

The Herndon Light



12th Month 11, 2016 A Newsletter of Herndon Friends Meeting - Quakers - Reston & Herndon Virginia 240

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| 12/17 | Christmas Sing 6 pm for Sweet and Savory Finger Food Potluck, followed by music |
| 12/18 | Fauquier Friends Worship Group Singing at 10:30; Worship/First Day school 11:00 |
| 12/24 | Christmas Eve Potluck and Meeting for Worship Contact Lynn Nagle for information |
| 12/25 | Meeting for Worship at 10:30 AM; no First Day School |
| 1/15 | Fauquier Friends Worship Group Singing at 10:30; Worship/First Day school 11:00 |
| 1/22 | Adult Discussion Session 9:00 AM "The Vocal Ministry" facilitated by Harry Tunis |
| 1/27-29 | BYM Women's Retreat at the Pearlstone Conference Center in Reistertown, Maryland |
| 2/19 | Fauquier Friends Worship Group Singing at 10:30; Worship/First Day school 11:00 |

Query: The Vocal Ministry

How do I discern when to speak and when not to speak, both in Meeting and elsewhere?

How do we encourage Friends to allow ample time to absorb the previous message before speaking?

How do I practice listening to the Truth which may be revealed by others?

Advices

Once Meeting begins, take time to enter fully into the spirit of worship. Gently offer up distractions as you center down and open yourself to the workings of the Spirit. Come to Meeting with neither a resolve to speak, nor a determination not to speak, but rather with an attitude of expectant waiting and openness.

If you feel moved to speak, take a moment to test your leading. Is your message from the Spirit, or somewhere else? If it is from God, is it meant only for yourself, or for the entire Meeting? Genuine ministry is often preceded

Herndon Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends holds Meeting for Worship at 660 Spring Street in Herndon each First Day (Sunday). Hymn singing begins at 10:15 am. An unprogrammed Meeting for Worship begins at 10:30 am and lasts about one hour. After worshipping with adults for 10-15 minutes, children and teenagers attend First Day School classes until the end of Meeting for Worship. The building is wheelchair accessible. For more information call the Meeting's telephone answering machine at 703-736-0592. The Newsletter Editor is Terence McCormally. Notices for the Newsletter can be sent to him at 2514 Trophy Lane, Reston, VA 20191 E-mail tmccormally@ffpcs.com. Newsletter assembled addressed and mailed by Meg Wallace **WEBSITE AT** www.herndonfriends.org.

The Care Coordinating Committee is available for Friends in need. If you need assistance because of an illness or other emergency, contact Abbey Compton, Clerk, at abbey.compton@verizon.net; or Priscilla Chamlee at dandpchamlee@gmail.com; or Fred Cresson at cresson4@verizon.net, or Stacey LaRoy at staceybear@laroyfamily.com or Margaret Rogers at margaret.anne.rogers1@gmail.com

by a physical uneasiness, a "heart pounding weakness," from which our name Quaker is derived. Remember that silence is not just the space between messages, but a deep and living communion with the "Spirit which gives life." Your silent prayer and openness to God are themselves a form of ministry that enriches the Meeting community. Allow adequate time between spoken messages, so that all may listen to God and truly hear the previous message.

Meeting For Business 12/11/16

Clerk Cat Wilkins gathered 27 Friends for Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business at 9:00 AM with a reading of the query and advices on the vocal ministry. Friends responded out of the silence.

It is an awesome responsibility to realize you are the conduit of God's message.

Speaking is important but I have also learned of the power of undistracted listening.

Sometimes, my clue to speak is when I don't want to.

Finance Committee: Amy Shinkman reported for the Finance committee that, as per the meeting minute of 11th Month 13, 57 letters were sent to the homes of Herndon Friends apprising them of the state of HFM finances and soliciting contributions. As of today, the treasurer reports we still have a \$17,000 shortfall in contributions. Although contributions have usually outpaced expenditure, this is the first year in which budgeted contributions have not been realized. The Finance Committee has decided not to present a 2017 budget until after the year's end in order to have a complete picture of contributions to inform next year's budget.

Peace Awards: Margaret Rogers presented an update on the 2017 Peace Awards project. So far this year, only 12 Fairfax County Schools have nominated students to receive a Peace Award, down about in half from last year. Margaret speculated this could be due to election fatigue, but more likely comes from the number of schools who have new people in the guidance office who are unfamiliar with the Peace Award Process. The Peace Awards Committee has decided to extend the deadline for nominees for one week to allow additional schools to participate.

