

THE INTERCHANGE

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends



Annual Session Special Edition

Pg. 5
Workshops

Pg. 11
Info for
Families

Pg. 13
Registration

Pg. 20
Community
News

Living in Harmony with the Earth and Each Other

Friends of all ages will gather as a Yearly Meeting for the 354th Annual Session of Baltimore Yearly Meeting from **July 28 - August 2, 2026** at Hood College in Frederick, MD. Whether this is your 50th Annual Session or your 1st, you are wanted and welcome. In this Special Edition of the Interchange, you'll learn all about Annual Session - from how to register to when you can attend your favorite workshop and everything in-between.

Throughout our 2026 Annual Session, together we'll explore the theme: *Living in Harmony with the Earth and Each Other*.

*"The world is God's creation.
How we treat the Earth, and all its creatures
is basic to our relationship with God,
and of fundamental religious concern
to the Society of Friends."*

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1998

We are all members of creation. From the tiniest microbe to the giant whale and the wisest human being, we are part of an intricate and marvelous web of life. Every person in the world is kin to us, regardless of the guise they wear. Every insect and plant and animal is a distant cousin. Imagine the music we could make if we all sang in harmony.

**How might we learn to see all living things in relation to each other?
How might we learn to tread more lightly on the earth?
How might we learn to be more tender toward each other?**

For further reflection on this year's theme, check out the full theme statement online or consider BYM Faith & Practice, *Section 20: How do we live our faith in care of the Earth?* (2025 Edition, pg. 50).

We cannot wait to see you in Frederick! If you have any questions about the ins-and-outs of Annual Session, please contact the Annual Session Program Committee at Program@bym-rsf.org or call the office at 301-774-7663.

Register Online at www.bym-rsf.org/annualsession.html

Registration is open NOW through July 11th. If you need assistance to complete your registration, you can call Lucy at the BYM Office at 301-658-6797 or email admin@bym-rsf.org.

Pre-Session Retreat

An Ecology of Quaker Practice to Live in Harmony with Each Other with Nadine Hoover

Monday, July 27, 2:30pm - 5:00pm, 7:00pm - 9:00pm
Tuesday, July 28, 9:00am - 12:00pm

Nadine Hoover of Niagara River Meeting in New York is a life-long Quaker, Alternatives to Violence Project facilitator since 1978, and conscientious objector to war. She is active with Friends Peace Teams and a founder of the Asia West Pacific Regional Team. Nadine authored Walking in the World as a Friend: Essential Quaker Practices with Quaker Religious Education Collaborative and Creating Cultures of Peace: a Movement of Love and Conscience, and edited The Power of Goodness: Art and Stories for a Culture of Peace and Justice (2nd Edition). She is a graduate of George School and Friends World College, former Secretary of Southeastern Yearly Meeting, and former Friends General Conference Bookstore Manager.



Please note:

Friends are encouraged to attend the entire retreat - which begins on Monday at 2:30pm and continues through Tuesday at Noon. The 2026 Retreat will be in-person only.



Speakers at Annual Session

Opening Plenary: Evan Welkin Tuesday, July 28, 7:30pm

Evan Welkin is a member of Olympia (Wash.) Meeting of North Pacific Yearly Meeting. While living in Italy, he joined the staff of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), Europe and Middle East Section and the FWCC World Office, facilitating the Global Quaker Sustainability Network. In July 2024, he was appointed executive secretary of the FWCC Section of the Americas.

2026 Carey Lecture: Valerie Brown Saturday, Aug 1, 7:30pm

Valerie Brown is an author, Buddhist-Quaker Dharma teacher, facilitator, and executive coach, specializing in leadership development and mindfulness practices, with a focus on diversity, social equity, and inclusion. A former lawyer and lobbyist, Valerie transformed her high-pressure, twenty-year career into serving leaders and nonprofits to create trustworthy, authentic, and compassionate workspaces. Valerie is the author of several books, including [Hope Leans Forward](#) (2022) and [Healing Our Way Home: Black Buddhist Teaching on Ancestors, Joy, and Liberation](#) (2024).



Annual Session Workshops At A Glance

Thursday, July 30, 2:00pm - 4:00pm

- T1 Our Faith and Practice on Living in Harmony with All
- T2 Spirit Overcoming Prejudice: Ending Cycles of Oppression, Part 1
- T3 Practicing Resilient Cooperation through Group Culture
- T4 Letter Writing Advocacy with FCNL
- T5 [Hybrid] Behind the Silent Curtain: What happens in Meeting for Worship?
- T6 [Hybrid] Our Planet in Poems
- T7 [Hybrid] Youth Safety: Cultivating Communities of Care
- T8 Digital Safety 101
- T9 [Hybrid] Seeking Harmony with the Earth
- T10 To Heal and Repair the World: Tapping the Power of Nonviolent Action Campaigns
- T11 Join the Contradance Tune Jam! Varied Instruments and Skill Levels

Friday, July 31, 2:00pm - 4:00pm

- F1 Training for Process Observation
- F2 Spirit Overcoming Prejudice: Ending Cycle of Oppression, Part 2
- F3 Community Regeneration in Response to Climate Emergency
- F4 [Hybrid] Native vs Invasive Plants
- F5 Field Trip: Reed Center
- F6 Immigration Concerns and Friendly Action
- F7 Anam Cara: The Art and Discipline of Spiritual Direction
- F8 [Hybrid] St Hildegards Viriditas and The Greening of Life and Spirit
- F9 Quaker Mysticism and its Relevance in Today's World
- F10 A New Abolition Movement: How Quakers are Working with Others to End Israeli Apartheid
- F11 The Spirit of Clerking: Inclusive & Inspired Community Building

