

ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING NEWS, Web Edition for November, 2021

VOCAL MINISTRY



QUERIES:

- How do I discern when to speak and when not to speak, both in Meeting and elsewhere?
- How do I practice listening to the Truth which may be revealed by others?

ADVICES:

Once Meeting begins, take time to enter fully into the spirit of worship. Gently offer up distractions as you center down and open yourself to the workings of the Spirit. Come to Meeting with neither a resolve to speak, nor a determination not to speak, but rather with an attitude of expectant waiting and openness.

If you feel moved to speak, take a moment to test your leading. Is your message from the Spirit, or somewhere else? If it is from God, is it meant only for yourself, or for the entire Meeting? Genuine ministry is often preceded by a physical uneasiness, a “heart pounding weakness,” from which our name Quaker is derived. Remember that silence is not just the space between messages, but a deep and living communion with the “Spirit which gives life.” Your silent prayer and openness to God are themselves a form of ministry that enriches the Meeting community.

VOICES:

As the worshiper sits in silence some message may arise out of the depth of the soul that by its nature is intended not simply for the worshiper but for the gathering as a whole. If it is left unexpressed, the worshiper feels burdened with a sense of omission, but if it is faithfully uttered, the worshiper feels a sense of clearness and relief. This peculiar sense of urgency is usually the sign of divine requirement. There is no sure or single test of guidance...Though a message may seem intellectually fitting it should not be given unless it glows with life.

-Howard H. Brinton, 1942

Waiting upon the Holy Spirit in silent expectation and prayer is the basis of our meeting for worship. Vocal ministry should arise out of a sense of being inwardly moved to share a message aloud. Sometimes a message is not ripe yet, or comes clearly but is meant only for the person receiving it, not for the group. Some Friends are led to speak frequently, and others only rarely; yet the timid or brief message of one who seldom speaks may be as moving and helpful as that of amore practiced speaker. The most satisfactory vocal ministry arises out of a leading that is felt in the silence so strongly that it cannot be ignored. It should be delivered with as few words as possible, yet as many as necessary.

-Baltimore Yearly Meeting, 1988

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Clerk's Announcement

If you would like an email or a notice to go out to members and attenders of the Meeting, please send your request to GunpowderClerk@gmail.com.

November 14th Forum: An exploration of Debbie Humphries' essay on "Why the World Needs Quakerism"

Our ongoing learning about Quakerism will be supported this year by three forums focused on Debbie Humphries book *Seeds that Change the World: Essays on Quakerism, Spirituality, Faith and Culture*. Copies of the book are available at the Meeting House (we can also mail a copy to your home if you like). Friends will likely find this a very different book than those we have read in recent years: it weaves together Humphries' own journey to and with Quakerism (she's a convinced Friend who was raised Mormon) with her vision for why the world needs the witness of Quakers today.

It's a bit provocative, even challenging at times. But we think it may be a good read for us as a community at this time in our shared journey. Friends in Spiritual Formation are reading essays in the first section of the book and considering how Humphries' journey to and with Quakerism resonates (or not) with our own experiences. For our forum on November 14th, we'll be spending some time with the final essay in the book entitled "Why the World Needs Quakerism." We'll then explore the essays on waiting worship and the "four pillars of Meeting for Business" at upcoming forums this winter. At the forums, we'll consider specific passages from each essay and explore our own experiences of these aspects of our Quaker faith and practice. Gunpowder Friends who need a copy of the book but cannot come to the Meeting House can make the request via email to Amy Schmaljohn at amy@schmaljohn.com.

FIRST DAY SCHOOL

FDS seeks to help fill Holiday baskets for families of the North County served by the Food Pantry. We have volunteered to provide 25 family sized bottles of juice and we are counting on your help. Bring your bottle(s) (32 oz or larger) on either of the first two Sundays in November. Place them on the long bench in the middle room.

And Thank You! for helping us help these families.

Bible Study of the Parables

Gunpowder Friends are exploring the parables of Jesus of Nazareth as recorded in the canonical and non-canonical gospels. Thus far, we've read the parables of the sower, the prodigal son, the lost sheep (and lost coin), and the good Samaritan. We're exploring the contexts for these parables and Jesus' method of teaching, as well as what they have to teach us today. Join us as we continue this journey with the at-once familiar but also complex and provocative parables.