Nominating Committee: Harry Tunis reported for the nominating committee which included Paul Murphy and Kim Glazer. The report, which is included in the Newsletter, was approved with minor modifications.

Peace and Social Concerns:

Tim Stanley reported for P&SC. Louisa Davis had requested support for her participation in Interfaith Partners for Justice, an organization of 10 Northern Virginia faith groups working on criminal justice issues. IPJ is working to improve transparency and auditing of Fairfax County Police actions, and to promote programs to ease reentry of people released from prison.

Friends united with a minute read by Tim:

We as Herndon Friends Meeting support the values of Interfaith Partners for Justice

and encourage this group as it grows and evolves.

The meeting approves the appointment of Louisa Davis as the HFM liaison to the Interfaith Partners for Justice.

Ministry and Oversight: Fred Cresson presented the report of the Ministry and Oversight Committee.

Harry Tunis will lead the next Adult Discussion session on First Month 22nd. The topic will be "The Vocal Ministry

Christmas observances: The Meeting will sponsor the annual Christmas Sing on Saturday 12/17 at the meeting house. Friends are invited to share a "Sweet and Savory" finger food potluck at 6 pm, followed by a musical program. Stacey Laroy is organizing the singing; Friends who want to play an instrument for accompaniment or solo should contact Stacey.

Lynn Nagle is organizing a Christmas Eve potluck and meeting for worship at the meetinghouse at 6:00 pm.

FUM Statement on Personal Ethics

Fred Cresson presented a first reading of a minute designed to address HFM's relationship to Friends United Meeting. (A little background gleaned from Wikipeda and Chuck Fager: FUM is the largest single organization of Quakers. It arose in 1963 from a predecessor group called Five Years Meeting, which in turn came about because of the Richmond Declaration. In 1887, Richmond, Indiana was the site of a meeting of Orthodox Gurneyite Quakers who were seeking a more Bible centered church. The Declaration stated that the Bible is a more important source of spiritual teaching than the inner light. One section states:

"It has ever been, and still is, the belief of the Society of Friends that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God; that, therefore, there can be no appeal from them to any other authority whatsoever; that they are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ."

The Declaration was accepted by most Orthodox Gurneyite yearly meetings (including Baltimore Yearly Meeting but not Philadelphia Yearly Meeting) and included in their Books of

Discipline. By this time (actually, in 1828) Baltimore Yearly Meeting had already split into Gurneyite Orthodox (Bible predominant) and Wilburite (inner light predominant), but even the orthodox BYM meetings were mainly unprogrammed silent meetings. The two branches of Baltimore Yearly Meeting eventually came back together—but not until 1968. As part of that coming back together, BYM participates in both Friends General Conference and Friends United Meeting.) One expression of the more evangelical and fundamentalist nature of the Orthodox FUM culture is the establishment of extensive missions in Africa, which now has the most Quakers in the world. Another aspect are the persistent beliefs that the Bible teaches that homosexuality is sinful and that the Bible is the ultimate source for such determination. Those beliefs are expressed in FUM's "Statement on Personal Ethics" which outlines expectations for employees of FUM including the position that all "intimate sexual behavior should be confined to traditional marriage, understood to be between one man and one woman." BYM has been working on this issue for many year trying to reconcile FUMs employment policy with BYM's understanding of the equality testimony. The Ministry and Oversight Committee received a copy of Sandy Springs December 2014 minute addressing this issue which was forwarded to all BYM Monthly Meetings. M&O considered the minute in light of the financial support (\$200 a year) that Herndon Friends Meeting send to FUM and drafted a proposed minute:

***Herndon Friends Meeting
Draft Minute about Friends United Meeting
Policy on Personal Ethics***

Quakers have a long history of belief that there is that of God in every person. Herndon Friends Meeting supports this belief and recognizes that we are all seekers of God's truth. In support of the Quaker testimony of Equality, Herndon Friends Meeting believes in equal rights for everyone. We wish to testify to the rights of all to live out freely and openly their differences in sexual orientation or gender identity.