Saturday, August 1, 2:00pm - 4:00pm

- S1 Walking in the World as a Friend
- S2 [Hybrid] The Way: A Contemplative Walk
- S3 Earth Care Witness: Exploring the Panorama
- S4 Sanctuary and Civil Initiative
- S5 [Hybrid] 339 Manumissions and Beyond: A Reparative Project
- S6 Transforming Conflict to Create Harmony
- S7 [Hybrid] Drawing on Quaker Roots: Investing Now for a Climate-Just Future
- S8 Meeting the Moment: Anti-Authoritarian Organizing at AFSC
- S9 Taboo Topics
- S10 Knitting for Worship
- S11 Neurographic Art as a Meditative Tool

Annual Session Workshops In Detail

THURSDAY

T1 Our Faith and Practice on Living in Harmony with All

To assist us in the next revision of Faith and Practice, we will invite our participants to consider what we can say about prejudice, discrimination, and treasuring diversity. We will describe our invitation, share resources, review our process, and then hold a listening session to model what we suggest.

Karen Cunnygham (Annapolis) and Ken Stockbridge (Patapsco).

Sponsored by BYM Faith & Practice Committee.

T2 Spirit Overcoming Prejudice: Ending Cycle of Oppression, Part 1

Part 1: In this interactive workshop, we will share in small groups how we experience and rely on Spirit in ways that overcome prejudice (Labels), reveal community dynamics (Sun & Umbrella), and consider simple practices to challenge and uproot prejudice among us. This workshop is best experienced in combination with Part 2 given Friday.

Nadine Hoover (Niagara River Meeting NY) is an AVP facilitator since 1978.

She works with Friends Peace Teams to train workers for justice and peace worldwide.

T3 Practicing Resilient Cooperation through Group Culture

Why is it so hard to work together sometimes? In this lab, participants and facilitators will practice fundamental group culture elements and discover how they help our groups cooperate more effectively.

Ryan McAllister (Maitri House) and Mikayla Lytton (Adelphi Friends Meeting)

T4 Letter Writing Advocacy with FCNL

Join FCNL for letter-writing advocacy for peace. FCNL will provide its policy expertise on our legislative priorities of ending the war with Iran and sending aid, not arms, to Israel and Palestine. We will be collecting letters from Quaker meetings around the country to deliver them to Congress.

Olivia Delaplaine is the Advocacy Coordinator at the FCNL and works with Friends around the country to organize for peace and justice.

T5 Behind the Silent Curtain- What Happens in Meeting for Worship

In every meeting for worship, Quakers enter into silence for an hour, sometimes without verbal messages. What happens in the minds and hearts of Friends during this time? Courageous Friends share how they spend their time in silence. How does this experience affect how we experience knowing and being known by Quakers.

Jim Citro (Patapsco). Sponsored by BYM Advancement & Outreach.

T6 [Hybrid] Our Planet in Poems

Our Earth is many things, and none of them are easy to put into words. Yet, many poets attempt to do just that. We will explore how poetry can be used to connect to nature, Earth, and all their denizens. This is the second annual Young Friends poetry workshop.

Leigh Phelps (Sandy Spring) is a Young Friend with a long term interest in literature and how it can be used to understand the world.

T7 [Hybrid] Youth Safety: Cultivating Communities of Care!

Living in harmony with each other requires acknowledging difficult truths, such as 1 of 4 children will be sexually abused. We have a profound responsibility to ensure that our youth are safe at every level of our Quaker

communities. Join with those who share a concern for youth safety. We will review the current BYM Youth Safety Policy (2026), share best practices, and discuss your Meeting's questions and concerns.

Stephanie Bean (Presiding Clerk of BYM) and Justin Connor (FMW). Sponsored by the BYM Trustees.

T8 Digital Safety 101

Learn practical, user-friendly ways to stay safe in our interconnected digital ecosystem! Quakers understand the importance of digital communications but don't know where to start. Historically, Quakers use discretion to defy injustice and ensure safety, especially for those most vulnerable to injustice. We apply these same principles to our digital spaces, seeking simplicity. Bring your devices!

Betsy Bramon (FMW) has helped activist organizations be safe online for over 15 years

T9 [Hybrid] Seeking Harmony with the Earth

In this workshop we will explore the tenets of the Honorable Harvest, for guidance as we seek to heal our relationship with the natural world. Described in Robin Kimmerer's book *The Serviceberry*, these guidelines have been followed by indigenous peoples to ensure an "Honorable Harvest. The guidelines emphasize such things as gratitude, reciprocity, and taking no more than you need.

Deborah Haines (Alexandria) is the co-clerk of the BYM Unity with Nature Committee and has a longstanding interest in indigenous cultures,

T10 To Heal and Repair the World: Tapping the Power of Nonviolent Action Campaigns

Want to join with your neighbors in collective action to achieve greater peace, justice, and sustainability in the world? In this workshop, we explore past successful campaigns to learn strategic planning tools that can build more effective campaigns. The workshop will include presentations, discussions, group exercises, and resources for further learning. We will also use AFSC's Apartheid-Free Communities movement as a case study.

Steve Chase (FMW) has been active in areas of Justice and Concern for many years.

T11 Join the Contradance Tune Jam! Varied Instruments and Skill Levels

This workshop will be a time for musicians of our Yearly Meeting to gather to choose and practice tunes for our Friday night All Ages contra dance! Contradance is a centuries-old form of community dance with live musicians. The contradance music repertoire is drawn from American Old-Time, Celtic, and Quebecois songs, played on string, wind, percussion instruments, and piano. All instruments are welcome, and there are roles for musicians of varying skill levels.

Virginia Avanesyan (FMW) is a teacher in Montgomery County, Maryland, who spent many years as a song leader in youth camps, and who rediscovered fiddle playing through contradance music.

