

ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING NEWS, Web Edition for January, 2022

SOCIAL CONCERNS



- How do I express my faith in action?
- Is my sense of justice based in love?
- Do I endeavor to face the pain of the world and respond to it with forgiveness and compassion?
- How do I avoid demonizing those who march against my concern?

ADVICES

Our testimonies are not the heart of our faith but are the fruits of our religious convictions. Assure that your actions in the world arise from your love of the Light in every person. Regard no person as your enemy. When opposing specific actions and abuses of power, seek to address the goodness and truth in each individual. While faith without works is dead, works without faith are hollow. Because we understand that activism is often spawned from an egocentric center, Friends are urged to test their leadings that their outward works are grounded in the Spirit.

VOICES

What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

-James 2:14-17 (NASB)

When we begin by demonizing the opposition, we have taken the first step to ensuring no possibility of resolution. However, there is another path: one which is far more likely to result in a

positive resolution. Instead of beginning with what divides us, we should begin with our common ground.

-Lawrence M. Hinman, 2005

It is said that one should never attempt the works of charity unless the motion springs from love in the heart. But God can lead us by more ways than one. Some he makes ready before he sends them out; others he sends out that they may be made ready.

-Mildred Binns Young, 1961

Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth. It is the very purpose of life, not something you do in your spare time.

-Shirley Chisholm, 1972

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.

Annual New Year's Eve Interfaith Prayer Celebration

For the 29th consecutive year, an interfaith gathering of Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists will be held on Friday, December 31, from 8:00 to 9:30pm at St Ignatius Church at Calvert and Madison Streets. The thrust of the event is to give thanks for the blessings of 2021, and to pray for continued blessings in 2022.

A diverse musical program will begin at 8:00, followed by the service at 8:30. A reception will follow at 9:30. **Masks are required.**

If on-street parking is not available, low cost, well-lighted indoor parking can be found one block south, behind the 707 North Calvert Street Building. Further information can be obtained from Jane Ambrose at salttavern@gmail.com.

Submitted by Jon Acton with the encouragement of Ministry & Counsel

First Saturday Drum Circle hosted by Gunpowder Friends Meeting

Dear Friends,

Those of us who came together for drumming in November enjoyed our time together. We talked about next steps for drumming at Gunpowder and we'd like to host drumming consistently, every 1st Saturday each month, from 3:30-5:00 PM.

We extend an invitation to folks from the wider community that may like to join with us, too -- there is no need to be a Gunpowder attender.

Through the winter months we will drum indoors with masks on, although when it's warm enough, we'll venture outdoors and drum in a circle around a fire. **Please feel free to join us, any/every 1st Saturday each month, from 3:30-5:00 PM.** Bring a snack if you like, bring a drum or percussion instrument if you have one. No RSVP required, however if you'd like to borrow



a drum (and there are plenty available, don't be shy!) please RSVP to Julie Evonna at Julieevonna@gmail.com
No experience required; all levels of drumming experience are welcomed. We drum for fun!

WGSV committee meeting Tuesday, January 11, 2022

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, January 11, 2022 from 4:30 to 6:00 in person at the meeting house. 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.

Library Announcement *submitted by Harry Faulkner*

The new online library catalog is up and running; a link is now available in the Spiritual Deepening / Gunpowder Library section of our website.



A reminder from **CompassioNet**: If you have an important peace and justice issue, cause, or call to action you would like to bring to the attention of the Gunpowder community in the coming new year, please send your ideas and pertinent information to: claire@exit24.net. *Thank you!*

Ministry and Counsel

Spiritual State of the Meeting Report Queries and Meeting for Worship Format Queries

This month, Ministry and Counsel has two sets of queries to share with you. Traditionally, our First month forum has been worship sharing in preparation for compiling our annual Spiritual State of the Meeting report, guided by queries from Baltimore Yearly Meeting Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee. In addition to those queries, we invite Friends to share thoughts and reflections of the past year, wherever those reflections lead. This year's BYM queries are:

- Talk about the joys and sorrows that your meeting has experienced this year. How have you grown in the Spirit?
- What wisdom and tools might your meeting share with other meetings about how the Spirit has guided your response to the pandemic. What have been the challenges?
- What wisdom and tools might your meeting share with other meetings about how the Spirit has guided your discussions on racism. What have been the challenges?
- If your meeting was asked to make a t-shirt that you would all wear, what would be the slogan? Would there be a picture?

Please hold these queries as we prepare to discern the spiritual state of our beloved meeting.

The second set of queries is centered in our continuing discernment around the format of our Meetings for Worship. Those queries are:

- What do you cherish in GFM Meeting for Worship?
- What gets in the way?
- Do you see way forward for us as a worshipping community? What does it look like?
- How are you now connected to the worshipping community?

We ask that you hold these queries in your hearts and send your responses to them to the co-clerks of Ministry and Counsel; Amy Schmaljohn at amy@schmaljohn.com and Greta Kirk Mickey at greta.mickey@gmail.com.

