

ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

## GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING NEWS, Web Edition for November, 2022

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### LISTENING



#### QUERIES:

- When is it hardest for me to be ready to listen?
- To what extent do I open myself to the risks of listening?
- How have I been changed by deeply listening to another, to God, to nature?
- How does my own perception affect the way I understand what others say?

#### ADVICES:

Listening to the Spirit, to the Inward Teacher, enables us to hear “where the words come from” when others speak. Hearing truth as others understand it is a way of deepening our own faith.

Just as compassionate listening can be a healing experience, inattentive conversation can be unkind and hurtful. Undivided attention is a precious gift.

Speak with your own, authentic voice, using the terms true to your experience. Encourage and welcome others to do the same. Read between the lines. Listen between the words.

#### VOICES:

Listening is a rare happening among human beings. You cannot listen to the word another is speaking if you are preoccupied with your appearance, or with impressing the other, or are trying to decide what you are going to say when the other stops talking, or are debating about whether what is being said is true or relevant or agreeable. Such matters have their place, but only after listening to the word as the word is being uttered. Listening is a primitive act of love in which a person gives himself to another’s word, making himself accessible and vulnerable to that word.

-William Stringfellow, 1973

Since we believe that there is in each person something divine, or what Jefferson called a moral sense, we are naturally called upon to listen to what other persons have to say, to what their hopes and aspirations and concerns are at the deepest level to which we can reach. There are many occasions where such listening is needed, and part of what it means to be a Friend in the world today is to slow down and listen carefully on at least some of those occasions.

-Newton Garver, 1983

You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time.

-M. Scott Peck, 1978

### **Long Term Financial Planning: We're Almost There!**

Our third and final Long Term Financial Planning retreat happened in September. It was yet another opportunity for our beloved community to come together in shared fellowship. We enjoyed wonderful food and conversation. We'd been away from this work over the summer and so we did deep gathering work around the questions at hand. Our facilitator, Cindy Kroll, led us in both small and large group exercises. We came together in community, a cohesive body, primed to engage with the work at hand.

Over the summer the Working Group for Stewarding our Vision (WGSV) sought a group of writers who would come together to sit with all of the input from our first two retreats and who would be prepared to engage in the herculean task of distilling all that they had heard and all that had been recorded into our Meeting's Key Financial Principles. We are grateful that Linda Davis, Amy Schmaljohn, Charlie Davis, and Alan Evans agreed to undertake this work. In August they shared their writing with the WGSV. Members of the WGSV were deeply touched by what had been written. WGSV members held the draft Key Financial Principles in discernment and, in conjunction with Cindy Kroll, offered a few amendments.

The Key Financial Principles are in a format similar to our Mission, Vision, and Values,-one clear and explicit sentence each. They are followed by a second document listing the Key Financial Principles with each one followed by an explanatory paragraph. It is our intent to retain both of these documents. Here they are:

### **GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING KEY FINANCIAL PRINCIPLES October, 2022**

- **Abundance: We operate from an attitude of abundance.**
- **Responsibility: We each have a responsibility in the right stewardship of our resources.**

- **Process: We are guided by Quaker processes that are transparent, intentional, communal, and Spirit-led.**
- **Longevity: We ensure adequate resources to support the long-term viability of the Meeting.**
- **Generosity: We share our gifts generously with the wider world.**

## **Gunpowder Friends Meeting Key Financial Principles**

This ethical framework is informed by a worldview that Spirit, Love, is alive and flowing through the entire universe, that we are co-creators with that Spirit, and that the gifts of Spirit are bountiful and regenerative. All the gifts of Spirit that flow through us help us to live fully into our mission, vision, and values. Our Quaker practices help us sustain this flow of Spirit—and the many gifts of Spirit—within us, among us, and beyond us. This framework will guide Gunpowder Friends in the care and sharing (stewardship) of those gifts as they flow through our community. Our community includes the Meeting’s physical infrastructure, the People, and the sacred Earth that surrounds us. We seek to make this worldview, our practices, and our joy in the flow of the gifts of Spirit visible to all with whom we live, worship, and encounter in the world.

