

ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING NEWS, Web Edition for May, 2021

EQUALITY



QUERIES:

- Do you search yourself for and strive to eliminate prejudices?
- How do we benefit from inequity and exploitation?
- How do we show through our ways of living that love of God affirms the equality of all people?

ADVICES:

It is important to realize that equality does not mean sameness. Each person is a separate individual and should have the opportunity to pursue her or his own gifts. To deny anyone the right to develop his or her full potential for any reason is not equality. Cultural and other differences among us weave a tapestry that is immeasurably enriched by our diversity. It is the right of every person to be treated with dignity and respect.

VOICES:

To consider mankind otherwise than brethren, to think favors are peculiar to one nation and exclude others, plainly supposes a darkness in the understanding. For as God's love is universal, so where the mind is sufficiently influenced by it, it begets a likeness of itself and the heart is enlarged towards all men.

-John Woolman, c. 1760

It is time for the preachers, the rabbis, the priests and pundits, and the professors to believe in the awesome wonder of diversity...It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength. We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter their color; equal in importance no matter their texture. Our young must be taught that racial peculiarities do exist, but

that beneath the skin, beyond the differing feature and into the true heart of being, fundamentally, we are more alike, my friend, than we are unlike.

-Maya Angelou, 1994

Gay and lesbian Friends and couples bless our Meeting. Their gifts of courage, love, and devotion speak to us of God, and move us closer to that of God within us all. We offer our experience of these gifts to other Meetings as they seek the Light on this issue.

-Charlottesville Monthly Meeting, 1997

My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.

-Desmond Tutu, 1984

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING



**MINISTRY &
COUNSEL**

FROM MINISTRY & COUNSEL:

Calendar Items

May 9 (at the rise of Meeting, 11:30 - 12:30, via Zoom): **Spirit and Nature Forum**

We'll use our imaginations and experience to connect to one another, to our beloved Meeting House and grounds, and to the spaces and places that we call home via our annual Spirit and Nature forum. Come prepared to celebrate gratitude, to be grounded in sensory awareness, and to celebrate all that is greening and singing and alive in the world all around (and within!) us.

May 20: **Spiritual Formation "Large Group"** Sharing (7-9 p.m. via Zoom)

Join us for reflections on our reading from Robin Wall Kimmerer's book "Braiding Sweetgrass." For more information, contact local coordinators Rebecca Richards or Amy Schmaljohn

May 23: **Bible Study** (9-10 a.m. Via Zoom)

Join us as we discern together the new focus for our study of the Christian/Hebrew Bible after a year of immersion in the wisdom of the Book of Job. All are welcome! No preparation required.

May 24: **McKim-Gunpowder Partnership Working Group** (7-8 p.m. via Zoom)

All Friends are welcome to join in our conversation and dreaming about how our two communities can discover pathways to mutual support and encouragement and joy! See newsletter article including the notes from our last meeting. To get the Meeting link or for more information, contact Amy Schmaljohn at amy@schmaljohn.com.

May 31st: **Memorial Day Meeting for Worship for Remembrance** (11:00 - 12:00 in person at the Meetinghouse and via Zoom). *See complete information and photo on page 11.*

Preparing to return to the Meeting House and Continuing to Bridge Friends Remotely

The Ministry and Counsel Committee continues to gather insights and experiences to chart a course back to the Meeting House for worship and other activities as the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions ease. We were grateful for the many Friends who participated in our April 11th forum to share our experiences and reflect on how we can safely re-establish Meetings for Worship at the Meeting House while simultaneously sustaining the virtual (Zoom) bridge that has allowed us to worship from homes near and far. M&C Friends are still gathering the wisdom of the community and preparing to propose how we can resume in-person Meetings for Worship and stay deeply connected as a community. More to come in May!