On 30 First month, at the rise of meeting, Ministry and Counsel will host another listening session when we will share what we have heard from each of you, and listen for the points of Light that shine forth.

Monthly Silent Retreat Day at Gunpowder Meeting

When: Second Saturday of each month 9 am until 3 pm (*with occasional date changes*)

Who: All are welcome

Where: Gunpowder Friends Meeting House

Contact: Rebecca Richards at rebecca.richards4912@gmail.com to learn more or confirm attendance

Silent Retreat Days at Gunpowder Friends Meeting provide an opportunity to gather in community – in silence – to refresh and renew our spiritual lives and to ground ourselves in peace and stillness away from the rush of daily life.

The Silent Retreat Day is largely unstructured. The Meeting House is open at 9 am. We settle in to silence by 9:15 am, then rise to our separate contemplative or active ways, indoors or outdoors, as we are inwardly led. Some take walks in the surrounding countryside, spend time in prayer or meditation, or engage in journaling, drawing, reading, knitting, or checking out the library.

At 12:30 a gentle bell calls us to gather for a bring-your-own-brown-bag lunch in the West Room (or if the weather is pleasant, we gather on the porch). This provides an opportunity for shared silence and, occasionally, a shared reading. Now and then a Friend may feel led to bring a pot of soup or a dessert to share

After lunch we return to personal silence, choosing activities as we are led. At 2:30 pm we gather again in the West Room in silence where there may be a spoken reflection on the day. No one need speak; speak only as you feel led. The retreat ends at 3 pm and we transition out of the silence to a brief time of conversation as we close the Meeting House.

All are welcome. Please contact Rebecca Richards if you would like to attend.
rebecca.richards4912@gmail.com

From Working Group for Stewarding Our Vision:

MOVING INTO GFM'S LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING PROCESS!

We're ready to begin the work of long-term financial planning! Our first gathering will take place on Friday, **March 11 (7-9pm)** and Saturday, **March 12 (9am – 3pm)** so save the dates!

Anyone who is part of the Gunpowder community, past and present, for a long or short time, is invited to be part of this work. Our facilitator for this work is Cindy Kroll. Cindy serves the Center for Action and Contemplation (founded by Richard Rohr) as their Managing Director of Finance and Business. She was key in leading the discernment process of that organization as they moved into a Spirit-led financial model. We are confident that she will be able to help us to do the same.

Our first session will feature great food, informal and friendly fellowship, sharing from our hearts and deep listening. We encourage all to attend what will be a lively Spirit-led time.

For further information, please contact Anita Langford at amlangfo@verizon.net or Greta Kirk Mickey at greta.mickey@gmail.com.

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.

First Day School News

JOB WELL DONE!!

FDS and the Gunpowder Community did an outstanding job of promoting the best of what the Christmas Holidays can be.

We received a warm thank you from the organizers of the North County Food bank included in part below:

Christmas came early to about 50 families on Friday and Saturday. In calculating our outreach, we figure we may touch 200 people this Christmas. We distributed food boxes of turkeys or hams [and every imaginable side for] their holiday meals. The sanctuary of Pine Grove United Methodist Church was the staging area for the gifts. What an overwhelming sight! Every pew was filled with gifts donated specifically for our clients. Many tears and statements of appreciation were seen and heard!

All of the planning and execution of this event at this busy time of the year, would not be possible without the support of you: our volunteers, food bank representatives, clergy, members of the community, churches, and businesses.

We wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year! Joan and Peggy

An adjusted schedule for First Day activities at Gunpowder Friends Meeting

Gunpowder Friends discerned a readiness to adjust our monthly schedule of First Day activities in response to a few needs and opportunities. First, we hope to be able to participate actively in the meetings of Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting, which generally gathers on third First Days three times each year.

As this is the time when we have held our monthly Meeting for Worship with Concern for Business, Gunpowder Friends' time and attention were torn between the needs of our own community and the opportunity for wider fellowship within the Quarter.

Secondly, our monthly FCNL letter writing activities have been held in recent years on the first First day during our coffee social hour. However, FCNL regularly publishes the monthly topic for letter writing in time for the second First Day of each month. We were therefore out of step with the timing for this important ministry. Finally, by holding our Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business on the third First day of each month, we were scrambling a bit to have the minutes finalized in time for inclusion in the monthly Gunpowder newsletter. Weighing these concerns, Ministry and Counsel recommended to monthly meeting a few adjustments to our monthly calendar.

First First Day

Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

- Second First Day Coffee Social & FCNL letter writing
- Third First Day Forum (and when applicable, participation in Chesapeake Quarter)
- Fourth First Day Bible Study before; Richard Rohr and FDS after; Meeting for Worship[

Gunpowder Friends approved these changes, to begin in Second Month 2022. Stay tuned!

