



ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

## GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING NEWS, Web Edition for February, 2021

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### LISTENING

#### QUERIES: Peace

How does my life reflect “the virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion for war”?

Where there are hatred, division, and strife, how are we instruments of reconciliation and love?

How do we regard those we believe have harmed us or others?

How does this affect our spiritual lives?

#### ADVICES:

Since its founding over 350 years ago, the Religious Society of Friends has testified to the worth of every individual by refusing to participate in war. We repudiate war because it violates the primacy of love, destroys lives that God has given, and tears the fabric of society.

As we work for peace in the world, Friends need to search out the seeds of war in ourselves and in our way of life. Instead of joining in actions that may lead to destruction and death, Friends are urged to cooperate to save life and strengthen the bonds of unity among all people.

Our faith calls for us to be fully present to the person before us. We need to bring into God’s light those emotions, attitudes, and prejudices in ourselves which lie at the root of destructive conflict, acknowledging our need for forgiveness and grace.

#### VOICES:

Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.

-Martin Luther King, Jr., 1967

George Fox did not say that he believed war to be wrong, or that in his opinion brute force never settled anything; he went straight to the heart of the matter and said that he “lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars.” To uphold such a testimony involved a dedicated life. The Quaker peace testimony is more than a repudiation of war, and more than a denial of the use of force; it is a way of life to which we must be faithful in small things as well as in great, in our human relationships, our business and social activities, and in the life and witness of our meetings.  
-Elfrida Vipont Foulds, 1966

I hope...that mankind will at length, as they call themselves reasonable creatures, have reason and sense enough to settle their differences without cutting throats; for in my opinion there never was a good war, or a bad peace.  
-Benjamin Franklin, 1783



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING



**MINISTRY &  
COUNSEL**

#### **FROM MINISTRY & COUNSEL:**

##### **Calendar Items**

February 14th Forum on ongoing learning about Quaker faith and practice (see newsletter article)

February 18th Spiritual Formation Large Group

February 28th Bible Study: The Book of Job (see newsletter article)

#### **A note from the Ministry and Counsel Committee about Meetings for Worship**

Among the charges to the Ministry and Counsel committee is the care of our Meetings for Worship. We have, during the Covid-19 pandemic, adjusted to Meetings for Worship via Zoom, connected our worship to the Meeting House through volunteer “anchors” each week, and shared responsibility among committee members for the convening and “tech hosting” of each week’s worship. We have been blessed as a community with consistently high weekly attendance in Meetings for Worship; geographically distant Friends have been able to participate in worship; those whose health makes even local travel difficult are with us each week; new attenders have joined us

seeking a grounded and grounding community. What a blessing it has been to experience this widening community in worship! Friends have often described the Meetings as both gathered and covered, and we have noted the spacious balance between silence and spoken ministry. In March, when we pivoted out of necessity to our technology-mediated worship space, we were not sure how we would adapt. Our faithfulness to our practice and to one another, however, yielded such blessings. As we move into and through 2021, Ministry and Counsel will be seeking input from Friends about how to maintain the many positive qualities of our current Meetings for Worship as we anticipate a return to the Meeting House. We anticipate hosting a forum in the next few months to share our experiences and discuss possible paths forward.

### **Join our ongoing learning about Quaker Faith and Practice**

All are welcome to join in our continuing learning about Quakerism through our discussion of Marcelle Martin's book *Our Life is Love: The Quaker Spiritual Journey*. In this fourth session with the book, we'll consider the section on "Faithfulness." As we explore what 17th century and 20th/21st century Friends understand about such experiences as leadings, taking up the cross, abiding, and perfection, we'll read aloud the voices of Friends and share how they connect to our own lives.

**Gunpowder Friends Bible Study** is focusing on the Book of Job from the Hebrew Bible for our winter session. Join us as we explore the wisdom of this ancient story of suffering and faithfulness and consider what it reveals to us in our own times. We have focused, to date, on the first two chapters. There is no need to read ahead: each time we meet, we read aloud the passage for consideration and spend time in quiet personal reflection before sharing our responses. We meet the fourth Sunday of every month via Zoom from 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

### **From Rep Pickard, on behalf of Ministry & Counsel:**

We continue to anchor worship at the meetinghouse with a small group of up to five Friends. To make it easier for all and to ensure these Friends' safety, please sign up, by Friday, to volunteer as an anchor here: <https://forms.gle/kkkF4x2qP7MRMLrt7> There are plenty of opportunities to volunteer in the coming months.



### **RICHARD ROHR:**

The Richard Rohr discussion group meets 4th First days at 11:30am through May. 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.

### **From Care and Oversight:**

#### **Virtual Coffee Hour, Sunday 2/7/21, At Rise of Meeting:**

Care and Oversight Committee invites you to stay online at the rise of Meeting on 1/3/21 for some casual social time using the breakout room feature of Zoom (BYO coffee, tea and/or snack)

**Meeting Directory:** In mid-December Care and Oversight Committee internally republished our updated Meeting directory. It is available only by email attachment or in a print copy. If you need a copy, either emailed or printed, please email [louannesmith2@gmail.com](mailto:louannesmith2@gmail.com) with your request. We

encourage Friends (especially during the dark days of winter!) to use this resource to reach out to one another.

**Reminder:** One role of C&O is to coordinate community support for those in need. Please let us know if you have needs the Meeting can help with!

