contemporary Friends, and how these connect to our own experience. These "Quakerism" sessions have been a favorite part of our forum line up in the past few years. We look forward to seeing you on October 11th, via Zoom, after Meeting for Worship.



SPIRITUAL FORMATION, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15TH, 7-8:30 VIA ZOOM:

We meet for fellowship as a local Spiritual Formation community on Thursday, October 15th from 7-8:30 p.m. via Zoom. This month, we'll be reflecting on a series of short readings from Richard Rohr, the teacher, mystic, and co-founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation. Among the major emphases of Rohr's teaching is the need to move beyond the dualistic thinking that dominates so much of our secular lives and to quiet the loud cries of the ego so that we can hear more clearly how we are being invited to live, especially in uncertain times. Sounds like nourishment for the soul! Whether or not you've

participated in Spiritual Formation before, you are welcome to join in any or all of our sessions this year, which will be on the third Thursday of each month from 7-8:30. Contact Rebecca Richards to be on the email distribution list (rebeccaruth48@comcast.net)



BIBLE STUDY: SUNDAY, 10/25/20, 9AM: VIA ZOOM: Join us in our continuing study of the "Psalms of Ascent" (120 - 134) that help us hear the ancient cry of longing for the nearness of God, especially in challenging times. We meet each fourth Sunday of the month from 9-10 a.m. just before Meeting for Worship. There is no advance reading required. Come to hear how these ancient texts connect to our contemporary lives and to participate in a time of lovely fellowship and deep sharing.



FROM CARE & OVERSIGHT: We thank all Friends who are providing service and care to our Meeting. There are many helping our community to remain vibrant, alive, and connected during the pandemic. We encourage all Friends to continue reaching out to one another, and to communicate needs. We remind everyone that the Meeting can provide support in a variety of ways (from running errands, to friendly conversation, to spiritual support, to a Clearness Committee, to name a few). We continue to seek ways to connect with Friends who are not joining us via Zoom. As we explore options, we have offered to coordinate efforts with M&C.



MINISTRY & COUNSEL

FROM MINISTRY & COUNSEL: WORSHIPFUL CONVERSATIONS ON RACE: Under the care of Ministry and Counsel, Gunpowder will host a series of conversations on race to help each of us find listening ears and helpful Friends. We had our first meeting in September and generated a list of topics related to race. At subsequent meetings, we will choose a topic from that list, and break into small groups to discuss that topic, before regathering for closing comments. These are meant to be spacious, spiritually grounded conversations among Friends. We do not aim to find solutions or fix problems. But simply to find space to talk and share, to listen deeply, to learn.

Worshipful Conversations on Race will occur **each First Thursday, from 7 to 8:30 via Zoom**. You can come to one or all --- **but you must sign up** to get the Zoom link sent to you. **To sign up, please email Anita Langford at amlangfo@verizon.net**



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 and follow these directions:

- Click on “Donate.”
- Under “Team” type in Gunpowder Friends.
- Complete the donation form indicating the amount you want to donate .
- Complete payment information. Credit card or Pay Pal may be used. Contact Tina Rives for further information: steve.tina.rives@gmail.com

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.



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 (no more than 5 per week) anchoring our worship through a live Zoom link from the worship room or porch. 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 this link:

<https://forms.gle/EZeVWhX58ULpkgjC8> " We ask that all Friends interested in this ministry sign up in advance.



UPDATE ON MEETING FOR WORSHIP: For the foreseeable future, Gunpowder’s Meetings for Worship will be held via Zoom. We’ll always be connected to the Meeting House, however, as a few Friends “anchor” worship there each Sunday (see preceding announcement). Members of Ministry and Counsel will be supporting the Meeting Clerk in hosting these Meetings so that she can have a break every now and then. We’ll continue to welcome Friends starting about 10 minutes before worship and then settle into worship at 10 a.m. The closing five minutes will offer a time to share “joys and sorrows” with the Meeting community. While we’ll continue to monitor when and how it

might be safe to return to the Meeting House for worship, we are grateful that so many Friends are faithful to gathering via Zoom and contributing to deep and meaningful worship experiences.



RICHARD ROHR DISCUSSION GROUP OCTOBER 25, 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.