FRIDAY

F1 Training for Process Observation

Building on knowledge in the PH Pamphlet, *Patterns of Racial Wounding and Justice*, this workshop offers training on how to observe and process in our Quaker Worship communities so we can create loving and liberatory practices. (Reading of pamphlet is not necessary before workshop. Co-written by leader, it will be sold in the bookstore.)

Lauren Brownlee (Bethesda) is the Deputy Director of FCNL. Sponsored by BYM Working Groups on Racism and Reparation.

F2 Spirit Overcoming Prejudice: Ending Cycle of Oppression, Part 2

In companion groups, we will share how we experience Spirit when we fail or fall short in ways that overcome privilege, then explore in pairs and small groups simple understandings and practices that challenge and uproot privilege and strengthen the beloved community among us. This interactive workshop is best experienced in combination with first part, presented yesterday,

Nadine Hoover (Niagara River Meeting NY) is an AVP facilitator since 1978. She works with Friends Peace Teams to train workers for justice and peace worldwide.

F3 Community Regeneration in Response to Climate Emergency

As a climate migrant and Executive Secretary of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas, Evan Welkin will explore personal and structure approaches we can take towards climate justice as Friends. This workshop will combine practical examples and workshopping with global examples of Quaker climate organizing.

Evan Welkin (North Pacific Yearly Meeting) is a Quaker organizer, ecovillage cofounder and international executive.

F4 [Hybrid] Native and Invasive Plants

We'll cover basic landscaping practices that support the local ecosystem, with special attention to the plants, then spend a little time outdoors spotting native and invasive plants around Hood College.

Margaret Fisher (Herndon). Sponsored by the Herndon Meeting Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management

F5 Field trip to Reed Center for Ecosystem Integration

Reed Center, in Middletown MD, Frederick County, seeks to repair the holistic connection of humans and their environment in multiple ways, including developing self-perpetuating ecosystems and designing natural landscapes. We will have a chance to visit, explore, and ask questions.

Beb Friton is the Director of the Reed Center. Sponsored by BYM Unity with Nature

F6 Immigration Concerns and Friendly Action

Wars abroad and mass deportation policies at home are making many of us question whether our human family can learn to be more tender toward each other, our non-human cohabitants, and the Earth itself. We must find the love, strength, and wisdom to sing together in harmony.

Erinn (Sandy Spring) is a policy professional, immigrant justice advocate, educator, and Friend

F7 Anam Cara: The Art and Discipline of Spiritual Direction

The ancient Celtic term Anam Cara means "soul friend." Today, it's often used to describe the intentional relationship between a spiritual director and directee. Despite the name, spiritual direction is not about giving or receiving direction; it's a ministry of compassionate listening and companionship. Curious to learn more? Join us!

Jim Webner (Stony Run) holds an M.Div. and is a graduate of the Heartpaths DFW three-year spiritual direction program.

F8 [Hybrid] St Hildegards Viriditas and The Greening of Life and Spirit

Participants will encounter Hildegard of Bingen through her music, writings, and practices, followed by an introduction to viriditas, or "greening life." The workshop centers on an experiential exploration of vitality, inviting reflection on growth, renewal, and what sustains life.

Breyette Lorntz (Charlottesville Monthly Meeting)

F9 Quaker Mysticism and its Relevance in Today's World

Mysticism is the foundation of Quakerism. We are known both by our silent waiting on the Divine to speak to each of us and engagement with social justice issues of our time. We will explore this 'intersection of spiritual experience and practical existence.

Deidre Foley Citro, long time Friend and member of Patapsco Meeting

F10 A New Abolition Movement: How Quakers are Working with Others to End Israeli Apartheid

Peace, Justice, and Equality are core Quaker testimonies for living in harmony with each other and the earth. These principles undergird the work to end US and corporate support for Israeli apartheid policies against Palestinians. How can BYM Friends take effective nonviolent action to further this movement for peace, justice, and equality?

Steve Chase (FMW) has been involved in Peace and Justice work with Friends other groups. He recently returned from Palestine.

F11 The Spirit of Clerking: Inclusive & Inspired Community Building

Explore Clerking as a spiritually-grounding tool to build community through the lens of our testimonies of equality and stewardship. Learn practices that tend to long-term relationships, cultivate new leaders and protect the valuable natural resource of people's time, attention and care for each other.

Betsy Bramon (FMW) and other Friends of FMW.

SATURDAY

S1 Walking in the World as a Friend

Drawing from the work of Plenary Speaker Nadine Hoover, a presentation and discussion on the 3 key roles of Quakerism: Minister, Steward, and Witness. Then we will discuss Convincement and Conviction as understood by Quakers. Finally, we will explore Spiritual Companionship.

Doug Vaughn (Stony Run) is an experienced trainer and a Quaker for over twenty years.

S2 [Hybrid] The Way: A Contemplative Walk

The presenter, who has walked the Camino twice will share how this contemplative walk was a life changing experience. She will share pictures from the walk and stories to inspire others to consider this spiritual exploration. Such a pilgrimage develops stronger connection to the earth and people from around the world.

Beth Haw (Williamsburg) has walked the Camino twice and plans to do another pilgrimage in Portugal in the fall.

S3 Earth Care Witness: Exploring the Panorama

Sharing the film "Quaker Earthcare Witness: A Panorama" to prompt deeper sharing of what earthcare means for Quakers.

Barb Adams (Richmond) is BYM's representative to Quaker Earthcare Witness and co-produced the QEW film. Deborah Haines (Alexandria) serves as Clerk of the BYM Unity with Nature committee

S4 Sanctuary and Civil Initiative

Sanctuary means building a protective community with people whose rights are being violated. It is older than any government and more demanding than protest. This workshop explores what it asks of us now.

John Allder Stephens (Alexandria) and Laura Willouby (Alexandria) have both worked extensively with immigration and justice issues.

