



Welcome to the **December 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](mailto: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](mailto:GunpowderClerk@gmail.com).

**Care and Oversight is preparing to republish (internally) our Meeting Directory in December, and we need your help!**

**If you have any updates or corrections** to your entry since December 2023

OR

**if you are new to our community** and would like to be listed in our directory, email [louannsmith2@gmail.com](mailto:louannsmith2@gmail.com) by Sunday 12/8/24. Please provide your email address, postal address and phone number(s).

**If you have been listed previously in the directory and you wish to opt out,**

email [louannsmith2@gmail.com](mailto:louannsmith2@gmail.com) or call 443-595-8292 with your request by **Sunday 12/8/24**. We will keep your contact information in our database, but we won't publish it in the directory.

The updated directory will be emailed to Gunpowder Friends, and at that time you will have the option to request a paper copy. Please note that the directory is **not** posted on our website and is not searchable on the internet. The directory is for the use of Meeting members and attenders for Meeting business only (and Meeting business includes reaching out to one another in Gunpowder's beloved community).

Thank you for your help as we strive to provide accurate and up-to-date information in our directory.

### **NORTH COUNTY FOOD BANK: BUTTER DRIVE for Holiday baskets**

Dear Friends, For the holidays -- Thanksgiving and Christmas -- we are helping the North County Food Bank prepare baskets for holiday dinners.

Our contribution is 30 **pounds of butter for each holiday!!** By my calculations, @ \$4/lb we need \$120 for each holiday. We can do this!!

It is easiest to collect cash and have one shopper buy the butter.

Please give \$\$\$ to Rebecca. (If you need to write a check, please make payable to Rebecca Richards, so as to not heap more work on Joan, our underpaid and overworked treasurer.)

THANKS ALL!!

### **COOKIE SOCIAL, December 8<sup>th</sup> at Rise of Meeting**

We will celebrate the season by sharing delicious holiday cookies! Everyone is invited to bring their favorite cookies to share, homemade or store bought gratefully accepted. It's a wonderful opportunity to celebrate

our beloved Gunpowder community's deep connections. Meeting will provide plenty of coffee and tea. We hope to see you there!

### **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP AND CAROLING December 24th, 7pm**

Reviving an old tradition, we will gather at the Meeting House on Christmas Eve.

Worship lasting about 30 minutes will begin at 7pm followed by carol singing. We welcome any musician who would like to accompany the singing, or we will just blend our voices acapella in the most familiar tunes.

De-caf coffee will be on offer and any holiday treats Friends bring to share.

Should weather present a hazard, look for a Clerk's email for cancellation.

### **SING IN THE NEW YEAR January 1, 2025, Community Sing Led by Ruth Fitz**

Come sing in the new year on January 1st, 2025, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Wed., Jan. 1 at Gunpowder Meetinghouse. Come for all or part of the day, as we sing and sup and socialize together. The technology bridge/Zoom link will be available for those who wish to use it. Friends are invited to bring a dish to share for lunch. Ruth Fitz will lead the singing, with music that ranges from energizing and fun to worshipful and quieting. No musical expertise is needed, just an open heart and a willing spirit.

### **DECEMBER FORUM – Forum on Reparations**

As Friends consider, pray, and work towards repairing the harms of the past and committing ourselves to justice and reconciliation moving forward, it can be helpful to understand a wide variety of good faith perspectives and concerns, to deepen and sharpen our understanding. In our forum in December, hear how one class at a local Quaker school addresses good faith arguments concerning the topic of reparations owed to the descendants of those oppressed by the institution of American slavery, Jim Crow laws, and housing discrimination. Eleventh and twelfth grade students in one class read Ta-Naheisi Coates's article, "The Case for Reparations," followed by good faith critiques of Coates's position from various Black scholars. In our December 15<sup>th</sup> forum, Gunpowder Friends will consider and learn more about this approach as a way of sharpening our own understanding.

### **Traveling in Times of Challenge**

Alan Schmaljohn shared a message in Meeting which seems ripe for a broader hearing. This interesting take on a familiar Woolman quote was first suggested to Alan in the on-line Spiritual Formation program's large group. It gives us pause to think about how we might carry our faith forward in these challenging times. The italics and bold script represent an adaptation which contemporizes Woolman's experience:

"Love was the first motion, and then a concern arose to spend some time with the Indians (*or in our context, Alan suggested, "those who voted differently than I"*), that I might feel and understand their life, and the Spirit they live in, if haply I might receive some instruction from them, or they be in any degree helped forward by my following the leadings of Truth amongst them. And as it pleased the Lord to make way for my going at a time when the troubles of war were increasing and when by reason of much wet weather travelling was more difficult than usual at that season, I looked upon it as a more favourable opportunity to season my mind, and bring me into a nearer sympathy with them. And as mine eye was to the great Father of Mercies, humbly desiring to learn what his will was concerning me, I was made quiet and content."

**THE ONE BOOK for this year is a "two-fer" -- two complementary Pendle Pamphlets.**

"The Prophetic Stream" by Bill Taber looks at prophetic ministry in both Biblical and early Quaker life.

"A Quietness Within" by Elaine Pryce turns to the wisdom of Christian mystics and early Quakers.

Both writers help us identify the sources of strength and resilience which help us keep our balance in trying times. **PLEASE PICK UP YOUR COPIES** of these books at the Meeting House (a signup sheet helps us know who has theirs).