FIRST DAY SCHOOL NEWS: Fall is here! The schoolyear has begun, and that means that Gunpowder Meeting’s First Day School (FDS) program is starting up again, too... in a virtual format. Our FDS Working Group is aware that there may be some families (old and new, in-state and out) who are interested in FDS for their children and would be happy to have their kids engaged virtually. We’d love input from these families as we move forward and make decisions. If you or your children are interested in FDS, please take this survey and return it by October 1st. Thank you. Click here for survey:

<https://tinyurl.com/y5hlsqmh> And then, save the date:

GFM, interested parents, and children will meet together on **Saturday, October 24th at 10:00 via Zoom**. Our first lesson via Zoom is currently scheduled for **Sunday, October 25th** at the Rise of Meeting (also via Zoom). A link will be sent out.

We look forward to seeing and interacting with you and your children this schoolyear. Despite the distance, we remain close at heart.



LIBRARY NEWS



In support of our conversations on institutional racism, the following books are new additions to the GFM Library. If you are interested in borrowing one of these books please contact Tina Rives. She will make arrangements for you to get the book.

The New Jim Crow : Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness by **Michelle Alexander**, 2012
Winner of NAACP Image Award for Nonfiction

We're Better Than This: My Fight for the Future of Democracy by **Elijah Cummings**, 2020
"This memoir serves as an urgent call to action as we strive to live up to our nation's pledge of liberty and justice for all". - *Rep. James E. Clyburn*

Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist ideas in America by **Ibram X. Kendi**, 2016
Winner of National Book Award Winner

"A deep (and often disturbing) chronicling of how anti-black thinking has entrenched itself in the fabric of American society not solely through ignorance, but through a rationalization of inequity in institutional practices." -*Atlantic*

Citizen: An American Lyric by **Claudia Rankine**, 2014
Poetry and essays. Winner of numerous poetry awards.
Best book of the year: *Boston Globe, LA Times, NPR, New Yorker*

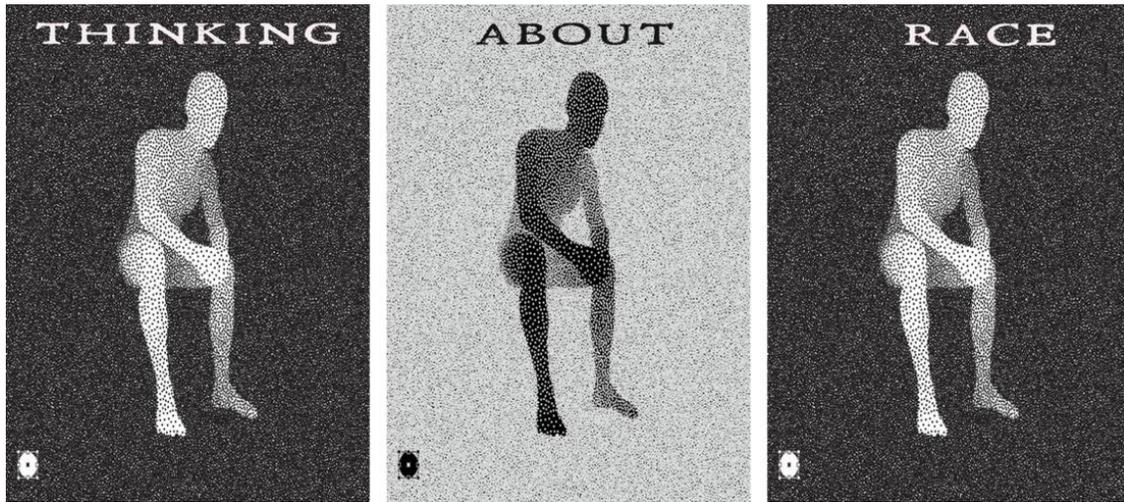
Just Us: An American Conversation by **Claudia Rankine**, 2020
This assembly of essays, poems, documents, and images disrupts the false comfort of our culture's luminal and private spaces.

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by **Isabel Wilkerson**, 2020
Oprah's Book Club.
The hierarchy of caste is not about feelings or morality. It is about power - which groups have it and which do not. Through a researched narrative and stories about real people, *Caste* is about how America today - and throughout history - has been shaped by a hidden caste system, a rigid hierarchy of human rankings.