S5 [Hybrid] 339 Manumissions and Beyond: A Reparative Project

The 339 Manumissions project is working to restore the family histories of those who were enslaved by Quakers. After understanding the how, what, where, and why of the project, participants will be invited to examine the legacy of this history within the Society of Friends. We will also consider the process of spiritual transformation that led some Friends to go beyond recognizing slavery as wrong to a place where the formerly enslaved were no longer "other."

Avis Wanda McClinton is a Quaker preservationist in Ann Arbor, Michigan and the founder of the 339 Manumissions and Beyond project. Avis will be joined by Dennis Gregg and Stephanie Leonard, also of Ann Arbor, who have been deeply involved in the project.

S6 Transforming Conflict to Create Harmony

How do we find the strength and wisdom to sing together in harmony? In this experiential workshop, participants will practice ways to engage with each other across differences; express views respectfully; hold each other tenderly; and affirm that of God in each other.

Joan Liversidge (Sandy Spring) and Rich Thayer (Charlottesville). Sponsored by the BYM Friends Supporting Friends Working Group for conflict accompaniment.

S7 [Hybrid] Drawing on Quaker Roots: Investing Now for a Climate-Just Future

Early Friends understood themselves to be a single global, sharing community. All are impacted by the climate emergency but those who have caused the least climate damage often suffer the most. We will explore together personal and structural approaches to take now for more climate justice in the future.

Evan Welkin (North Pacific Yearly Meeting) is a Quaker organizer, ecovillage cofounder and international executive. Ann Riggs (Sandy Spring/Annapolis) is a Quaker theologian and clerk of FGC's Christian and Interfaith Relations Committee.

S8 Meeting the Moment: Anti-Authoritarian Organizing at AFSC

In a time of rising violence and authoritarianism, Friends are seeking grounded, spirit led ways to respond. This workshop offers simple, meaningful pathways for collective action - supporting communities experiencing harm, strengthening efforts to end systems of oppression, engaging in emerging responses to new challenges, and staying connected through regular online spiritual and learning spaces. Participants will leave with accessible next steps for weaving faith, justice, and community into their work in this moment.

Jacob Flower, based in Atlanta, GA, is the Regional Director for the American Friends Service Committee in the U.S. South.

S9 Taboo Topics

Thinking about aging, death, and money is difficult, but not thinking about them can result in unintended outcomes and discord. What if we broke the taboo and talked about some of these inevitabilities? This workshop will help you become comfortable and create a pathway to peaceful preparedness.

*Patti Nesbit (Sandy Spring) travels in the ministry with a concern for aging, death, and dying. She is the lead author of *A Tender Time: Quaker Voices on the End of Life*. Mimi Blackwell is the Director of Philanthropic Services at Friends Fiduciary Corporation.*

S10 Knitting for Worship

Participants are invited to bring knitting or other handcrafts and gather in a shared space of worship. Through quiet practice and optional reflection, we will hold themes of resilience, care, and the ways small, repeated acts shape a life.

Breyette Lorntz (Charlottesville) became a Friend the same year she learned to knit and has been following both threads ever since.

S11 Neurographic Art as a Meditative Tool

We Quakers are a mystical lot, and meditating helps usher in that divine space. One meditation tool is Neurographic Art. No Art skills needed.

Deirdre Foley Citro (Patapsco) is artist, art teacher, and mediator.

Families At Annual Session

BYM welcomes families to a vibrant community of adults and children! Children from birth through 8th grade participate for free in BYM's Annual Session. If you're staying on-campus, be sure to choose a Family Room under the Hospitality options. Annual Session provides a range of family-friendly activities such as the popular "capture the flag" games after dinner and the All Ages Celebration (contra dancing in 2026!)

Children infant to 8th grade participate in Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM). At JYM, your child will meet and get to know children from other Meetings, have fun, and learn Quaker values and history. The JYM program is divided by age.

Nursery (infant-preschool) provides childcare in a space filled with loving, creative adults who are ready to play, read books, and run!

Elementary (Grades K-5) provides a variety of adult-led activities and fun focused on the Annual Session Theme.

Junior Young Friends (Grades 6-8) meet in their own community, supported by JYM adults, to learn experientially about Quaker process and participate in a wide variety of activities - sometimes joining the elementary classes and sometimes joining the Young Friends.

Junior Yearly Meeting takes place during all Business Meetings at Annual Session as well as during workshops and evening plenaries. Parents may organize co-op care during other times.

Young Friends (Grades 9-12) Young Friends self-organize programming under the direction and care of BYM's Youth Programs Manager and volunteer Friendly Adult Mentors ("the FAM"). During Annual Session, Young Friends participate in their own Business Meetings. They organize adventures both on and off campus and run a game of "capture the flag" for Junior Yearly Meeting. They also join the larger BYM community for meals, workshops, and optional evening lectures. Good news, YFs: the bouncy castle is back in 2026!

The Young Friends program will run Tuesday-Sunday. Coming in on Monday for the retreat? Your Young Friend is welcome to attend the retreat. Early check-in to the Young Friends dorm may be available - contact BYM's Genevieve Legowski to discuss.

For more information about programming for children and Young Friends at Annual Session, visit the Annual Session Homepage.