An Update from Ministry and Counsel on Formats for Meeting for Worship

Members of Ministry and Counsel are grateful for the Meeting-wide commitment to discerning together what format(s) for Meeting for Worship we will offer during the continuing Covid-19 pandemic. To date, we've had three listening sessions that have guided our shared discernment. Most recently, 43 Friends gathered on October 3rd for a sharing session in the "Claremont Dialogue" format as we listened deeply to one another's experiences of the various formats of worship we've explored over the past 18 months: virtual via "Zoom," in-person at the Meeting House, and hybrid with a technology "bridge" between the Meeting House and Friends worshipping from home. Our format for this sharing allowed Friends at the Meeting House and Friends at home to be connected via a technology bridge (Zoom and a Logitech camera/microphone in the worship room).

Not surprisingly, our experiences of these various formats are different, as they are informed by our unique life experiences and journeys. We listened with love and care as we shared our experiences. Out of this time of sharing, members of the Ministry and Counsel committee heard several needs. First, we need a period of continuity when we will be experiencing a consistent schedule of Meeting for Worship formats over a more extended period of time. Second, we need to experiment with the "hybrid" worship format so that the technology is either less intrusive into the worship room space and/or makes Friends worshipping from home more visible and audible to those in the physical worship room space. Third, we need worship times and spaces that are unmediated by technology for Friends who find the technology an impediment to deep worship.

Accordingly, we are embarking on a period of three months (November - January) when Sunday worship will be in a hybrid format, with various technological experimentations driven by Friends' research and commitment to the needs spoken in our October 3rd sharing session. We are also committed to hosting a mid-week Meeting for Worship at the Meeting House during this time on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 - 7:30 that is entirely free of technology. We hope that by continuing to experiment and share our experiences that we'll discover the clarity we need to move forward together as a beloved and unified worshipping community. Please be in contact with Ministry and Counsel co-clerks Greta Kirk Mickey (greta.mickey@gmail.com) or Amy Schmaljohn (amy@schmaljohn.com) with your insights and experiences and ability to support our hybrid Meetings for Worship.

WGSV

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 Wednesday, November 10, 2021 from 7:30 to 9:00pm via Zoom. We will continue discernment around the monthly meeting's request for the WGSV to create a process for addressing the need for sound long term financial planning.

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.

Drumming Event with Fire Circle – Festive Beats

Gunpowder drummers and Julie Evonna will guide us – all Gunpowder Friends and Families are welcome – it should be fun for everyone, young and old, experienced drummers and folks entirely new to drumming.

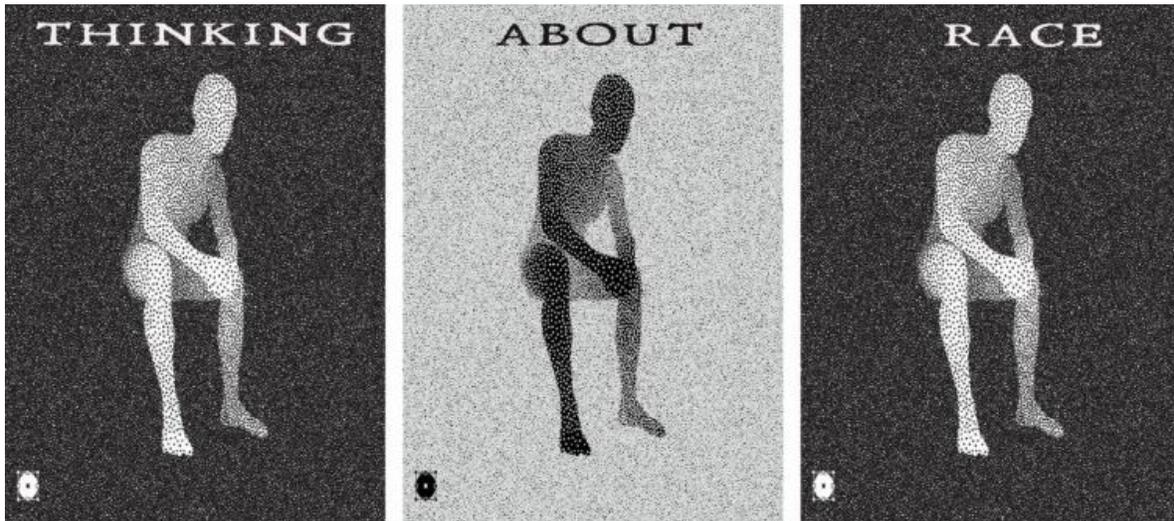
Where: Gunpowder Friends Meeting House, paved area adjacent to Meeting House