Those who cannot pick them up will receive a copy by mail.

### **BOOK STUDY GROUP in Spring of 2025**

Gunpowder's Working Group for Racial Reconciliation is inviting Friends to a book study group this spring to dig a little deeper into Kazu Haga's book, *Healing Resistance*, and the six principles of Kingian nonviolence outlined there.

The group will meet biweekly, in person, on three Saturday mornings. Suggested location and dates are March 8th, March 22, and April 5, 2025, from 9 to 11am, at Stony Run Friends Meeting House library for convenience of location and parking.

We will focus on two principles of nonviolence at each session.

Interested Friends are invited to contact Anita Langford at [amlangfo@verion.net](mailto:amlangfo@verion.net) or to text or call Jo Brown, who has offered to facilitate, at 717-385-5813 for more information.

PS: The Working Group is also happy to care for an online book-study group should the interest arise.

### **CLERK'S MUSINGS**

A word about language: I often express myself in "God" language; It is the language that I grew up hearing and using and so it feels comfortable to me. However – my own belief is much, much broader. It encompasses Holy One, Creator, Spirit, All That Is, That which is Unknowable and Unnamable, without gender, and so much more. I invite you to interpret the language I use in whatever way works best for you.

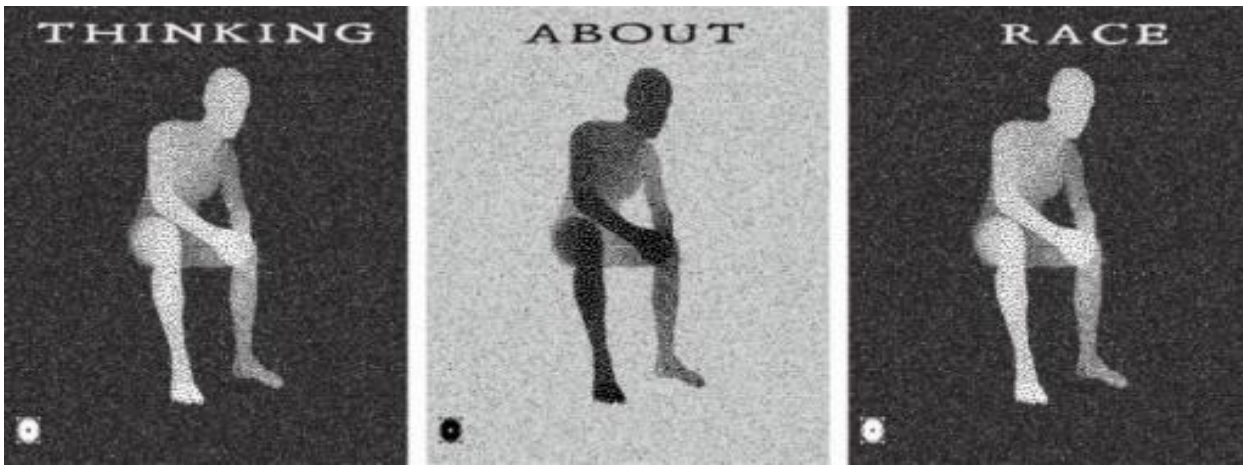
### **Joy to the world!**

Each year as we approach Christmas I think of Mary, Mother of Jesus. For me, it is a story – a very important story with a very important teaching. When the angel of the Lord came to Mary and told her that she would have a son and she would call him Jesus, she was stunned. She was after all unmarried and a chaste woman. Given all that, who wouldn't be stunned? The amazing thing about Mary is that she said "yes. Be it unto me according to your word". She didn't know what lay ahead. She didn't know if her betrothed would still have her. She didn't know what special challenges parenting this special child might bring. She didn't know that he would be sentenced to death, and crucified. What she did know was that she trusted God. She trusted enough to give her life over to God's.

What could be more joyful for us at this time as we trust the Holy One to so fill our hearts and minds and souls that we too are ready to say "Yes! Be it unto me according to your word". I believe that we humans are at our very best when we allow ourselves to be used by God; When we make our eyes and ears and mouths and hands – all that we are, all that we can do and all that we can be – available for Spirit to use as He/She will. This is the Joy of finding Christ within. May we all know the Joy of the Presence in our lives this holiday season.

Much love to you all!

Greta



### **Thinking About Race (December 2024)**

Gunpowder Meeting's Working Group for Racial Reconciliation will present a Forum on Reparations on December 15th. In preparation for this forum, we are using this regular column (October to December) to present a broad range of perspectives related to this topic. These quotes, brief as they are, are only a snapshot and do not represent any considered values of our community, but help us hear a variety of voices.

This month we share words from President Barack Obama cited by Ta-Nahesi Coates:

“Theoretically, you can make obviously a powerful argument that centuries of slavery, Jim Crow, discrimination are the primary cause for all those gaps,” Obama said, referencing the gulf in education, wealth, and employment that separates black and white America. “That those were wrongs to the black community as a whole, and black families specifically, and that in order to close that gap, a society has a moral obligation to make a large, aggressive investment, even if it’s not in the form of individual reparations checks but in the form of a Marshall Plan.”

- President Barack Obama, cited in “My President was Black,” by Ta-Nehisi Coates, The Atlantic, 2016