Report from the McKim-Gunpowder Working Group Meeting of March 29th

The McKim-Gunpowder Partnership Working Group continues to meet on the fourth Monday of each month. On March 29th, we continued our conversations to get to know one another. Among the things we shared were our love of gardening and plants, a desire to reconnect to a service-oriented ministry, our commitment to the peace testimony and conflict transformation, including one participant's facilitation in the Alternatives to Violence Project.

(see hard copy of newsletter for full report)

Anchoring Worship at the Meeting House:

If Friends would like to anchor Meeting for Worship at the meetinghouse during April and the succeeding months, please email Heather Sowers at heatherjo715@gmail.com.

WGSV Committee Meeting

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, May 11, 2021, 4:30-6:00pm via Zoom. We will begin discernment around the leading that arose at the 10/17/20 Discerning Our Way Forward retreat "to combine the uniqueness of our physical setting with radical hospitality and spiritual nurture". 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.

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.

Annual Meeting of GFM Peace and Social Justice Liaisons:

An important part of Quaker community is education, outreach, and activism on critical issues facing the larger community. At GFM our Peace and Social Justice (P&SJ) committee is open to the whole Meeting. To facilitate this work, we name liaisons to bring issues and concerns to Monthly

Meeting so we can take appropriate, supportive action. This year's annual meeting of P&SJ Liaisons will be held on **Thursday, May 6, 2021, 7-8:30pm via Zoom.**

All interested persons are welcome to join us. Please notify Anita Langford at amlangfo@verizon.net if you are interested in joining us.

First Day School Service Project

On March 27, Friends of all ages helped the North County Cluster Food Bank with their Easter holiday give away. The Cluster Food Bank and Clothes Closet are housed on the grounds of Pine Grove United Methodist Church on Middletown Road and is supported by local churches. Forty six families received canned goods, cleaning supplies, hams, turkeys, eggs, milk, and baked goods for their Easter holiday meal.

Since their greatest need is food, the Gunpowder FDS work group hopes to organize a food donation drive to provide food for families during the summer when children are out of school. More information on ways you can help will be available as plans develop.

First Day School Food Donation Drive in support of the North County Cluster Food Bank and Meeting House Cleanup Day:

Our food donation drive will take place on Saturday, May 22, from 10:00-12:00 Noon at the Meeting House. This is the same day as the Property Committee's Spring Clean up Day! So bring your food and a rake! The property committee is inviting Gunpowder friends to join a clean-up day at the meetinghouse on May 22 beginning at 10:00. We will be working on the flower beds, spreading mulch, and washing windows.

The Cluster Food Bank will be in need of the following items for the summer:

Food: cereal, peanut butter, jelly, canned meat (tuna), soups, individual fruit cups, small bags of chips, juice boxes, rice, and pasta. **Not needed:** black beans, chick peas

Also needed: paper products, cleaning items, and personal items.

Questions: contact Tina Rives.

Prison Pen Pal Opportunity:

If you would like to be a Prison Pen Pal, contact John List at iahr.jlist@gmail.com. John is from the Interfaith Action for Human Rights, <https://www.intervaihtactionhr.org>. Most of the prisoners who are looking for pen pals through IAHR are those convicted of felonies in DC. People convicted of felonies in DC are sent to one of the 122 Federal facilities operated by the Bureau of Prisons across the US. Because of this, many of them are very far away from family members and receive no visitors. *Tracy Haidar*



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:

"Because we see each person as a minister, Friends collectively accept responsibility for the pastoral work that would be performed by a paid minister."

-- from *BYM Resource for Faith & Practice* 2013, p. 103.

Indeed, we all are ministers. Thank you, Gunpowder Friends for the care, love, and ministry you generously share with one another. We remind everyone that C&O is available to organize clearness or support committees and to coordinate community support for those in need.