### **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.** You can drop in for a few minutes or stay the hour. The Clerk will send out a link each week.

### **WORKING GROUP FOR STEWARDING OUR VISION (WGSV):**



Dear Friends, The Working Group on Stewarding our Vision is charged with naming and supporting future Meeting aspirations. The next meeting of the WGSV committee will be held on Tuesday, February 16, 2021, 4:30-6:00pm via Zoom. We will review the list of leadings that were generated during the Discerning our Way Forward gathering and

hear a report from the McKim Center- Gunpowder Friends Meeting Partnership Group. Friends are most welcome to join us. If you plan to attend please contact Greta Kirk-Mickey at [greta.mickey@gmail.com](mailto:greta.mickey@gmail.com) or Anita Langford at [amlangfo@verizon.net](mailto:amlangfo@verizon.net)

#### **An Update from the Working Group on Stewarding our Vision (WGSV)**

Over the last several years at Gunpowder we have worked diligently to bring forward a vision to guide our life together and our work in the world. Now, as we identify a concrete focus for that work, we enter exciting territory.

To summarize recent steps in this journey, the following is from an article which missed publication in last month's newsletter.

*Beginning last fall, "the WGSV committee was led to bring forward a series of gatherings to help us to rest in the Spirit as we discerned the possibilities for our work in the world.*

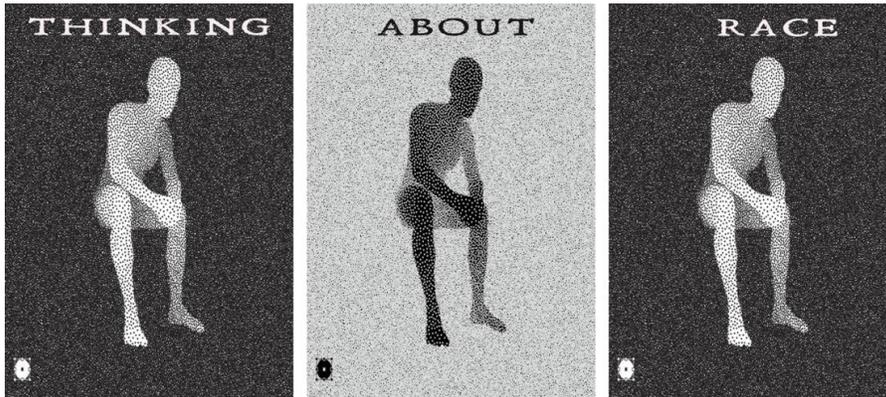
*Our gathering on October 17<sup>th</sup>, **Discerning Our Way Forward**, was deeply Spirit led. Friends present shared leadings that had risen after they had held a series of queries which were designed to help open way. While many leadings rose, strong unity and excitement was felt around a leading to work with the McKim Community Center.*

*Friends shared their understanding that if we were to step into this work it would be the work of accompaniment. It would entail a journey of mutual learning and of deepening relationships with the McKim Community Center so that together, we might grow in love, understanding, and service to one another."*

We can now joyfully report that at Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business in Twelfth Month, the formation of the Working Group for the McKim Center was approved. At First Month Business Meeting we took yet another step forward and approved the charge for the working group and affirmed it's name as the McKim Center – Gunpowder Friends Meeting Partnership Group (MGPG).

(See the Monthly Meeting minutes to read the entire charge.) We look forward to deepening our partnership with the McKim Community Center as we learn how we may be of service to one another.

The McKim Center- Gunpowder Friends Meeting Partnership Group, consists of Greta Kirk-Mickey, Alan Evans, and Amy Schmaljohn. If you feel called to this work, please contact one of the members of the Partnership Group.



**Thinking About Race** (February 2021) – From Zadie Smith’s *Intimations*

Published in 2020, *Intimations* contains reflections “on what has happened—and what should come next.”

“That prejudice is most dangerous not when it resides in individual hearts and minds but when it is preserved in systems. For example: an educational system that proves unable to see a boy as a child, seeing him only as a potential threat. That any child who enters such a prejudiced system will be in grave danger. Be he ever so beautiful and talented, inspired and inspirational, loving and love—he can still be broken.”

The end page of the book states:

All the author’s royalties will go to charity.  
This edition benefits:

*The Equal Justice Initiative*

*The COVID-19  
Emergency Relief Fund  
for New York*

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.

## **WORSHIPFUL CONVERSATIONS ON RACE AND JUSTICE**

Next gathering, **Thursday, February 4th, 7:00pm**

These conversations, offered under the care of the Ministry and Counsel committee, are intended to offer a space for sharing concerns and experiences on the subject of race and racial justice. These are meant to be spacious, spiritually grounded conversations held in the Light of Spirit and in hope of insight. We intend to listen deeply and share honestly rather than find solutions or fix problems.

### **Topic:**

Language Used for Conversations about Race

### **Queries:**

Reflect on the language that is used around race. Is there a time you can recall when language around race has opened your heart? Is there a time you can recall when language around race has shut down a situation?

**GETTING THE LINK:** If you have participated previously, you will receive the zoom link. If you have not, but want to join in, please email Anita Langford at [amlangfo@verizon.net](mailto:amlangfo@verizon.net).

The Planning Committee: Anita Langford, Helen Berkeley, Bob Fetter, Rebecca Richards

**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](mailto:gunpowderclerk@gmail.com).**