



Gunpowder Friends Meeting

Welcome to the **March 2024 Web Edition** of the Gunpowder Newsletter. Some information has been redacted. To receive the full monthly Newsletter please feel free to inquire with Gunpowder's Clerk at gunpowderclerk@gmail.com.

Members and attenders may access newsletters and monthly minutes in the log-in area of the website.

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.

Intergenerational Game Night at the Meetinghouse

Friday, March 15th, join us for an intergenerational game night at the Meetinghouse. BYOB—Bring Your Own Boardgame! If you have one. Otherwise, just bring yourself and your dinner. Light refreshments will be served. Folks will bring all sorts of games to share. All ages welcome, young-at-heart required! We will be opening doors at 5 PM and playing until folks get ready for bedtime (8 or 9?). Please see Rep Pichard or Wendy Snyder with any questions.

McKim Youth Leadership Retreat at Gunpowder!

Our partnership with the McKim Community Association and the Baltimore Wisdom Project continues to offer us opportunities for meaningful connection with Baltimore young people and the wise teachers and coaches who inspire them. Next up is our hosting of a leadership retreat for high-school-aged McKim youth. On Friday, March 22nd from 6-9 p.m. ten or so young people, along with Coach Garfield Thompson and Miss tree turtle, will be visiting Gunpowder for an evening of learning and fellowship. Those of us on the McKim Partnership Working Group invite you to join in the gathering. We'll share a meal (that we will provide—menu being decided by the youth!), listen to the wisdom of Coach Garfield as he offers lessons in leadership and team building for the youth, have some time for 1-1 connection with the young people, and time for worship sharing as a whole group. We need your help and presence. If you're available and willing, please contact the working group clerk, Amy Schmaljohn (amy@schmaljohn.com).

Bible Study at Gunpowder: March 24th 9-10 a.m.

The hale and hearty Bible Study Group at Gunpowder invites you to join us in our journey with second Isaiah (chapters 40-55 in the Book of Isaiah). We were drawn to this book to hear how the prophetic voice speaks in troubled and troubling times (in many ways like our own). Scholar Walter Bruggeman offers that the prophet, at her or his best, not only offers a critique of the dominant, destructive ideology, but a vision of what might take its place: a more just and peaceful world. The poetry of second Isaiah engages our imagination through gorgeous poetry and rich imagery, and lends itself to song (notably some very familiar lyrics from Handel's *Messiah*). Join us for a bit of inspiration and a lot of good sharing about how the passages—both familiar and new—speak to our experiences today. We've spent time thus far with chapters 40 and 41, so in March we'll

turn our attention to 42. You needn't have read anything in advance or have any experience with the Hebrew or Christian Bible. We'd love for you to join us!

Spiritual Formation "Large Group" Gathering March 21st 6:30 - 8:00

When the Spiritual Formation group at Gunpowder gathers in March, we'll have time for fellowship at the dinner table followed by sharing in response to William Taber's Pendle Hill Pamphlet "The Prophetic Stream" (#256). Taber asserts that "[a]ll of the early Friends ministers, starting with George Fox, believed that they were in the living stream of the prophets which stretched from Abraham to Moses through Jesus and the apostles unto their very own time." We modern Friends can, Taber invites, connect more deeply to our faith and its practice by entering into this stream. As is our practice in Spiritual Formation sharing, we'll reflect together how Taber's ideas and words connect (or don't!) with our own experience. If you're interested in receiving an electronic copy of the pamphlet (and, we hope, joining in the evening of fellowship and sharing), contact Rebecca Richards (rebecca.richards4912@gmail.com).

Filling Easter Baskets for The Food Pantry -- Cash due by March 17

We will be providing 50 jars of pasta sauce for Easter Baskets being filled by the North County Food Bank. Friends are asked to contribute cash (figure \$2-3 per jar) and one shopper will do the purchase -- easier to remember, too.

Please give cash or check to Rebecca Richards

Right Sharing of World Resources: Collecting Stamps for Quaker Good Works

It's the time of year when we receive lots of "real" mail -- in envelopes with postage stamps! Please save used postage stamps and put them in the collection box at the Meeting House. Leave an ample margin around the stamp.

Since 1966 this Stamp Project has collected and sold used postage stamps, the proceeds supporting RSWR. Current RSWR programs provide microloans in support of women in their microbusiness ventures in Guatemala, India, Kenya and Sierra Leone. Thank you for your support -- and your stamps! Questions? See LouAnne Smith.



Thinking about Race – (March 2024)

Submitted by Rebecca Richards

There's a book I'd highly recommend if you're interested in the gifts of Black culture and literature in particular: Read Until You Understand: The Profound Wisdom of Black Life and Literature by Farah Jasmine Griffin, Columbia University, where she chairs the department of African American and African Diaspora Studies.

In a chapter on "The Transformative Potential of Love," she writes about Toni Morrison's book Paradise. Morrison writes of a wedding in which two sermons on love are "delivered". One sermon, about a distant judging deity, makes the case for undeserved salvation (you don't deserve it, but you can earn it.). The other "sermon", in this case delivered by a silent act of witness, reveals Morrison's stunning theology of universal love. This silent sermon is delivered by a young pastor, Misner, so profoundly offended by the limited vision of the sermon he's heard that all he can do is lift the cross before the assembled church in silence.

From Griffin's book:

Misner cannot speak calmly, so he holds the cross before the gathered and wills them to know "that not only is God interested you; He is you."

There are important implications in Misner's silent sermon for all people of faith and for those of us who are secular as well. Suppose what we call God is nothing more than a conception of human beings loving each other, treating each other with mutual respect? Suppose we create and live in something divine each time we act lovingly and respectfully toward each other? Suppose humans are the only vehicles and vessels of Grace and Love? This kind of love is the basis of justice. This love is the conduit of freedom. This love is power beyond wealth, greed and physical might.

-- Farah Jasmine Griffin, Read Until You Understand, p. 167-8