We recognize that Friends place great importance on the Bible as testimony of God's presence and guidance in our lives as well as

on our own direct experience of Divine leadings. It is our sense that all loving and respectful relationships are to be honored as expressions of Jesus' commandment that we love one another. We believe that our mutual acceptance and cherishing of the various forms of commitment to loving intimacy honors this commandment. It is our sense also that doing this is an expression of Friends' commitment to be bringers of peace.

We agree with Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting's recent minute about the Friends United Meeting Policy on Personal Ethics. They state in their minute, "Sandy Spring Meeting accepts and welcomes people into fellowship regardless of sexual orientation or marital status. Our only concern regarding these matters is that our intimate relationships be respectful, committed and loving."

In their Policy on Personal Ethics, Friends United Meeting "affirms the civil rights of all people, and that staff and volunteer appointments and promotions are made without regard to sex, race, national origin, age, physical disability or sexual orientation." But FUM further states, "It is expected however that intimate sexual behavior should be confined to traditional marriage, understood to be between one man and one woman." This policy continues to be in effect for Friends United Meeting.

Herndon Friends Meeting believes that it would not be in keeping with our Quaker beliefs and testimonies to exclude those whose definition of a loving, intimate and sexual relationship is different from that of "traditional marriage, understood to be between one man and one woman." In the past, we have provided financial support to FUM. But this financial support is, in effect, supporting FUM's exclusionary and discriminatory policy. We will continue to hold FUM in the Light, but while this policy remains in effect, Herndon Friends Meeting will not provide FUM with financial support.

The clerk asked for a period of silence to consider the minute, out of which Friends responded.

John Smallwood, who served on the FUM board for three years as a representative to BYM, reported that FUM has struggled seriously with the policy and the issue of homosexuality. He thinks the impasse in getting FUM to liberalize their employment policy arises for three reasons: Orthodox friends are Biblical when they try to discern ethical behavior and an appeal to other sources is unconvincing; liberal east coast Friends are out of touch with Midwestern orthodox Friends who are not comfortable with gay rights; half of FUM is African, largely in Kenya, and there is strong cultural and legal distaste for homosexuality in that culture. One reason for the FUM policy is to avoid sending homosexual FUM employees to areas where they may be subject to legal and physical danger.

Friends questioned the utility and purpose of a minute to this issue. It was recognized that threatening to cut off funds would not likely change the behavior of FUM. Margaret Fisher asked if we would suggest that the vegetarians in meeting not contribute to the meeting because we don't prohibit meat at potluck. Margaret Rogers pointed out that we will never in any of our relationships have complete agreement, and this does not prohibit us from working together on things we agree on. Paul Murphy noted that a continuing financial relationship may open the door to further engagement and influence.

Kim Glazer commented that it was important to take a stand and point out unjust behavior and Liz Wilson echoed that as a matter of integrity we should assure that we make it clear what kind of behavior we find is not acceptable.

Herndon Friends recognize the good work FUM does in relief and health care in Africa, but the fundamental mission of FUM is to evangelize. Their mission statement is "to extend the Body of Christ and to energize and equip the Religious Society of Friends to gather people into Christian fellowships." This may not be a mission we share.

Clerk Cat Wilkins closed the discussion with gratitude for those who contributed and a

plan for Ministry and Oversight to sponsor a discussion session on the issue. No action was taken on the minute at this time.

Accomplishment of Marriage

David Vedova and Annapurna Das

Stacey Laroy reported on the wedding of David Vedova and Annapurna Das

"David Andrew Vedova and Annapurna Das were married at the Clarion Hotel in Leesburg Virginia, at 4 p.m. on Friday, November 25, 2016, under the care of Herndon Friends Meeting. The Oversight Committee consisted of Stacey LaRoy, Debbie McCormick, Cathy Tunis, and Harry Tunis.

The first portion of the ceremony was a Meeting for Worship for the purpose of marriage. Harry described the order of events and expectations to the approximately 100 guests. Both sets of parents were present, Dave's parents coming from Sandy Spring Friends House and Anu's from New Delhi, India. Dave's sons, Daniel and Patrick, escorted Anu's daughters, Shivani and Priya. Dave's father, Harold Vedova, read the wedding certificate. Several guests spoke out of the silence, many from Aldrin Elementary School, where the couple both work as special education assistants. Anu wore traditional Indian clothing.

