

THE INTERCHANGE

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Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends



ANNUAL SESSION 2026

*“It was a week
marked by the deep
joy of being together.”*

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Annual Session 2026

At the end of July, Baltimore Yearly Meeting Friends gathered in Frederick, MD for our 354th Annual Session. BYM Friends have been gathering in this manner since approximately 1672, when George Fox landed on the shores of Maryland to gather up the burgeoning Quaker movement in the area and lay out the structure of monthly and yearly meetings. This year, 268 Friends attended—including 72 commuters and 28 children.

Highlights of our time together included more than 30 workshops, stirring plenaries from Evan Welkin and Valerie Brown, and the beloved All Ages Celebration—a big indoor/outdoor party for Friends young and old. During our Business Sessions, we approved a 2027 budget for the Yearly Meeting and united with three Peace and Social Concern Minutes.

One of our biggest items of business this year was our Presiding Clerk transition. Steph Bean (Adelphi) our Presiding Clerk since 2020 stepped down. Ted Heck (Richmond) was approved as BYM's new Presiding Clerk. Ted spent Annual Session shadowing Steph and is now responding to emails sent to YMclerk@bym-rsf.org. Welcome Ted! A minute of gratitude for Steph Bean's service to BYM will come to the November Interim Meeting.

The Minutes from our 2026 Annual Session are now on the BYM website and will be printed in the 2026 Yearbook, which will be available and mailed to all Monthly Meetings at the end of the year. Please enjoy the photo recap of Annual Session in the pages ahead!

Save the Date for Annual Session 2027.

We will gather July 19-25, 2027 at Hood College in Frederick under the theme Building Spiritual Community with Joy and Connection. Please note this is one week earlier than recent years!





2026 BYM Annual Session Epistle

To Friends Everywhere—

Baltimore Yearly Meeting gathered at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland under the blue skies and the theme of Living in Harmony with the Earth and Each Other. Our community was expanded and enriched by Friends joining us online throughout the week. As those of us at Hood renewed our connections to others, so did the online cohort who participated in workshops, plenary, business meeting, breaks, and so much more. We are grateful that we can enlarge our gathering via digital access. It was a week marked by the deep joy of being together. It is only together that we can see each other through.

Nadine Hoover began the week with a retreat based on our theme. We learned about conviction, the direct experience of Spirit, and conviction, experiencing spirit in times that we fall short. Our Convincement and Conviction become

the solid ground where we can experiment with Spirit in our lives. As more Friends joined us, we heard from Evan Welkin from the Friends World Committee for Consultation in our opening plenary. As we navigate the uncertainty of the climate crisis and growing worldwide instability, Friend Evan offered us the metaphor found in Exodus of the people of God building a holy tent to take with them into the desert. Through community building, we too can build the structures that will see us through difficult times.

We gathered for an interactive plenary mid-week—hearing from groups within BYM and the larger Religious Society of Friends working to build God's peaceable kin-dom on earth. The presentations lifted up how seemingly disparate concerns intersect in the work of the spirit. There was a sweetness in dwelling in what we can and are doing to promote living in harmony with all of creation.

Throughout the week, we individually and corporately reflected on and lamented the impact of the United States government and global challenges on untold numbers of people in our communities, our country, and throughout our world. Friends witnessed the conviction of powerful spirit in business meeting, workshops, worship, play, and music. Friends utilized contemplative practices to restore their "inward ground," including chanting, mirroring (listening without preparing a reply), and holding queries in worship. These practices are essential antidotes to the individualism and disconnection that are contributing to the discord in our world.

The BYM camping programs were highlighted as successful models for putting faith into action. Initiatives like the STRIDE program and BIPOC Staff Gatherings employ a "pollinator garden" approach—creating proactive, diverse systems of support that nurture the whole community rather than exhausting specific parts. Systems are tools to restore humanity rather than merely administrative structures; the goal is to create environments where racism, exclusion, and poverty become unthinkable.