The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration by **Isabel Wilkerson**, 2010
Winner of National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction.
"What makes this so compelling is the intimacy of the stories she tells, in wonderfully lyrical prose, of the private struggles of particular men and women caught in a system designed to denigrate them."



Chicago Tribune



CASH BAIL

The following is an excerpt from an article entitled “Criminal Conditions” by Jan A. Fernandez. Printed in **ACLU Magazine**, Summer 2020, pp. 24-29. <https://www.aclu.org/aclu-magazine/aclu-magazine-summer-2020>

“...The United States has many distinguishing traits, but its most damaging distinction is that it imprisons the most people on Earth: 2.3 million, or nearly 35 percent of the world’s incarcerated population. Environmental, judicial, and institutional factors feed this unconscionable bloat, filling jails and prisons with people who can’t afford fines or bail while disproportionately punishing Black and Brown communities.

...Driving this national tragedy is an exploitative cash bail system that funnels hundreds of thousands of people into local jails. More than 70 percent of those incarcerated—about half a million people—are pretrial detainees who have not been convicted of any crime, and many are only there because they could not afford bail. It’s a profitable, prejudiced machine that targets poor people and people of color, who are jailed at higher rates and charged higher bail amounts...

... Black and Latino men are on average assigned substantively higher amounts than white men for similar crimes—and those who cannot afford either land in jail. Trapped there, they are subject to a system that perpetuates negative outcomes: Defendants are four times more likely to be sentenced to prison if they spend their pretrial time in jail; they are more likely to take guilty plea deals for lesser charges to obtain release, *even if they are innocent*; they suffer the psychological trauma of being cut off from family and friends for weeks, months, or even years; they are exposed to violence, abuse, and poor health conditions; and they risk losing homes, jobs, and custody of their children.” [emphasis added]...

...To support your state’s efforts toward rapid decarceration and an end to cash bail practices... visit www.aclu.org/smartjustice.”

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 first Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, currently via Zoom. If you would like to attend, contact clerk David Etheridge, david.etheridge@verizon.net.



**DISCERNING OUR WAY FORWARD:
October 17, 2020 – 10:00AM to 1:00PM**

Please set aside this time and plan to join the Working Group on Stewarding our Vision (WGSV) for a time of deep discernment as we listen to one another and how Spirit is working within and among us. This is a special time to come together as our beloved Gunpowder Friends Community. We need to all be engaged in the process! Here's why:

During the financial literacy forum our Treasurer, Kerry Zimmerman gave a presentation on our meeting's finances. We now need your input as we begin to discern the work of actively living into our Mission, Vision, and Values statement. In that statement, we committed to "engage in ongoing discernment around five values, each of which invites us to consider who to be and what to do as a community." Here are those five values:

- *Personal and community spiritual deepening and religious practice are at the core of our reason for being a community.*
- *We appreciate and want to sustain a strong and lasting Gunpowder Meeting.*
- *The practice of providing hospitality, care, and inclusion to all is an essential part of our being.*
- *We are a Quaker community connected to the wider Quaker world, seeking additional and deeper connections with the Quaker world.*
- *We are a community interested in offering more individual and community action in the wider world.*

As we hold these values in our hearts and minds, the WGSV committee has worked to create a series of queries to help to lead us deeper into discernment around our values and how we choose to live into them in the world. In bringing you these queries, we acknowledge that none of them will speak to everyone, but we believe that each one will touch someone. We ask that you read them all listening for those that touch you most deeply. You may find some uncomfortable; listen to that. Others may bring you joy and still others may tug at your very being. Listen to it all. Take time to actively sit with what you are hearing: hope, dream, shut nothing out. We ask that you hold these queries and all that rises for you in preparation for our October 17th gathering. Together we will then explore all of the wonderful possibilities that you will bring forward.