Upon the completion of the Meeting for Worship, the couple participated in four Hindu rituals:

Varmala - the exchange of garlands by the bride and groom. The garland consists of flowers and thread. Though the flowers lose their beauty and charm with time, the thread endures and never leaves the garland, just as the married couple vows never to leave each other.

Sindoor Dann - the 5,000 year old Hindu tradition of wearing sindoor or vermilion. Sindoor, a red mixture of turmeric and lime, is applied by the groom to the bride's forehead.

Akshat - the showering of the bride and groom with rose petals by each guest. This ceremony is a symbol of prosperity and longevity.

Parnama - the taking of blessings from Elders by touching their feet. This is considered a form of respectful salutation before Elders, teachers and deities. It is said that when a person bows down that they let go of their ego and become more humble in this act. When an Elder touches your head they bless you with long life, fortune and wisdom. The bride and groom performed this ceremony with their parents, elder siblings, and finally, with Harry and Cathy Tunis, a first for them.

Debbie McCormick supervised the signing of the wedding certificate as everyone filed out of the room. The wedding was followed by a reception, a series of toasts, then an Indian buffet dinner and dancing.

Women's Retreat January 27-29

Registration is now open for the 2017 Baltimore Yearly Meeting Women's Retreat January 27 through 29 at the Pearlstone Conference Center in Reisterstown, MD. If you're interested, register early as the conference sold out last year with a long waiting list at the end.

Unspoken Messages

How to Change Minds

During the discussion at Meeting for Business on Friends United Meeting's Personal Ethics policy (that sets an expectation that sexual behavior should be confined to "traditional marriage understood to be between one man and one woman") Friends questioned the wisdom and utility of withholding funds from an organization or writing a minute of disapproval as a way to change minds. How can you change someone's mind?

As an example of a mind changer look to John Woolman. Confronted with hundreds of Quaker slave owners who believed that slavery was consistent with Quaker testimonies, he visited them one by one, asking the question, "Are there any concerned with the importation and trade in the sale of negroes," and responding to the claims that the slaves were better off than in the wars in their own countries by pressing again, "If compassion for the Africans, on account of their domestic troubles, was the real motive of our purchasing them, that spirit of tenderness

being attended to, would incite us to use them kindly that, as strangers brought out of affliction, their lives might be happy among us. (John Woolman's Journal 1757). After years of toil Quakers in the colonies abandoned slavery.

Patience, understanding, and gentle queries can help open a mind but can never change them; only the Spirit can do that. In discussing the tension between orthodox (evangelical) Friends and Hicksite Friends, Howard Brinton writes in "Friends for 350 Years:"

"This illustrates a fundamental difference between the new evangelist and the older Quaker preacher. For the evangelist, the religious service was focused on himself; for the older type of minister the sermon arose out of the united life of the meeting. The evangelist kept careful count of the number of conversions he made. The older Friends did not pretend to know what changes the spirit might be secretly making in the hearts of their hearers."

--Terence McCormally

Last Minute Christmas Gifts

The most recent edition of Friends Journal offers reviews of children's books that might be good gifts for children or grandchildren.

The Goodbye Book by Todd Parr is a picture book for 2 to 5 year olds that talks about loss and loneliness.

Where's the Elephant? By Barroux Is a picture book for 3 to 7 year olds that combines a picture search with a message about shrinking habitat.

For the 4 to 8 year old set, **Bloom** by Doreen Cronin is a read aloud story of a "mud fairy" who is an underappreciated girl who helps her people see the value of getting your hands dirty, and **Ada's Violin** by Susan Hood tells the true life story of an orchestra created by the residents of a garbage dump in Paraguay

Brief Reports:

Research in positive psychology shows that people who cultivate an attitude of gratitude increase their personal happiness and their effectiveness. One technique to becoming more grateful is to consciously focus on the good things that happen in your life and to every day write down three things that you appreciate that day. If you do that for three or four weeks, it makes you focus on the positive, and that increases your happiness. So here are my three for the day:

I was so grateful for the clear, strong voice of our clerk while she was reading the query and advices at meeting for business. She reads like a pro, making it less of a struggle for my failing ears, and more about concentrating on the meaning of the reading.

I appreciate Margaret Rogers setting up the hospitality refreshments –even on her own birthday.

I am thankful Lynn Nagle did a perfect job getting exactly the right supplies for making sandwiches (and to Judith Fox and Kim Glazer for putting them all in bags)

Herndon Friends Meeting
660 Spring Street
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