### **Abundance: We operate from an attitude of abundance.**

The time, skills, effort, energy, experience, connections, and wisdom of each individual in our community comprise constantly regenerating resources. The financial wealth (invested money, capital holdings such as our Meeting House and grounds) and income (returns on our invested money, gifts from individuals in and beyond our community) are other important resources that we care for and share. The synergies between, among, and beyond us enhance all these resources and capacities.

### **Responsibility: We each have a responsibility in the right stewardship of our resources.**

The care and sharing of our many resources are the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of the Meeting, not just the responsibility of a select group of Friends with specific expertise. As such, right stewardship of our resources requires that we each remain engaged in the processes that guide our understanding and right use of our resources. As each of us is able, we share our respective resources.

### **Process: We are guided by Quaker processes that are transparent, intentional, communal, and Spirit-led.**

We assure the availability of information throughout the community (transparency). We seek to discern the best uses of resources after considering the various ways we can use our wealth to realize our vision (intentional). We listen together and yield to a Source beyond our own to discern the best actions (communal and Spirit-led).

### **Longevity: We ensure adequate resources to support the long-term viability of the Meeting.**

This includes investments in infrastructure, management of resources, spiritual growth of individuals, actions that promote resiliency, and our relationship to the sacred Earth on which we ultimately depend. In this way we use resources to ensure the longevity of the Meeting, the places it occupies, and the natural systems of which we are members.

**Generosity: We share our gifts generously with the wider world.**

We share our resources generously with individuals and organizations to co-create a more just, peaceful world, and a healthy planet. Our faith and its practice call us to be of service in the world. We share our resources to advance our shared mission, vision, and values.

These Key Financial Principles were brought forward for a first reading at Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business in Tenth month. One Friend brought forward a concern that Leadership had not been included as a Key Financial Principle and offered a paragraph on Leadership as an amendment. This offering was referred to the writing group for discernment around the possibility of inclusion as a Key Financial Principle. The writing group subsequently shared their discernment and writing with the WGSV. Results of this discernment will be shared at Eleventh Month Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business.

The draft of the Key Financial Principles will be presented for a Second reading with a request for approval at Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business in Eleventh Month. Upon approval, the Key Financial Principles will be appended to our Mission, Vision, and Values Statement and become a way for Gunpowder Friends to balance the use of our financial resources with our Mission, Vision, and Values as we seek to support our work both at home and in the world.

**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*.

**WGSV Committee Meeting Announcement:**

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 9, 2022, from 7:00 to 8:00pm 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*

**FROM FIRST DAY SCHOOL:**

**FDS calls all Friends to work in supporting our neighbors in need.**

**Holiday Food Baskets for the North County Food Bank.**

This year we are donating butter in 1# packages, 25 for each holiday, Thanksgiving and Christmas. To simplify purchase and storage of this perishable item, we will sign up for the number of pounds of butter we want to donate (at \$4 each) and one person will purchase and deliver it to the Food Bank.

There will be a sign-up sheet at the Meeting House, or you can email Rebecca at [rebecca.richards@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.richards@gmail.com) to indicate your butter subsidy.

### **Christmas Gifts**

We are supporting a family of three, a mom with two daughters (grade and middle schoolers). More details about their preferences will be forthcoming but think camo and military colors -- they want to be in solidarity with an older sibling serving in the army. They also like board games, Legos and art projects.

## **NEWS FROM THE SPIRIT AND NATURE WORKING GROUP**

During the September 18 forum we focused on the theme of “What it means to love a place,” using a short essay of the same name. At that time we invited the Meeting to try a spiritual practice called Sit Spot that will help us fall in love more deeply with our Meetinghouse grounds.

### **Why a Sit Spot?**

The best way to fall in love with a place is to get to know it better. And the best way to get to know it better is by spending more time there and giving it your full attention. A Sit Spot practice can help you do that.