A Convenient Way to Support Gunpowder Friends Meeting

It takes a village to keep Gunpowder Friends Meeting running. All the gifts that our members have to offer make a difference in that effort, be they time, energy, friendship, vocal ministry, or compassion.

If you are also able to give financially to help defray the expenses we face every month, from postage for Newsletters, to supplies and materials for First Day School, to the electric bill, as well as repairs and general maintenance, there is a way you can do so without having to write a check or put a reminder on your calendar.

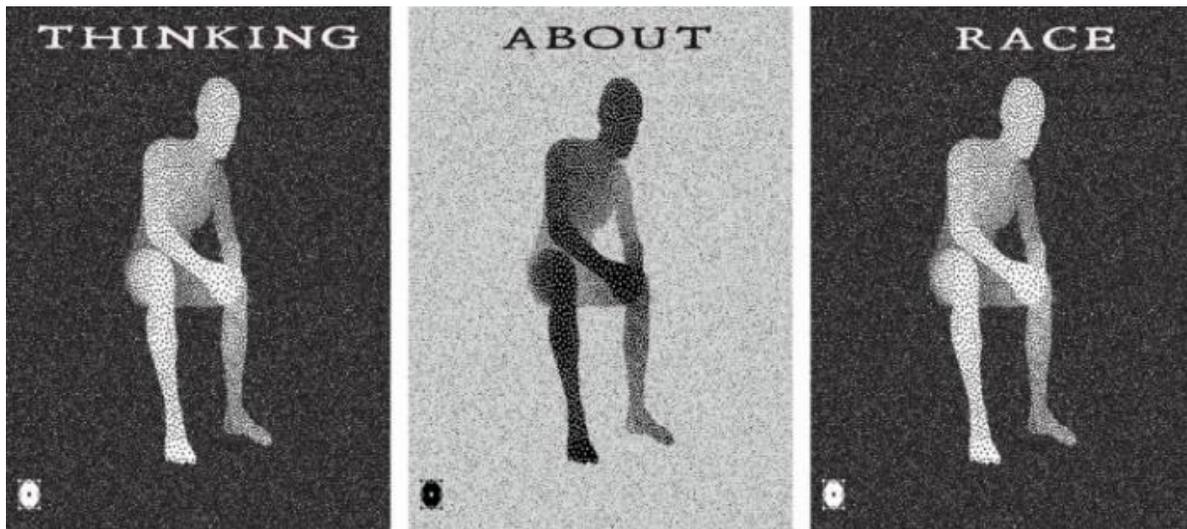
Using the services of Vanco, Gunpowder Friends Meeting can accept regular monthly donations of any amount that you determine, directly from your bank.

If you would like to learn more about how to set up this program, contact our Treasurer, Kerry Zimmerman at kerezazimmerman@gmail.com.

Thanks very much !!

From Care and Oversight:

The winter months can be tough for many of us, particularly during this isolating pandemic. Care and Oversight encourages Friends to reach out to Friends, perhaps particularly those of us who live alone, to connect through the mail, by email, and by telephone. Let's light up the phone lines this January and February!



Thinking About Race – (January 2022) Overcoming Medical Bias

Medical bias can be deadly, by Damon Centola, in The Baltimore Sun, December 6, 2021

“In the largest study of its kind to date, a 2020 analysis of more than 3 million U.S. patients’ hospital admissions between 2012 and 2017 found that adults who are Black or from other underrepresented racial or ethnic groups received up to 10% fewer early treatments for heart problems than white patients. Medical bias according to race and gender is so powerful that even mega stars like Serena Williams have nearly died from it.

“Institutions including medical schools and hospitals have responded to the problem of bias with implicit bias training—the use of cognitive techniques to make people aware of their internalized assumptions about race and gender. But the data show that it doesn’t work. Being taught directly about one’s own internalized assumptions unfortunately doesn’t seem to alter behavior. So, what can we do about bias that is unconscious, pervasive and threatens the lives of millions of Americans?

“In a study published this month in the journal Nature Communications, my colleagues and I discovered a surprisingly effective answer: an online group reasoning technique known as networked collective intelligence, which basically means getting doctors to exchange treatment options with one another. Think of it as a group chat for specialists.

[The article then describes the new online group approach and its remarkable results.]
“While no single discovery or innovation can eradicate race and gender bias from medicine, using egalitarian networks to improve medical care could spark a badly needed paradigm shift, where we train future clinicians to seek answers through peer problem-solving networks rather than deferring to seniority. We have known for some time that biased norms in healthcare are reinforced and strengthened by traditional medical networks. But clinical networks can improve upon the traditional logic of medical authority by relying on collective intelligence, which can reduce flaws in clinical reasoning in a way individual approaches cannot.”

Damon Centola is a senior fellow at the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, professor of communication, sociology, and engineering at the University of Pennsylvania and author, most recently, of “Change: How to Make Big Things Happen.”

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, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, currently via Zoom. If you would like to attend, contact the clerk at david.etheridge@verizon.net.

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.