Annual Session At A Glance

Baltimore Yearly Meeting Annual Session Schedule for the Week July 27 to August 2, 2026

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00		Breakfast (7:00-8:30)					
8:00		Morning Groups (8:15-9:15) Bible Study, Worship Sharing, Chanting, Etc.					
9:00		Retreat	Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business* (MfW - B)				MFW-B* Epistles
10:00						All Together Worship*	
11:00							
12:00	Lunch (12:00-1:00)						
	Registration Open 12:30-2:00pm						
1:00	Retreat Registration	Siesta (1:00 - 2:00)					
		Global Majority (BIPOC) Hang-Out* (1:00 - 1:45pm)					
2:00		Worship*	Memorial Meeting*	Workshops*			
3:00	Retreat	MFW - B*	Committee Meetings (3:45 - 5:15)	Interest Groups (4:15-5:15)	Interest Groups (4:15-5:15)	Committee Meetings (4:15-5:15)	
4:00							
5:00	Dinner Served (5:00-6:30) Tues - Sat Registration Open (4:30-5:30pm, 6:30-7:15pm)						
6:00						Worship (6:15pm)	
	Singing (6:15-7:00)						
7:00	Retreat						
8:00		Opening Plenary*	Lecture TBD*	Coffee House	All Ages Celebration	Carey Lecture*	
9:15		Intervisitation	Intervisitation	Intervisitation	Intervisitation	Intervisitation	

*Denotes Hybrid Options

Registration Hours:	Mon: 12:00-2:30pm, 6:30-7:30pm
	Tues-Sat: 8:45-9:15am, 12:30-2:00pm; 4:30-5:30pm; 6:30-7:15pm

Annual Session Logistics

Register Online at www.bym-rsf.org/annualsession.html

Registration is open NOW through July 11th. If you need assistance to complete your registration, you can call Lucy at the BYM Office at 301-658-6797 or email Registrar@bym-rsf.org.

2026 Annual Session Rates

Adult Double	\$110/night	Includes room, linens, 3 meals, facility fees, and online access
Adult Single	\$130/night	
Young Friends Grades 9-12	\$75/night	
Children Birth-8th Grade	Free	
Adult Commuter	\$75/day	Includes 2 meals, daily facility fee, and online access
Online-Only	\$50	Online access for the entire week
Single Event	\$25	Online or in-person

Fees & Payment

We are excited to keep most 2026 suggested registration rates equal to or lower than rates in 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025! This year we will have a slight increase in the rate for a single room to reflect limited numbers and high demand. In addition, we will continue to use a Pay-As-Led model. The suggested registration rate represents the true cost of participating in BYM's Annual Session. Please keep this cost in mind as you determine the amount you are led to pay for your registration or the registration for your entire group. Friends may pay any amount they choose - below or above the rate.

Registration above the suggested rates helps ensure all Friends can attend, regardless of ability to pay. The generosity of Friends paying above the suggested rate has allowed us to lower the rate for high school aged Friends again this year. If you are paying more than the suggested rate and would like a tax deduction letter for the amount over your suggested fees, please email Development@bym-rsf.org.

Each lodging night includes three meals, beginning with dinner on the day of arrival and continuing through lunch the following day. For Commuters, the rate includes two meals of your choice among breakfast, lunch and dinner, each day. When registering online, you will have the choice to pay by credit card or check.

Accessibility

BYM strives to create an Annual Session where all are welcome and everyone has what they need to actively participate. The dorms at Hood College were constructed in 2020-2021 and are accessible for a variety of needs including low threshold, single-step showers; individual climate control; rooms with private bathrooms and refrigerators; and wheelchair accessible rooms. However, some events are held in older buildings that are ADA-compliant but may be inconvenient or require extra time to navigate. Maps are available from the Information Desk showing all accessible entrances for Annual Session buildings. Some accessible entrances may be on the backside of a building. The location of Business Meeting is accessible, but access to the bathroom in that building requires first exiting the building to access bathrooms via another entrance. Sound is amplified for Meeting for Business and Meeting for Worship and transcripts are enabled on Zoom. We also provide Bluetooth access for participants who use Bluetooth enabled hearing aids. Volunteer drivers provide rides in golf carts to help Friends move between buildings throughout Annual Session. To discuss your access needs, please contact the Registrar at registrar@bym-rsf.org.

Check In

Links for all online Annual Session programs will be emailed to registered participants. **We no longer offer express check-in, so all Friends must check-in with our Registrar.** If you arrive during a meal-time, please just head to the meal and check-in after. Friends arriving after the Registration Desk has closed for the day may call the number posted on the Registration Desk, on the door of Blazer Hall, and on the Annual Session Webpage. The Registration Desk is open only at the hours listed below. After-hours check-in is available by texting the number posted at the Registration Desk.

Monday: 12:00-2:30pm, 6:30-7:30pm

Tuesday - Saturday: 8:45-9:15am, 12:30-2:00pm; 4:30-5:30pm; 6:30-7:15pm

Policies & Procedures

Visit the BYM Annual Session webpage for information on the Annual Session code of conduct, refunds, and this year's COVID policy.



All About Annual Session

All Together Worship: On Sunday morning at 11:00am, we'll end Annual Session with All Together Worship - joining together, through the power of Zoom, everyone at Annual Session and Friends from across our Yearly Meeting. Whether you plan to attend Annual Session or not, we'll look forward to seeing you at BYM All Together Worship on Sunday, August 2nd!

Morning Worship Groups: Following breakfast each morning, many Friends begin the day with morning worship groups. In 2026, morning worship group options are:

- Sacred Chant
- Experiment with Light
- Bible Study
- Worship Sharing

You can select a morning group when you register or in person on the sheets near the BYM Information table. We hope that you will feel comfortable for the whole week in your morning group. If your group just doesn't fit, it's fine to ask another group's leader if you may join them.

Bookstore: This summer, the Bookstore will feature new titles from our speakers and workshop leaders and a wide variety of gently used books to choose from, plus a wide selection of crafts. Bookstore Hours are posted each day in the Daily Minute. Please remember the Bookstore is not open during Business Meetings or during the evening Plenary Sessions.

Friends are invited to offer items for sale as a vendor at the Bookstore. Quilted items, pottery, clothing, independently published materials, and all manner of crafts and goods are welcome. Contact the Bookstore Manager at bookstore@bym-rsf.org.

Coffee House: An open-mic talent show for Friends of all ages. Bring your poetry, instrument, hidden talent, Dad jokes, et al.