### **A Sit Spot**

It's a simple, powerful experience that will enable you to be more present and connected to our Meetinghouse and grounds. In my experience it has been joyful to give myself permission to simply sit, observe, and be present. It doesn't take much of your time, but it can have a profound impact.



Wendy Balder has found a sit spot  
*Photo by Linda Davis*

### **What is a sit spot?**

In its most basic form, a sit spot is a single place in nature that you visit on a regular basis.

### **What will you do in your sit spot?**

First choose a place on the Meetinghouse grounds to be your Sit Spot. Spend anywhere from 10 minutes to an hour at your sit spot. If you can, spend fifteen minutes in the space. That will give you time to relax into the space and begin to notice everything.

### **The first thing to do is get comfortable.**

For most of us that means sitting down, so choose a place on a bench or a step or the wall, or bring a chair outside with you. Bring a cushion if you wish.

### **What do you need?**

You don't need binoculars or a journal or a sketchbook or an app or a camera. If possible, turn off your cellphone. If not, then place it on silent. Just sit and observe.

The point is to get familiar with who and what you share this place with. Orient yourself with which direction you're facing and know where it is on a map. See if you notice what seems to be drawing your curiosity the most and if you're observing any patterns. After your first few times, take it further and get connected with your senses. Close your eyes and see what you can feel with your sense of touch. What can you hear nearest to you, and which sounds are the farthest away? What can you pick up with your peripheral vision? Use your senses of smell and taste and see if you can smell the weather or a flower blooming, or taste the air. Can you feel the wind? Now that you've connected with your senses, see if you can pick out a few things that you've never actually noticed before. Seek out a new plant, animal, or fungi that you aren't familiar with and use your senses to learn about this new friend. Note as many details as you can and see what questions you have.



LouAnne's sit spot is in a kayak  
*Watercolor by Linda Davis*

**After** you finish your time outside, come inside to the West Room and record what you observed or experienced. Mark the location of your Sit Spot on the aerial photo of Gunpowder. Then on a sticky note, record your observations—a few words, a drawing along with your name, the date, and the time—and post it on the board in the West Room. You may want to browse the books or visit an online resource that will be posted in the West Room. In sharing our observations, we will help one another fall deeper in love with this special place we share.

(With excerpts from: <https://www.wildernessawareness.org/articles/core-routine-sit-spot/>)

Our November 20<sup>th</sup> forum will focus on the intersection of Nature and Wellness with invited guest Heidi Schreiber-Pan, Ph.D.

We are also pleased to support a 'one book' reading again this year in partnership with the Ministry and Counsel committee. M&C has purchased for each Meeting household a copy of *Earth Prayers*, which includes prayers and poems from across global cultures and time periods. The Working Group invites each of us to explore the book and to discover poems and prayers that speak to our experience and condition. We'll have time to share what has spoken to us at our upcoming forums this fall.

**The Ministry and Counsel Committee and the Spirit and Nature Working Group invited us each to establish a Sit Spot on the land around our Meetinghouse so we can learn more about nature in the place we love. After you visit your Sit Spot, you may want to learn more about what you've observed. These resources can help.**

#### **REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS -**

[https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/pages/plants\\_wildlife/herps/index.aspx](https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/pages/plants_wildlife/herps/index.aspx) – Learn the size, appearance, and habitat of the reptiles (turtles, snakes, and lizards) and amphibians (salamanders, newts, frogs, toads) who live in Maryland. Compare observations to photos to identify the animal.

**MAMMALS -** [https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/plants\\_wildlife/Mammals.aspx](https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/plants_wildlife/Mammals.aspx) - Learn the description, range, habitat, diet, reproduction, and behavior of mammals in the state. Compare observations to photos to identify the animal.

**MOTHS** - <http://www.marylandmoths.com/> - Browse their beauty. Learn to identify those in our state.

**MOTHS AND BUTTERFLIES** - <https://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/category/region/united-states/maryland> - Maps and photos of recent sightings so you know what you're likely to see.