QUERIES:

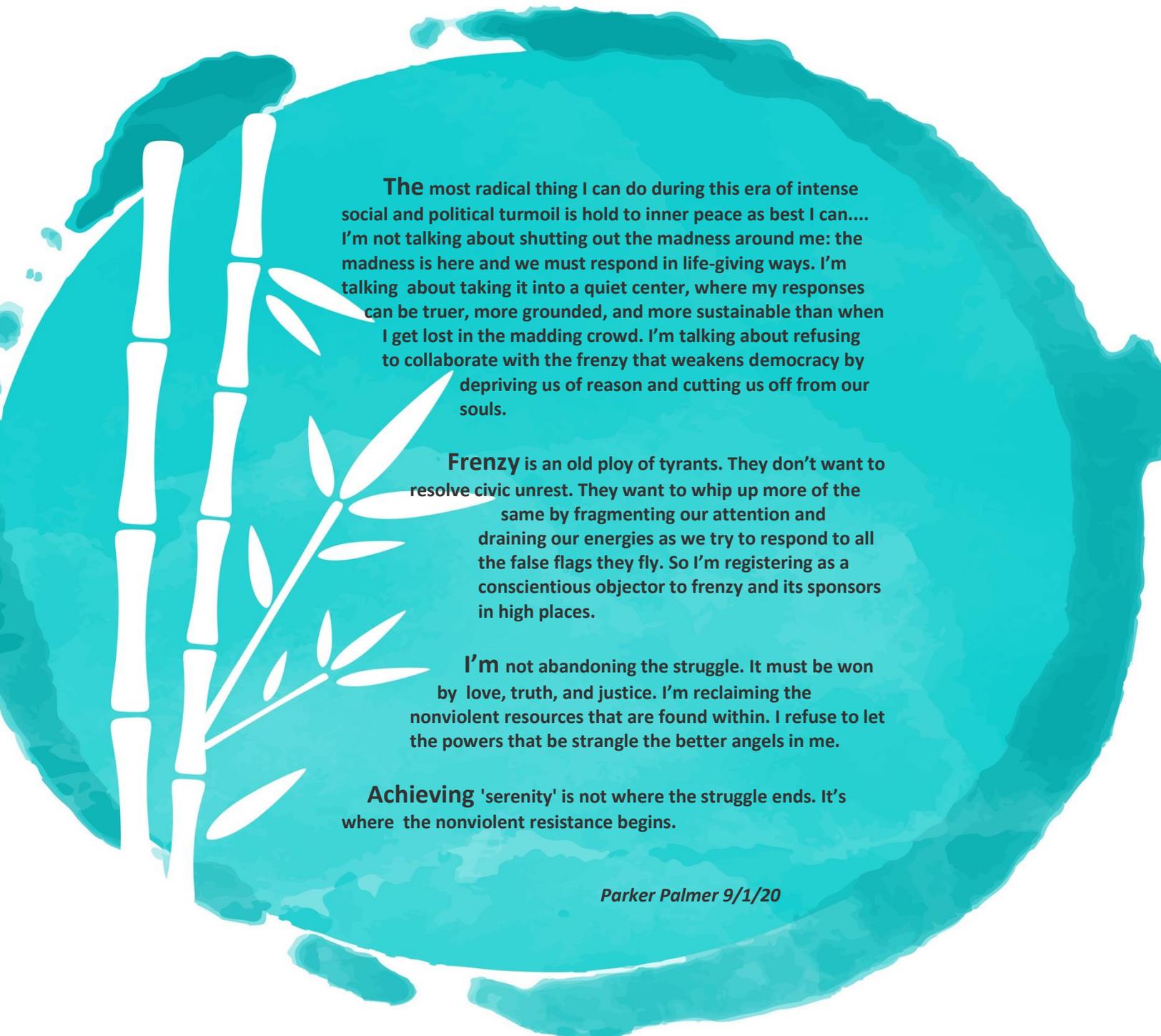
- Are there ways that our spiritual and religious practices might help to open way for others? What are they?
- Is money key to sustaining Gunpowder Friends Meeting? What else might help us to grow and deepen? How can we engage others in this work?
- If it were necessary, how far would we be willing to stretch to help others in need: to provide hospitality, care, and inclusion? How might the meeting community support those who do? Might Gunpowder Friends step into this work?
- Friends at Gunpowder Friends Meeting touch the greater Quaker community in many places. All of these larger Quaker organizations engage in broader work in the nation and the world. Does that work call to you?
- Questions of racial inequality loom large. Are there ways in which we as a meeting or as individual Friends might engage in that work? How would the meeting support the work?
- When we become aware of needs in other meetings, individuals, communities, are we willing to give from all of our possible resources, including money, to provide support?
- Do you feel that you are being called into service? How can the meeting support you in that?
- How much is enough?
- What are we willing to risk?
- In what ways am I or we privileged? Fiscal, Racial, Educational? other? Are there ways I personally and we as a Meeting can use our privilege to help others? How?
- Close your eyes. Open your heart, mind, and soul. Listen – hear what Spirit would have you do. See what your inner vision brings you – What do you see. Open yourself to all possibilities. What do you hear and see? Are you being called into action in the wider world?

