



Welcome to the **April 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.

APRIL FORUM – Spirit and Nature: What does it mean for us to be good stewards of the earth? April 20th 2025, 11:30am-1:00pm

We have received a proposed revision from the Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) Committee on Faith and Practice (F&P)** of a section related to environmental concerns. At this forum we will consider this proposed section in an effort to give requested feedback to the committee. It will be a good opportunity for us to consider our commitment to being good stewards of the earth.

** Like many Yearly Meetings, BYM's F&P articulates common understandings of our faith and how we practice it. For the past several years this committee has been revising sections and seeking feedback from the BYM Community before presenting final drafts at YM sessions for approval. Section by section BYM is building toward a completed F&P which acts, not as a discipline or rule book, but a guide as to where Quakers in our region stand on various concerns.

The Ministry and Worship committee would like to hear from you about your hopes and dreams for adult education -- what would you like to do together?

Please contact Dave Fitz, Rebecca Richards, Lisa Sutton, Janet Abrams or Jo Brown with your ideas.

APRIL REQUESTS For The North County Food Pantry

PASTA!! -- Dry boxed pasta, pasta sauce, kids canned pasta, mac & cheese please.

From NOMINATING COMMITTEE

"We don't get together to do the work; we do the work so we can get together." --Charlie Davis

There are lots of ways to serve our Meeting, and many Friends find that participation in the work of the Meeting is enriching for the individual as well as for the community. And some would say that building and supporting our Meeting right now is one way we can make the world a better place. Are you wondering how your leadings, skills, and experience might match the Meeting's needs? We invite you to speak with any member of Nominating Committee to explore opportunities and to find your niche.

Wendy Balder, Tina Beneman, Ruth Fitz, Marilyn Rothstein, and LouAnne Smith

SPIRITUAL FORMATION recently read portions of *Quaker Strongholds* by British Friend Caroline Stephen (1834-1909).

Here is an excerpt from Chapter VI "Our Calling" (paragraph 186):

"In our days faith is challenged at every point and at every turn, with a freedom and a violence which was unknown fifty years ago. All that can be shaken is being shaken, to its very foundations. My own firm belief is that, though full of danger, this is on the whole a natural, a necessary, and, in the main, a beneficial process. Throw a large load of fuel on a clear fire, and for a time it may seem doubtful whether it is not extinguished; but if the flame be strong enough, it will rise again through the smoke and dust, and burn the stronger for what it has mastered. And so assuredly will faith in whatever is truly eternal rise above all present confusions and darkenings of counsel, and burn with fresh power in those hearts which have steadfastly cleaved to truth, be its requirements what they may."

The full text of *Quaker Strongholds* (1890) is available

at <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/61802/pg61802-images.html#c3>

THIRD Zoom Social

The Care and Oversight Committee will be hosting an informal zoom social with Anne and Bob Heaton on **Tuesday, April 8, at 4 pm**. Please contact Karen O'Mara karenschomara@gmail.com if you wish to participate.

SPRING WORK DAY at the Meetinghouse: **Saturday, April 26th**

Our annual spring house-cleaning day will be on Saturday, April 26 10:00am-2:00pm. We welcome friends to help give our spiritual home a springtime freshening! We also will be doing outside work with mulch, plantings, yard stuff...Pizza and ambient music shall be provided. Email or talk to Harry for questions/details.

LETTER OF SUPPORT sent on behalf of Gunpowder Friends Meeting, by email and US Post

Dear Reverend Budde,

A beloved chant that often arises for us in times of worship and fellowship invites us to feel the beauty and power of the words of Micah 6:8: What does the Lord require of thee? To seek justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.

When we heard your sermon during the prayer service for the inauguration of the current president, we resonated deeply with your invitation for us to be human together, to seek unity, and to practice the humility that will allow us to listen deeply and find ways to work together to achieve the deepest aspirations of our country.

We write today to let you know that we stand in unity with you in your encouragement to the president that he act with mercy toward those who are marginalized and fearful. So few have yet found the courage to call the president to this level of care for our neighbors and all who live within our nation. That this encouragement came from the core of your faith and was heard by a national and international audience allowed it to resonate from heart to heart, and we hope to soften and change those hardened to its wisdom. May it continue to be so.

In love and in peace,

Gunpowder Friends Meeting

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.