## **BIRDS**

Merlin app - <https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/> - Learn to identify birds by sight and sound. You download this free app on your phone or other device. Record live in the field and get a real-time identification. Amazing.

Cornell Ornithology Lab website - <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/> - Visit this website to identify the birds you observe by sight or sound. Learn about their life history.

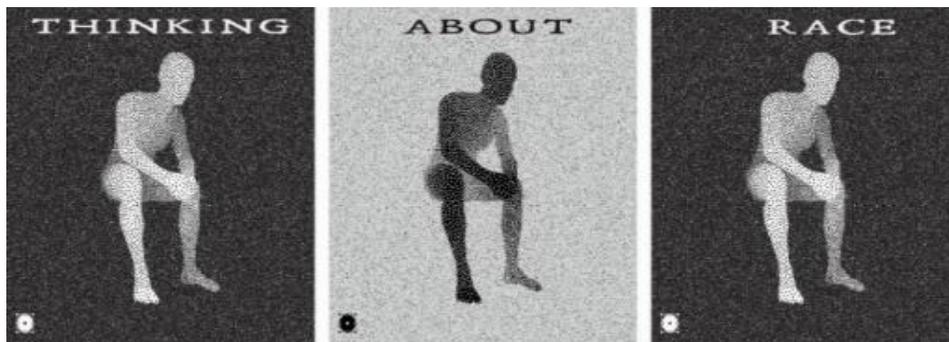
**FEATHERS** - <https://www.fws.gov/lab/featheratlas/> - The site will help you compare a photo of a feather you find to a library of scanned images. Amazing resource. Important reminder: feathers are protected by law.

**SINGING INSECTS** - <https://songsofinsects.com/> - Who is singing outside? This site offers sound recordings and photos to help you find out which crickets, katydids, grasshoppers, and cicadas you're hearing. These pages will expose you to over 90 common and widespread species.

**ALL SPECIES** - <https://www.marylandbiodiversity.com/> - The Maryland Biodiversity Project is a non-profit organization focused on cataloging the living things of Maryland. They promote conservation, science, and education by helping to build a vibrant nature study community. Visit this site to see photos, see if it's native to Maryland and where it lives in the state, find its relatives, and compare species.

## **SHARE YOUR OBSERVATIONS**

**ALL SPECIES** - [www.iNaturalist.org](http://www.iNaturalist.org) - iNaturalist is a social network of naturalists, citizen scientists, and biologists built on the concept of mapping and sharing observations of biodiversity across the globe. iNaturalist may be accessed via its website or from its mobile applications. You take a photo of an organism, upload the photo and location to iNaturalist, and experts from around the world help you identify it.



**Thinking About Race** (November 2022) – Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address

This month the BYM Working Group on Racism shares with you a portion of the

“Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address: Greetings to the Natural World.” We encourage you to read the entire document here:

**[https://americanindian.si.edu/environment/pdf/01\\_02\\_Thanksgiving\\_Address.pdf](https://americanindian.si.edu/environment/pdf/01_02_Thanksgiving_Address.pdf)**

This Thanksgiving Address includes a paragraph of greetings to each of 17 aspects of the natural world. Each one ends with the words “Now our minds are one.” The 17 are The People, The Earth Mother, The Water, The Fish, The Plants, The Food Plants, The Medicine Herbs, The Animals, The Trees, The Birds, The Four Winds, The Thunderers, The Sun, The Grandmother Moon, The Stars, The Enlightened Teachers, The Creator. Following the 17 greetings are these words:

### **“Closing Words**

“We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own way.

“Now our minds are one.”

This translation of the Mohawk version of the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address was developed, published in 1993, and provided, courtesy of: Six Nations Indian Museum and the Tracking Project. All rights reserved.

Thanksgiving Address: Greetings to the Natural World English version: John Stokes and Kanawahienton (David Benedict, Turtle Clan/Mohawk) Mohawk version: Rokwaho (Dan Thompson, Wolf Clan/Mohawk) Original inspiration: Tekaronianekon (Jake Swamp, Wolf Clan/Mohawk)

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