



Welcome to the **January 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.

JANUARY FORUM – January 19th 2025

Worship Sharing on the Spiritual on the State of the Meeting Report (SSoM)

Each year Baltimore Yearly Meeting asks each Monthly Meeting to report on “how the Spirit prospers among you.” We begin the process of creating the SSoM by hearing from our community at a worship sharing in which we respond to a set of queries. Based on this sharing and overall observations, Ministry & Counsel brings a draft report to Business Meeting for approval before it is sent to the Yearly Meeting.

We find this to be both a joyful and instructive exercise in reviewing the past year of our life together. Please take time over the next few weeks to consider the following queries. Everyone's thoughts and feelings are important in the process of creating this report. If you are not able to be present in January, any member of M&C will receive your thoughts in person or by email.

- What are specific ways in which our spirits have been nurtured at Gunpowder? Are there aspects of nurture missing?
- Do we encounter limits in our practice of the Beloved Community ideal?
- As we work for peace, are we nourished by peace and justice within and among ourselves?

Members of Ministry and Counsel: Dave Fitz and Rebecca Richards (Co-Clerks), Jo Brown, Janet Abrams, and Lisa Sutton. Additionally, Clerk of Meeting Greta Kirk Mickey, is an ex-officio member.

Called Worship for January 20, 2025 at Noon

This year the presidential inauguration falls on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, Monday, January 20th. Gunpowder Friends deeply value the ideals of Beloved Community and the values of engaged nonviolence espoused by Dr. King. For many, this coincidence of the calendar is a bitter irony.

However, we are called to move forward in hope and look to Spirit to guide us in finding way open to “do justice and love kindness” (Micah 6:8). Therefore, we are setting a time aside for worship beginning at 12 noon on January 20, 2025.

Whatever your plans, we call on all Friends to lift up the values of Beloved Community on the MLK Holiday and at the time of the inauguration of the 47th President of the United States.

The Committee on Ministry and Counsel

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

Right Sharing of World Resources Stamp Program

Please bring your stamps to the Meeting House, used and unused, which we send to Indianapolis First Friends Meeting. Here is a blurb from their website about their good work.

"Indianapolis First Friends is proud to host a stamp program that benefits Right Sharing of World Resources (RWSR), an independent not-for-profit Quaker organization sharing the abundance of God's love by working for equity through partnerships around the world.

People around the world send in stamps to First Friends, which the \$tamping for Dollar\$ team trims, sorts, and sells to collectors and dealers. The proceeds are sent to RSWR. RSWR makes grants to groups of marginalized women in Guatemala, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and India to fund individual micro-enterprise projects. The team also provides the names and addresses of stamp donors to RSWR to add to its marketing database."

Questions? See LouAnne Smith.

SAVE THE DATE: A Gathering of Healers

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

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

Healers from near and far are invited!

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. If you think you would like to be part of this gathering please contact Greta Kirk Mickey: text or call 315-694-1359 or email

greta.mickey@gmail.com.

Stay tuned for more information!

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 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.

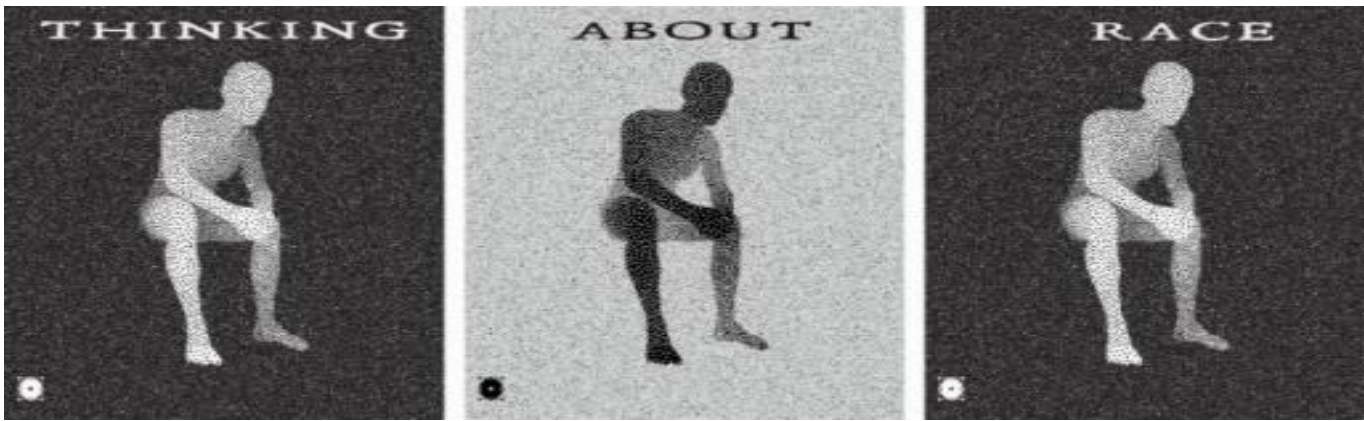
What to do with a heavy heart...