The Daily Minute: The Daily Minute is Annual Session's daily communication about scheduling changes, room assignments, late-breaking content, and much more. The Daily Minutes is available in paper copy at Annual Session and online each morning on the Annual Session Website.

Daily Singing: Gather 'round, Friends. We will sing hymns around the piano together Tuesday-Friday evening. All God's critters have a place in the choir!

Global Majority Hang-Out Space: The Global Majority Caucus will facilitate a Global Majority Hang-Out Space on Wednesday through Saturday, from 1 pm to 1:45 pm. The Hang-Out will be Hybrid, with both in-person and Zoom connection, bringing in Friends from far and wide to join this Space, which is exclusively for Global Majority Friends.

The term "Global Majority" encourages those who are dual- or multi-heritage, Indigenous, Aboriginal, Black, Pacific Islander, Brown, and West, South or East Asian to see themselves as belonging to the global majority rather than as "minorities." These groups represent about 80% of the world population. Note: The term "People of Color," by contrast, centers whiteness as the norm, while implying that white people have no race in a racialized world.

Interest Groups: Interest Groups provide a great way to gather informally to focus on topics of interest to Friends. They meet Thursday or Friday at 4:15. Topics and locations are announced in the Daily Minute. If you would like to hold an interest group, please make your request no later than 4 pm, a day in advance using the on-line form or paper copy at the Information desk to be sure to get an assigned space. Since we can only have a limited number of groups at a time, there is a priority list for subjects, and space is not guaranteed.

Intervisitation Lounge: Light refreshments are offered on the Ground floor of the dorm at 9:15 each evening (except Friday) This is an opportunity for visitors to Baltimore Yearly Meeting to get together with members of BYM to build the community of Friendship and discuss the concerns and joys that are rising up among various Yearly Meetings. We look forward to connecting with those who have joined us in the past and those new to our Annual Session. This is a great time for informal sharing of our experiences when we have visited other Meetings and the experiences of visitors to our own Yearly Meeting. Card and board games are also available.

Meeting for Worship: Annual Session begins with an unprogrammed Meeting for Worship on Tuesday at 2:00pm, followed by the first business session. All of our business sessions are held in a spirit of worship, and Friends are invited to enter the Meeting space online or in-person a few minutes ahead to settle into worship. On Saturday, Friends are invited to a Christ-centered programmed worship hosted by Friends Church of Baltimore. On First Day (Sunday) morning, the entire community gathers for unprogrammed worship at 11:00am.

Meeting for Business: Meeting for Business begins with a reading and a period of silent worship. Copies of the Annual Reports of committees and groups, Interim Meeting Minutes, and other documents are made available in advance - via the BYM website and limited printed copies are available in-person. This is core information about what the Yearly Meeting has done in the last year and explains a great deal about what goes on.

Memorial Meeting: Join with Friends on Wednesday afternoon to hold in our hearts Friends who are no longer with us and share memorial minutes from across the Yearly Meeting.



Yearly Meeting News

BYM Quaker Camps, LLC: Governing Our Camps with Integrity and Stewardship

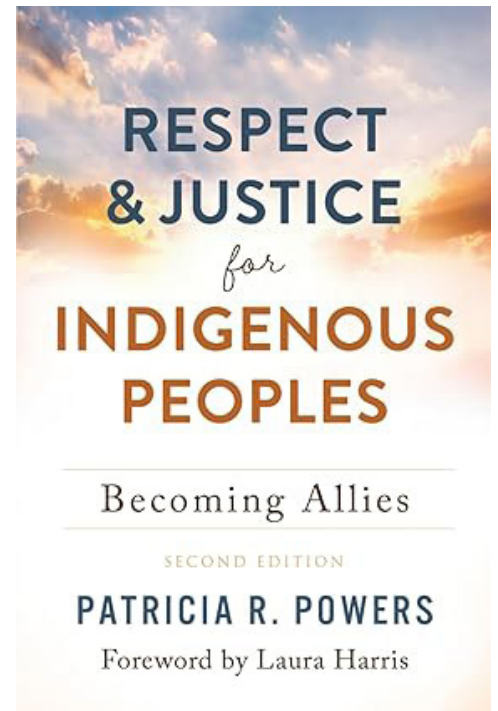
At the January Business Meeting of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, our community approved the formation of “BYM Quaker Camps, LLC,” and the Board of the new LLC was approved at an April Called Meeting for Business. This governance change was set into motion by camp’s 2023-2028 Strategic Plan. Over the last two years, a BYM Camp Governance Study Group has been considering options to ensure BYM Camps can thrive for its next 100 years.

After looking at several models for potential change, the study group proposed the creation of an LLC, and the Yearly Meeting, after careful discernment, approved the formation this past January. BYM Quaker Camps, LLC will allow BYM Camps to plan and act more nimbly and flexibly while maintaining both its unique Quaker identity and deep connection to the Yearly Meeting community. For now, most of the way we operate camp will look and feel the same, but in the background, our leadership teams will be growing better equipped to respond to the needs of campers and staff, as well as the many business demands of running four summer camps in three states -- in a complex world!

If you have questions or interest in the BYM Camps LLC, please reach out to Camping Program Manager Zora Tucker (zoratucker@bym-rsf.org) or Camping Program Committee co-clerk (and Board nominee) Al Best (al.best3@gmail.com).