The WGSV committee is excited to be doing this work with you!

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

REFLECTIONS

The following is an offering from Friend, Tracy Haidar. It is a posting she found from well-known Friend and writer, Parker Palmer. It spoke to her and she thought it might resonate with other Friends. Enjoy.



The most radical thing I can do during this era of intense social and political turmoil is hold to inner peace as best I can.... I'm not talking about shutting out the madness around me: the madness is here and we must respond in life-giving ways. I'm talking about taking it into a quiet center, where my responses can be truer, more grounded, and more sustainable than when I get lost in the madding crowd. I'm talking about refusing to collaborate with the frenzy that weakens democracy by depriving us of reason and cutting us off from our souls.

Frenzy is an old ploy of tyrants. They don't want to resolve civic unrest. They want to whip up more of the same by fragmenting our attention and draining our energies as we try to respond to all the false flags they fly. So I'm registering as a conscientious objector to frenzy and its sponsors in high places.

I'm not abandoning the struggle. It must be won by love, truth, and justice. I'm reclaiming the nonviolent resources that are found within. I refuse to let the powers that be strangle the better angels in me.

Achieving 'serenity' is not where the struggle ends. It's where the nonviolent resistance begins.

Parker Palmer 9/1/20



Friends Committee ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION

In 2019, the House passed the Dream and Promise Act (H.R. 6) to create a path to legal status for many of these young people. Even though this legislation has broad support from members of Congress and 1,200 faith leaders, the Senate has failed to act.

Add your voice to the lobbying of our 2020-21 Advocacy Corps class, and **ask your senators to co-sponsor and pass the Dream and Promise Act (H.R. 6)**. Please act using the accompanying letter template or call script (see below). Please add a personal note of 2-4 sentences to your letter or email, letting your legislators know why you are concerned. Then, call the U.S. Congress at 202-224-3121 to be connected to your representative's and senators' offices. Leave a message if they do not pick up or if you are calling after office hours.

Once you have done so, let Anna Brown know, as Anna makes a record of how many Friends at Gunpowder participate in this effort each month. E-mail Anna at goodwood28@hotmail.com

CALL SCRIPT

Hello, I am calling for **Representative/Senator** _____. I am your constituent in **[city, state]** in district **[number]**. Please co-sponsor and pass the Dream and Promise Act (H.R. 6) to create a path to legal status for many young immigrants.

Even though they came to this country as children and grew up in our communities, approximately 3 million immigrant Dreamers have been forced to live in the shadows as the administration, courts, and Congress debate their fate. Yet Congress has so far refused to reform the U.S. immigration system, leaving millions of immigrants living in fear of family separation, deportation, and detention. Please pass the Dream and Promise Act (H.R. 6) to overhaul our immigration system for the better.

Thank you for your consideration.

FCNL, continued...

E-MAIL/LETTER TEMPLATE

October 2020

Dear _____

Please co-sponsor and pass the Dream and Promise Act (H.R. 6) to create a path to legal status for many young immigrants.

I seek an equitable society supported by policies that recognize the Light of God in each of us, no exceptions. Yet Congress has so far refused to reform the U.S. immigration system, leaving millions of immigrants living in fear of family separation, deportation, and detention.

Even though they came to this country as children and grew up in our communities, approximately three million Dreamers, including individuals with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status, have been forced to live in the shadows as the administration, courts, and Congress debate their fate.

(My story)

In 2019, the House passed the Dream and Promise Act (H.R. 6) to create a path to legal status for many of these young people. Even though this legislation has broad support from members of Congress and 1,200 faith leaders, the Senate has failed to act.

Please pass the Dream and Promise Act (H.R. 6) to overhaul our immigration system for the better.

Sincerely,

(Name, Physical Address, Phone, Email)



Friends Committee
ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION

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.