A long time ago, when I was still deep in the throws of the Episcopal Church I found myself in a time of deep turmoil. I had three very young children. My marriage was falling apart. My relationship with the church was in tatters. I was in despair. In that time I found myself praying the daily office (a series of prescribed prayers and bible readings) twice a day; Matins and Vespers – morning and evening. A friend asked me how I could find the time to do that. I replied that it was my lifeline, that I *had* to find the time. I have lost and found that wisdom so many times in the course of my life that I cannot begin to count them.

Recently, in the midst of a reading I read this sentence from James Finley. "Although the thread breaks many times from our end, it never breaks from God's end." It is precisely that teaching that I have learned and lost and relearned again and again. That thread is always there. Even when we break the thread it is always there for us to find and to grasp again. When all else is gone, God does not desert us! Hold on tight with both hands. It is life itself.

We, as a peculiar people, practicing a peculiar faith in a time when our world is turned upside down in so many ways, ask how we can move forward while remaining faithful. What can we do? For me, the first movement is to find Spirit; first and foremost, within my own being. For me, that means dedicated times of sitting with the Holy One, sometimes in conversation (prayer) but most often in silent waiting. Building and rebuilding, reawakening that relationship; as with any relationship that requires intention. That is the very beginning of finding Peace. In Black Elk's words "above all you should understand that there can never be peace between nations until there is known that true peace, which, as I have often said, is within the souls of men."

Greta



Thinking About Race (January 2025)

Nikki Giovanni June 7, 1943 – December 9, 2024 -- Nikki Giovanni is called a poet of black joy, but she knew how to name rage as well which she did as part of the Black Power and Black Arts Movements of the 1960s.

She was born in Ohio, raised mostly in Tennessee, educated at Fisk and Columbia and taught at Virginia Tech for 35 years where she was Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the time of her death. Many VT students attest to how Nikki Giovanni changed their lives and helped them see and live more deeply. No stranger to challenge, she knew how to summon others to courage:

“Embrace the change, no matter what it is; once you do you can learn about the new world you’re in and take advantage of it. Mistakes are a part of life. It is the response to the error that counts.”

Two of her most beloved poems:

Knoxville, Tennessee

I always like summer
 best
 you can eat fresh corn
 from daddy's garden
 and okra
 and greens
 and cabbage
 and lots of
 barbecue
 and buttermilk
 and homemade ice-cream
 at the church picnic

and listen to
 gospel music
 outside
 at the church
 homecoming
 and you go to the mountains
 with your grandmother
 and go barefooted
 and be warm
 all the time
 not only when you go to bed
 and sleep

Legacies

her grandmother called her from the playground
 “yes, ma’am”
 “i want chu to learn how to make rolls” said the
 old woman proudly
 but the little girl didn’t want
 to learn how because she knew
 even if she couldn’t say it that
 that would mean when the old one died she would be
 less
 dependent on her spirit so
 she said
 “i don’t want to know how to make no rolls”
 with her lips poked out
 and the old woman wiped her hands on
 her apron saying “lord
 these children”
 and neither of them ever
 said what they meant
 and i guess nobody ever does