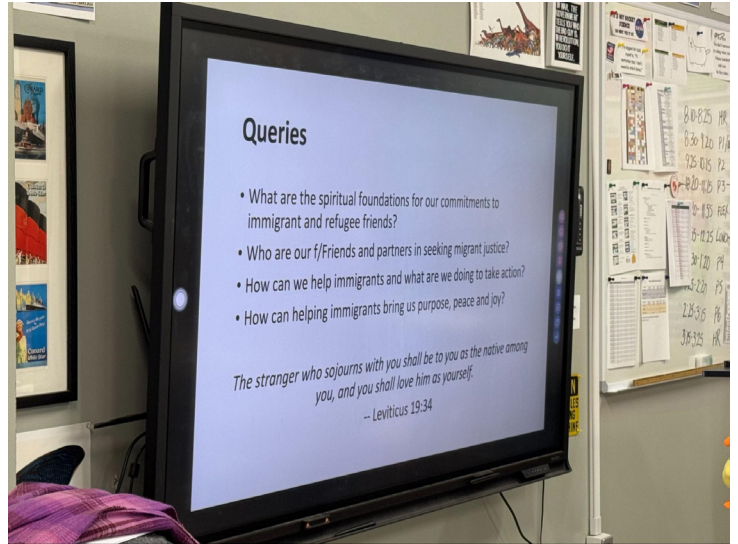
Indigenous Affairs Committee New Publications

The BYM Indigenous Affairs Committee is pleased to provide two resources, new in 2025, to the community and to the world. Pat Power’s (longtime IAC Clerk) published a new book, *Respect & Justice for Indigenous Peoples: Becoming Allies*. In this history of BYM’s Indigenous Affairs Committee 1940-2025, you may find names of your family members and ancestors or Monthly Meeting Friends. Combining Committee, Quaker, and Native history, the book focuses on the dynamics of being an ally and describes concrete individual and group actions. Readers will be surprised at the number and variety of ways that the committee found to champion tribal Nations. Readers will be sorrowful about harms done by Friends which are described in detail. The first volume of the history, *As They Were Led: Quakerly Steps and Missteps Toward Native Justice, 1795-1940*, (2021) is also available. On the BYM website, you can also find the new Quick Facts About Indigenous Americans (2025). This publication is the product of the Committee’s data project, compiled by Alexis Contreras (Confederated Tribes of Grand Rounde) and edited by Susannah Rose (co-clerk of BYMIAC). Quick Facts About Indigenous Americans is intended to assist Indigenous Americans and allies as they lobby representatives, seek funding, or provide education. It may be freely used without credits. The Indigenous Affairs Committee (IAC) works to stimulate interest in issues related to American Indians. The oldest continuous committee of BYM, IAC works with local Meetings, other Yearly Meetings, and other Friends’ organizations to benefit native peoples.



Peace & Social Concerns Networking Day

The BYM Peace & Social Concerns Networking Day on Saturday, March 14, was a meaningful and inspiring gathering that brought Friends together for a full day of learning, reflection, and connection. Hosted by the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Peace and Social Concerns Committee, the event took place at Friends Meeting School in Ijamsville, Maryland, and welcomed over 50 attendees who came from local Monthly Meetings from



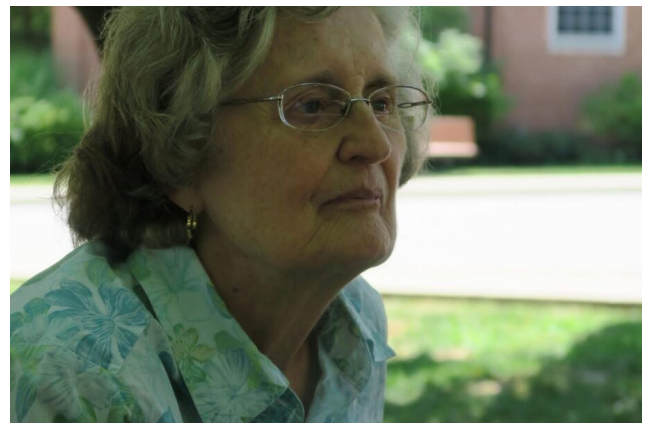
Washington D.C., Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia ready to engage with the important theme: "How Are We Meeting the Moment? Discernment, Clearness & Faithful Action in Grim Times." The atmosphere strengthened a sense of community purpose. The day began with time to reconnect and meet new people before the opening session. The opening session provided thoughtful queries to frame the day and encouraged participants to reflect on how our spiritual values guide our responses to the challenges of our time. Morning workshops offered thoughtful discussions on the pressing issues of cruelty experienced by immigrants in our country and by Palestinians overseas. Participants explored how Friends can take compassionate practical action to support immigrant communities. The workshop on becoming an Apartheid-Free Community encouraged Meetings to consider how they may take faithful steps toward justice and peace in Israel/Palestine. The three afternoon workshops included, 1) Friends' Peace Testimony and the renewed nuclear arms race, 2)Discerning and responding to harms caused by actions of our government, and 3) Environmental advocacy through legislation in Maryland and Virginia. Each session combined presentations with discussion, allowing participants to reflect deeply and learn from one another's experiences. Many participants were so inspired after the workshops that they stayed behind to discuss, share contact information, and plan additional activities.

The day concluded with worship sharing, where participants reflected on insights, takeaways, and the sense of renewed commitment many felt. The gathering fostered thoughtful conversation, spiritual grounding, and practical ideas for faithful action.

Honoring Pat Schenck, founder of the BYM Working Group on Racism

Patience "Pat" Schenck died on July 4, 2025, at Friends House Retirement Community. She had just turned 88. Pat had been a member of Annapolis Friends Meeting, which she first attended in 1966. Over the years she served on every then-existing committee, clerked most of them, and founded two: Pastoral Care and Outreach.

She was also very active in Baltimore Yearly meeting, where her most prominent role was as founder, in 2002, of the BYM



Working Group on Racism among Friends. It was later renamed simply the Working Group on Racism to reflect efforts to raise the consciousness of BYM friends to the racism not merely among Friends, but throughout society. She was known in Annapolis for her social and racial justice work, serving on the Human Rights Commission, the Conflict Resolution Center, and the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR), which she helped found. In 2017 The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, Committee of Maryland awarded her its Peace Maker Award.