Healing

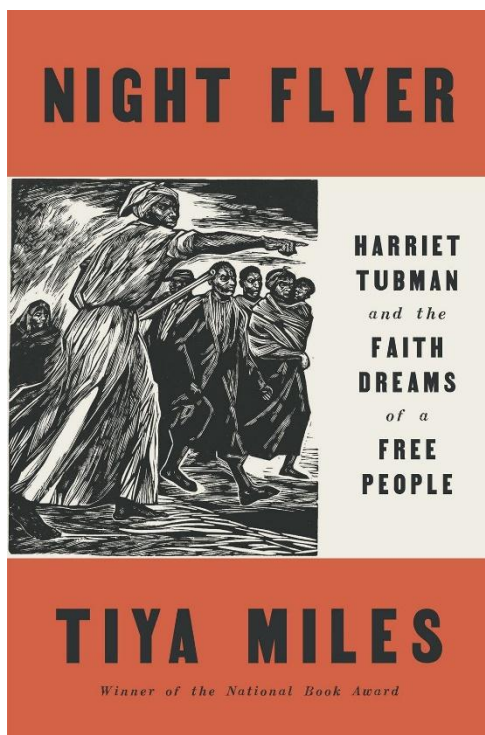
Over the last several weeks, my physical body has been healing from knee replacement surgery. Simultaneously, I have witnessed the immense pain that is taking place in our country and around the world. The healing of the physical body happens, almost unbidden, but the healing and opening of our hearts and souls and minds requires a great deal more. In my understanding, that healing requires a deep openness and invitation to the work of Spirit. It is the work of Spirit in our lives that stirs our very beings and opens us to an understanding of what God would have us do. It brings us to a place of ever deepening Faith.

Early Friends faith; their deep and abiding relationship with God, carried them through times when they were afraid and lifted them up on wings of courage. Is our faith so different from that of early Friends? They believed, as we do, that God would teach them directly. They listened for that teaching, tested

CLERK'S MUSINGS, *continued*

what they believed they heard with trusted Friends, and acted on it. They stood before magistrates, hats on, and spoke their Truth to power, knowing that they might well end up in jail for extended periods of time. How does our faith inform our actions? How does our fear inform our actions? What is God calling us to do?

Greta Kirk Mickey



Harriet Tubman and the Faith Dreams of a Free People by Tia Miles

"It seems as if I heard my God rustling in the tops of mulberry trees."-
Zilpha Elaw

With daily assaults on people of every stripe, I am heartened by the recent testimony of a Friend. As we sat in our stone Meeting room this past January, she reflected on how frightened and demoralized the Quakers must have felt in 1850 with the introduction of the Fugitive Slave Act. This act empowered federal agents to enforce the law and also empowered the notion that all people of African descent were presumed to be slaves, unless proven otherwise. Not only could runaway slaves be captured and returned to bondage, but those aiding and abetting them now faced fines, imprisonment, and possibly charges of treason.

Her comment reignited my wondering - how did enslaved people, as well as latter day Quakers find the bravery, the strength to live their convictions? Ever since I was a little girl, I've pondered this question. Harriet Tubman was (and still is) my greatest hero. I've often asked myself, if I were there, if I were in her shoes, could I have been as

brave as she? How did she do it? Tia Miles, in her latest book, *Harriet Tubman and the Faith Dreams of a Free People*, provides a glimpse of the source of Harriet's strength- a deep, personal relationship with Spirit and Nature.

In the book, Miles asserts that Araminta (Harriet) was a mystic who existed within an "ecosystem" of other female mystics during one of the darkest periods of our country's history. Their ministries often emerged in, and became interwoven with, Nature. We learn of Harriet's predecessors and her contemporaries - women such as Jarena Lee, Old Elizabeth, Zilpha Elaw, Julia A.J. Foote - all for whom God was a living companion. From the writings of these women, and those of Harriet herself, a deeper understanding of their spiritual landscape emerges. Like other African American women prophetesses of her time, Harriet had an intimate connection to Nature, which nourished her, provided cover, and gave a sense of constancy and containment. The circumstances of her life called her to take a stand, but her faith gave her the energy to walk it through.

The book is timely for obvious reasons. It is not just a biography, but also provides inspiration when many of us are searching for clarity and questioning our own potency. For me, it is a reminder of the power of a sustained personal relationship with Spirit and Nature, and of the ongoing gifts of my own ecosystem, which includes the abiding presence and testimony of Gunpowder Friends.

Carin Kirikos