Virtual Coffee Hour, Sunday 5/2/21, at Rise of Meeting:

Care and Oversight Committee invites you to stay online at the rise of Meeting on the first First Day of each month for some casual social time. We meet in small groups using Zoom breakout rooms, and Friends find that this is a wonderful opportunity to catch up and learn more about each other. (BYO coffee, tea and/or snack)

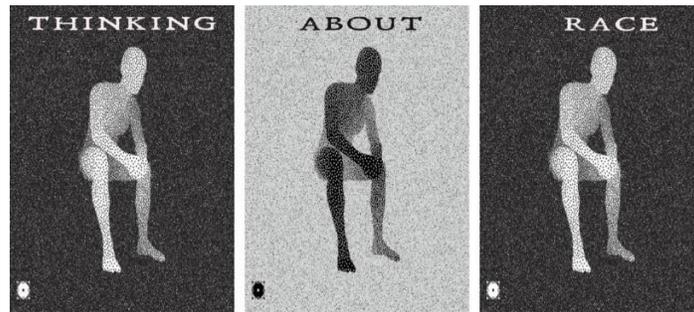
Memorial Day Meeting for Worship and Remembrance

Gunpowder Friends Meeting, Outdoors and via Zoom

May 31, 2021, 11AM EDT

Friends are invited to join in person or via videoconference (Zoom) Gunpowder Monthly Meeting's annual ***Memorial Day Meeting for Worship and Remembrance***, this year's date being May 31st. We gather at 11 AM on the Monday holiday. Due to unabated coronavirus pandemic, masks and vaccination are recommended, and Friends will worship outdoors on the west porch; for Zoom participants, a camera will be trained on the burial ground during the hour; the welcome and any vocal ministry will be offered to that camera. In lieu of potluck lunch held in "normal times," Friends are invited to bring their own simple lunch for a time of fellowship. Additional details, a brief history of this Gunpowder tradition, and Zoom link will be provided by Clerk's E-mail.





Thinking About Race (May, 2021) – John Lewis, Across That Bridge

Near the close of his book, Across That Bridge, John Lewis states:

“All our work, all our struggle, all our days add up to one purpose: to reconcile ourselves to the truth, and finally accept once and for all that we are one people, one family, the human family, that we are all emanations of one divine source and that source is Love.....Know that the truth always leads to love, and the perpetuation of peace. Its products are never bitterness and strife. Clothe yourself in the work of love, in the revolutionary work of nonviolent resistance against evil. Anchor the eternity of love in your own soul and embed this planet with goodness. Release the need to hate, to harbor division, and the enticement of revenge. Release all bitterness. Hold only love, only peace in your heart, knowing that the battle of good to overcome evil is already won.”

From Across That Bridge, A Vision for Change and the Future of America, John Lewis, 2012, pp. 207-208.

Worshipful Conversations on Race

Last September Gunpowder Friends began a series of eight monthly engaged discussions we called “Worshipful Conversations on Race.” Held under the care of Ministry and Counsel, these conversations were meant to be spacious, spiritually grounded, held in the light of Spirit, and in the hope of insight. In all, 25-30 Friends participated at one or more of the sessions.

We covered many topics, prompted by queries devised by the planning group: Anita Langford, Bob Fetter, Helen Berkeley and Rebecca Richards. These queries ranged from sharing stories of our earliest memories of race-based distinctions and attitudes learned early in life to learning about and critiquing current trends and approaches in racial justice work. Friends shared difficult situations of encounters with racism in the world and in themselves. We learned how to talk about and move through these encounters and found we could return to some contexts with new insights.

We discussed how to apply our Quaker principles of equity, integrity, plain speech and respecting that of God in others to the work of promoting justice and love in the arena of racial justice work. One Friend said that he had come once again to the certainty that “We are One” and that all our work must reflect this truth. We affirmed that this is a Spiritual Truth we are called to live into.

The upcoming Forum for Sixth Month presents another opportunity to gather with Friends on this topic. We hope you will join in.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Forum on Racial Justice, 13th Sixth Month 2021

June's Forum will focus on listening to parts of an On Being (Krista Tippett) interview with John Lewis and will include time for sharing among us around the issues he raises.

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.