Baltimore Yearly Meeting

Called Interim Meeting

January 28, 2023, 10 am

(By Zoom)

Opening. Friends gathered at 10:00 am by Zoom. Interim Yearly Meeting Clerk Bette Hoover reviewed that agenda. She then introduced Martin Melville (State College) and Susan Russell Walters (Baltimore--Homewood) who will be serving as our prayerful presence today, and Deborah Haines (Alexandria), Recording Clerk.

Bette Hoover read the land acknowledgement honoring the original stewards of the lands now utilized by BYM. Donna Kolaitis (Menallen) read the anti-racist queries that will frame our discernment today. Sarah Gillooly, General Secretary, reviewed the technology we are using, and noted that they will be assisting anyone who encounters technical problems.

Bette Hoover invited us to lift up the names of those we are holding in prayer this morning, beginning with Tyre Nichols and his family. Out of the silence, several Friends lifted up the names of members of Baltimore Yearly Meeting who have recently died. Friends settled into a deep period of open worship.

Bette Hoover reminded us that we last met at a session of programmed worship on December 3, 2022 called ”Rising from the Ashes.” An edited video recording of that session will soon be available.

Nominating Committee Report. Karie Firoozmand (Stony Run), Co-Clerk, presented the report. She explained that the Friends United Meeting (FUM) Triennial will be held in Kenya in July 2023. The Triennial scheduled for 2020 was cancelled because of the pandemic, with necessary business transacted by a virtual gathering in 2021. Serving as a BYM representative to the 2023 Triennial will be expensive because of the foreign travel involved. Nominating Committee has been working with Stewardship and Finance to ensure that enough funding is available so that no one would be unable to accept appointment because of financial considerations.

The formula established by FUM allows us to appoint nine representatives. These traditionally include our Presiding Clerk, our General Secretary, and our three representatives to the FUM General Board. These five individuals have all agreed to serve. The Nominating Committee filled out the slate with Friends of Color active in BYM, including two from Kenya.

Karie Firoozmand then presented the proposed list. Several Friends spoke to the report.

Friends expressed appreciation for the diversity and quality of the list being presented today. One Friend noted that there are two members of the LGBTQ community on the list. A Friend asked for our prayers for one of the nominees, Bartholomew Miheso (Stony Run), who is in the hospital with pneumonia. We were reminded that all Friends are welcome to attend the Triennial, whether or not they are yearly meeting representatives. It can be a wonderful experience.

Sarah Gillooly spoke to the question of financial support. They explained that the current BYM policy is to pay 50% of the cost our representatives incur when they attend the FUM Triennial or overseas gatherings of the Friends World Committee for Consultation. Monthly meetings are encouraged to provide additional support. A working group is being organized to explore how we can ensure that all BYM representatives to outside organizations are adequately supported, so that no one will be excluded from service because of financial considerations.

Friends expressed appreciation that this problem is being looked into. Georgia Fuller (Langley Hill) noted that her service on the FUM General Board, which meets in Richmond, Indiana, is also expensive, even though it does not involve foreign travel.

With regard to the Triennial, Georgia Fuller explained that registration fees for the Triennial are higher for Friends from North America, in order to subsidize those from other parts of the world. She noted that this is a critical year for FUM, as it continues its efforts to transition from being a missionary organization to being a true global partnership. This Triennial is an especially important one.

Friends **approved** the proposed list of representatives, with gratitude and appreciation for the service they are undertaking.

Karie Firoozmand reported two resignations. Mari Schimmer (Adelphi) has resigned from Advancement and Outreach; Tronette Anochie (Sandy Spring) has resigned from Growing Diverse Leadership. These resignations were duly recorded.

The meeting closed with a period of deeply settled worship.