



Welcome to the **February 2025 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.

FEBRUARY FORUM – Peace Testimonies: February 16th 2025, 11:30am-1:00pm

Quaker peace testimonies have formed a cornerstone of Quaker faith and culture since the mid-17th century. Friends have renewed these commitments across centuries in response to violent conflict and injustice. In February's forum, we will read together several short historical testimonies to peace, discern the principles behind them, and ask what these principles may mean now, for our everyday life and spiritual practice.

It's SOUP-ER Month at the FOOD BANK

We all enjoy sitting down to a warming bowl of soup. So let's fill the bin with canned soup and crackers. P.S. they get lots of tomato and chicken noodle, so LET'S MIX IT UP... lentil, split pea, beef barley, etc.

Monthly Drum Circle

Please feel free to join us this 1st Saturday, from 3:00-4:30 PM. No RSVP required, however if you'd like to borrow a drum (and there are plenty available, don't be shy!) please RSVP to Jennifer Robinson (jlrobinson@gmail.com).

We will drum indoors or outdoors depending upon weather. Masks are optional.

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. No experience required; all levels of drumming experience are welcomed. We drum for fun!

FIRST Quarterly Zoom Social

The Care and Oversight Committee will be hosting an informal zoom social with Anne and Bob Heaton on **Tuesday, February 11, at 4 pm**. Please contact Karen O'Mara karenschomara@gmail.com if you wish to participate.

Register now for: a Gathering of Healers

Calling all Spirit-led, Hands-on Energy workers!

March 28-30, 2025, at Gunpowder Friends Meeting, Sparks, Maryland

This is envisioned as a time get to know one another, to give and receive work, and to talk about way

forward as a cohort of healers in a deeply worshipful setting. You may go to this link <https://ivory-dre-18.tiny.site> to access additional information, schedule, and registration form. If you'd like additional information, please contact Greta Kirk Mickey: text or call 315-694-1359 or email greta.mickey@gmail.com.

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.

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.

What is discernment?

Quakers often talk about sitting in discernment. I'm trying to remember the last time I had a conversation about what sitting in discernment means. For my own clarity, I started with the dictionary. It says that it is "perception in the absence of judgment with a view to obtaining spiritual guidance and understanding". To me, despite the fact that this definition uses the phrase "spiritual guidance" it does not speak to our Quaker faith or practice of discernment. My understanding of Quaker discernment says that we are listening for that voice within; the voice of Spirit, to lead us.

So how do we hear the voice of Spirit? Secular society, in great part, negates the possibility of actually hearing Spirit speak to us. Nothing could be farther than the truth! Spirit is alive and well and waiting for us to not only ask but to listen deeply, for it is in the silence of our souls that Spirit speaks. I know that voice well and I suspect that you do too.

Conversations with our friends and colleagues are most fulfilling when we listen deeply to one another. It is the way in which we build deep and fulfilling relationships steeped in trust, love, and joy. So it is with Spirit. It takes time, and practice, and a different kind of attention to build a relationship with God. As Friends we acknowledge that there is that of God in each of us. As we build our relationship with Spirit we awaken that of God within. When something deep and holy was going on my friend John used to say, "The angels are throwing a party in heaven!" With each and every person who reaches out to listen for the voice of Spirit, I hear the echo of John's voice, "The angels are throwing a party in heaven!" May we all enjoy the dance.

Greta

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Quakers Sue DHS over Immigration Enforcement and Religious Freedom

January 27, 2025

By [Sharlee DiMenichi](#)

Quakers are suing the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) over potential immigration raids at houses of worship. Plaintiffs include Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Adelphi (Md.) Meeting, and Richmond (Va.) Meeting. The suit argues that plaintiffs' religious liberty is violated by the Trump administration's [January 20 rescindment](#) of protections for people without legal status in "sensitive locations" such as places of worship.

Since 2011, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents [have been restricted](#) from arresting, interrogating, searching, or surveilling people in such places as meetinghouses, churches, mosques, synagogues, schools, and hospitals.

The suit states that immigration enforcement in and around houses of worship violates worshipers' First Amendment right to freedom of religion.

"The core of the lawsuit argues that if the protections of religious exercise mean anything under the law, it must include the right of people to gather together for worship. If the government is going to impede that right, it must have a very good reason for doing so. The government has not enforced immigration law at houses of worship for at least the last 31 years, so it is difficult to see how an about-face on that policy could satisfy any meaningful level of review," according to [a statement](#) on Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's (PYM) website.

The councils of the yearly meeting met and easily came to unity about becoming plaintiffs of the suit, according to PYM general secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer. Immediately prior to the suit being filed the clerks of monthly and quarterly meetings gathered to hear the news and were also supportive and excited.

"Everything just moved lightning fast. By Quaker standards, it was breathtaking," said Duncan-Tessmer.

Representatives from PYM, Baltimore Yearly Meeting and New England Yearly Meeting worked with lawyers from Democracy Forward, the nonprofit legal group that filed the suit, in the middle of last week, according to Duncan-Tessmer. The [suit](#) was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland on January 27.

Friends' historic experience of religious persecution motivated modern Quakers to join the lawsuit, according to Duncan-Tessmer. William Penn protected freedom of religion in the [Charter of Privileges](#). The framers of the Constitution drew on this tradition to enshrine religious liberty in the First Amendment, she explained. The First Amendment was ratified in 1791. The Constitution was ratified between 1787 and 1789. "That's why we have freedom of religion in this country because of Quakers," Duncan-Tessmer said.

Protections for individuals without legal status at sensitive locations included exceptions for cases involving national security hazards, terrorism, and imminent threats of death or violence, according to DHS.

The DHS media office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Correction: The process of PYM's decision making and work with other yearly meetings and Democracy Forward has been clarified.

This is a developing story. Please check frequently for updates.

Letter sent by BYM Peace and Social Concerns Committee, received by the Meeting Clerk:

January 27, 2025

The Right Rev. Marianne Edgar Budde
Episcopal Church House
Mount St. Alban
Washington, D.C. 20016-5094

Dear Bishop Budde:

We write to express our profound thanks to you for your lovingly delivered call on the new president to show compassion to those dehumanized and terrorized by divisive policy pronouncements. We appreciate you and your example. Please know that there are innumerable people around the country who share your view, and we wish you to hear this, above the hateful noise. You are giving a voice to people who are often unheard.

As members of the Religious Society of Friends who believe “there is that of God in everyone,” your statement when you were interviewed by NPR resonated with us: it is dangerous “to speak of people in these broad categories, and particularly immigrants as all being criminals, or transgender children as somehow being dangerous.”

Thank you for speaking truth to power. We hope all people of faith will follow your courageous example and that this will extend to our elected representatives.

Standing together for peace and justice,

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)*
Peace & Social Concerns Committee

cc:

Senator Angela Alsobrooks

Senator Tim Kaine

Senator Dave McCormick

Senator Chris Van Hollen

Senator Mark Warner

Senator John Fetterman

Rep. Sarah Elfreth

Rep. Andy Harris

Rep. Steny Hoyer

Rep. Glen Ivey

Rep. April McClain-Delaney

Rep. Kweisi Mfume

Rep. Johnny Olszewski

Rep. Jamie Raskin

* Baltimore Yearly Meeting is a regional Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends that has existed for more than 300 years. Geographically, it includes most of Virginia, Maryland west of the Chesapeake Bay, central Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, and parts of West Virginia. It has about 4,740 members-- Friends of all ages--organized into 40 established Monthly Meetings plus 13 Preparative Meetings and Worship Groups.