When: Saturday, 11/6 from 3:00 - 5:00 PM – we will gather at 3:00 PM

Who: Gunpowder Community is invited -- feel free to invite a f(F)riend who enjoys drumming, too, if you'd like!

What to Bring (or not): Yourself, your family, maybe a f(F)riend. No need to bring a snack, there will be some snacks. No need to bring a chair, there will be some chairs. No need to bring a drum or percussion instrument there will be drums and percussion instruments. That said, if you'd like to bring a snack or your own drum, by all means, do so!

Note: if it rains, we will drum indoors in the Meeting Room and masks will be required.



Thinking about Race – (November 2021)

Excerpt from “The Fire Next Time” by James Baldwin, published in 1962

This book-length essay is often referred to as Baldwin’s “masterwork.” This section is taken near the end of the essay.

Time and time again, the people discover that they have merely betrayed themselves into the hands of yet another Pharaoh, who, since he was necessary to put the broken country together, will not let them go. Perhaps, people being the conundrums that they are, and having so little desire to shoulder the burden of their lives, this is what will always happen. But at the bottom of my heart I do not believe this. I think that people can be better than that, and I know that people can be better than they are. We are capable of bearing a great burden, once we discover that the burden is reality and arrive where reality is. Anyway, the point here is that we are living in an age of revolution, whether we will or no, and that America is the only Western nation with both power and, as I hope to suggest, the

experience that may help to make these revolutions real and minimize the human damage. Any attempt we make to oppose these outbursts of energy is tantamount to signing our death warrant.

Editor's Note: In preparation for her annual Eleventh Month submission of A MINUTE IN SUPPORT OF A WITNESS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, Elizabeth Koopman offers the following requests and queries for Friends' consideration:

Quakers and Indigenous Peoples **

We ask Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups:

To continue to educate themselves, including children and youth, about the doctrine of discovery, the ongoing effects of colonialism, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

To formally acknowledge the traditional territories where their Meetings are located and engage in processes of reflection on the meaning of this. Acknowledgments can be accomplished through signage, statements during the close of Meeting, and inclusion in information provided to any community groups who use Meeting House space.

To find out about current concerns of Indigenous Peoples from those territories, including land appropriation or resource development, with which the Meeting could be engaged.

To investigate projects of cultural revitalization that Indigenous Peoples are involved in and discern if there is an appropriate role (including funding) that Friends can play.

To uphold and support individual Friends involved with grassroots Indigenous rights work and provide spiritual support to Friends led to this work. This might include offering committees of care and approving minutes of support.

Queries for Reflection

1. Does my local Meeting know and acknowledge the traditional Territory on which we hold our worship and gatherings?
2. Do I challenge my assumptions about colonization and continuing racist practices and policies?
3. How can we follow leadings of the Spirit, both individually and in our Meetings, to actively ensure the United States of America decolonizes?
4. How is the journey of reconciliation consistent with Friends' testimonies and practice?
5. What is our role in furthering reconciliation and how can we follow leadings of the Spirit to deepen our engagement?

6. How can I be involved in respectfully supporting the current concerns of Indigenous Peoples near where I live and/or worship?
7. Do my actions support Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty?
8. How am I learning about Indigenous Peoples? Is it through their own voices or is it through mainstream media that often silences dissenting or different voices?

*** Adapted from Canadian Friends Service Committee, by Elizabeth Koopman*

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.