Her leading to work for justice was amplified through her writing skills. She authored two Pendle Hill Pamphlets: "Answering the Call to Heal the World," #383 (2006) about the journey to discern one's spiritual leadings and bring them into action, and "Living Our Testimony on Equality: A White Friend's Experience," #415 (2014) about her work against race-based injustice. She also wrote numerous articles and book reviews for Friends Journal.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting was fortunate to have the myriad contributions Pat Schenck brought us and her smiling presence in all of our affairs. She touched many lives with her wisdom, love, and commitment to social and racial justice. She said, "The struggles don't matter as much as the love."

Come Back to Camp for Memorial Day Weekend!

It's hard to be a human in the world right now, so why not make a soft landing back at camp? We'll sing songs, play games, have fire circles, discuss the future of our camps, and - for those so inclined - stay for a Monday Memorial Work Day to prep the property for the summertime. You can camp in a tent or request cabin space, and electricity is available for those who medically need it. It is our hope to make this an annual event that rotates to all of the camps. The cost is pay-what-you-can, using a model similar to our Sliding Scale for our camp. Online registration can be found on the BYM website under "Events."

Questions? Email Linda Garrettson (lgarrettson1@gmail.com).

To help organize or coordinate, contact Susannah Brown (susannah.w.brown@gmail.com).



Community News

The Interchange shares updates from across our Yearly Meeting. News for the Fall Issue of the Interchange can be sent to admin@bym-rsf.org. Information about births, deaths (including Memorial Minutes), or new memberships within your Meeting are also lovingly received by the Yearly Meeting anytime at the same address.

Annapolis Friends Meeting

Discerning expanding our building: Our Meeting is growing with newcomers finding their way to us. We have long felt that we need to upgrade our bathrooms, storage, classrooms, and disability support. We have architectural plans now and an Advisory Group formed to begin discernment.

Sharing our building through rentals: Our multipurpose/worship room is increasingly popular with area groups needing a place to meet. Some of the variety of rentals coming through our doors include traditional dance, writers association, Parkinson's support, underserved youth support group, spiritual/mindfulness groups, a local theater company—and a Young Friends Con (rent free!).

Meetings for Learning: Each 2nd, 4th and 5th First Day, between our 8:00am and 11:00am worship times, Annapolis Friends gather for "Meetings for Learning." This past year, topics included: Quaker Foundations, Sacred Dance and Chant, worship sharings, various committee outreach (right stewardship, finding our path reflections), singing and brunches. The opportunities keep flowing in from Friends leadings. This coming year, we will reach out with a series on Friends Testimonies.

Submitted by Barbara Thomas

Dunnings Creek Friends Meeting

Dunnings Creek Friends has had a winter of caring for both the Meeting House, and the Meeting. Necessary reparative interior maintenance work, and significant exterior maintenance projects have required both attention and deliberation.

We have at the same time carried on our care of each other and reaching out to community. Small meaningful gestures have included the Valentines distribution to the Meeting and the neighbors, and spring flowers to the neighbors are coming soon. The Peace and Social Concerns committee hosted a guest speaker, an occasional attendee, who gave a heartfelt talk on his fifty years of victims advocacy work in prisons and his personal journey to forgiving his niece's murderer, and efforts to provide both the incarcerated and former felons meaningful opportunities. Members and attenders, as moved, have joined others in Bedford standing in witness for peace, social justice, and basic human rights and needs each Saturday in Bedford town square. The simple effort to engage passersby in non-partisan concerns affecting all is ongoing.

Submitted by Ellen Prentiss Campbell

Herndon Friends Meeting

The Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County, which was originally founded by Herndon Friends Meeting and which is now sponsored by 16 local organizations, had its annual reception for the recipients in March. Of the 30 public high schools in Fairfax County, 28 selected either a student or a group of students who has done something that promotes peace. We celebrated their achievements at a ceremony attended by friends, families, and several public officials. The Student Peace Awards has been a lovely and gratifying project, now in its 21st year. We share a website with Frederick Meeting, which sponsors the Student Peace Awards of Frederick County, Maryland. We would be happy to talk to anyone who might like to start such a project for their own local schools.

Submitted by Margaret Fisher

Richmond Friends Meeting

Two new offerings are adding to our worship experience. Rejoicing at the presence of a regular attender who is a fine pianist, we've begun singing every First Day prior to our 11 a.m. Meeting for Worship. With the return of spring, we're also reinstating Meeting for Worship at the Clearing, our beautiful retreat center in Amelia County, on the First Sunday of each month. This will be in addition to our regular meeting times at Kensington Avenue.

We conducted a threshing session on immigration concerns on March 21. About two-dozen individuals attended. There was strong sentiment for peaceful action in support of our immigrant neighbors. Concurrently, a group within Meeting has formed to consider ways to coordinate with similarly minded groups and transform ideas into actions.

About thirty members and attenders participated in a two-session workshop (totaling eight hours) around "Learning to Have Courageous Conversations in Multi-Racial Settings." The training was conducted by two trainers (one Black, one White) and five ambassadors (all Black) affiliated with Coming Together Virginia, a group focused on cross-racial connections and learning. In the aftermath, the Racial Justice Team is considering ways to delve more deeply into our understandings about race and racial connections. Plans are underway for our annual Spring Retreat at the Clearing on Memorial Day weekend. This year's theme is "Opening to Joy." The retreat will be interactive and will spring from the ideas and gifts of our community.
Submitted by Margaret Edds



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Baltimore Yearly Meeting nurtures a vibrant Quaker community across the Mid-Atlantic. BYM unites Friends from 50 Quaker meetings and worship groups throughout VA, MD, PA, WV, and DC. Together we strengthen local meetings, grow in spirit, nurture youth, and connect and serve as Friends.

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