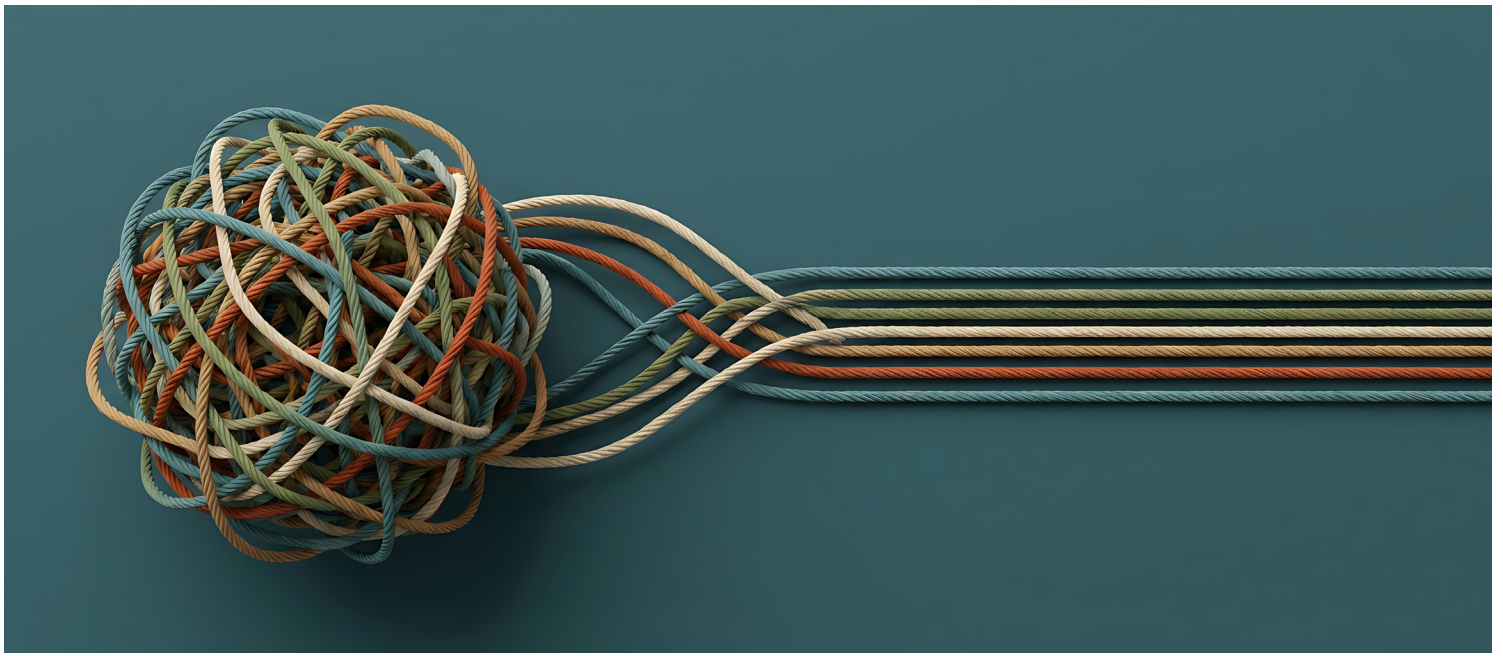
We enjoyed a new feature for Wednesday night: Film night. Adults gathered to view films about vital concerns about Israel and Palestine and small solutions all over the globe that give us reasons for "climate hope." Our children enjoyed a film about the migration of the monarch butterfly, which is also a lesson in multi-generational trust. We welcomed Friends young and old, returning

and new, from near and far, in our business, our worship, our play, and our fellowship. We lingered in the warmth of each other's smiles, broke bread together, and walked among the beautiful trees of Hood College, which reminded us we are part of nature.

Saturday culminated with lively worship with the Friends Church of Baltimore, singing and sharing messages about countering loneliness and isolation with connection and community. Harmony after all, implies being with others. Our Carey Memorial lecture by Valerie Brown highlighted the intersecting challenges our world presents to us. She reminded us that our inner work leads to outward transformation that ultimately heals us individually and collectively. Friend Valerie invited us to have the dexterity to balance hope and fear and not foreclose the future. She called us to share and celebrate what we love, so our joy can sustain us in our work.

As a body, our spirits are in harmony, though we may stumble in our processes and when conflict arises. The bravery of deep personal sharing by some modeled that when we take that leap in community, we can have healing and connection. But we know in our hearts that we are united in Love. We send our prayers that the Light of God's Love will shine to give you hope and courage to live through these troubled and troubling times.

*"It was a week
marked by the deep
joy of being together."*



FROM THE DESK OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Launching A Yearly Meeting Structure Study Group

SARAH GILLOOLY

During my first week on the job, back in 2021, the outgoing Interim General Secretary of Baltimore Yearly Meeting handed off to me what we jokingly call “the BYM Bag of Keys.” Let me tell you about this bag of keys: A few of them are labeled—back closet, tan filing cabinet—do we even have a tan filing cabinet? But most of them are not labeled. At least one of them is rusty!

The BYM Bag of Keys has saved the day a few times. Our Finance Director got locked out of his office during his first month on the job and, low and behold, we found an unlabeled spare in the Bag of Keys. Earlier this year, we found a key to a closet that nobody had opened since 2020. Also very helpful! But some of these keys probably go to items we don’t even own anymore—old cabinets, vehicles we sold a decade ago, a half-dozen unknown camp locks—the detritus of Living Together.

Over the last 5 years, I’ve come to see the Bag of Keys as a metaphor for some of the challenges we are having in Living Together as a Yearly Meeting. Our structures are kind of like the Bag of Keys. There is some really good and important stuff in there, but over the years we’ve started to build up what’s known as organizational debt.

Organizational debt is an organizational psychology term that comes from a concept in the tech sector. Technology debt is when coders encounter a problem and make a quick fix to keep the program running in the moment for its intended purpose. However, over time those “quick fixes” build up and can begin to degrade the functionality of the software. Organizational debt is similar. It’s all the compromises made “just to get things done.” It’s all the workarounds and quick fixes and reactions to one incident. It’s all the things we do for reasons nobody even

remembers. The “interest” on that debt starts to accumulate as the world changes around the organization and comes in the form of reduced capacity, less flexibility, and lower and lower engagement. It’s one of those concepts that once you hear it, you’re like, yep, I know exactly what that is. BYM has some organizational debt, and I’d like to get us on a payment plan.

Let me give you some evidence and examples of the organizational debt we are carrying around.

- **How do people get onto the Supervisory Committee?** Well, we appoint a Naming Committee to constitute a Search Committee to nominate a Supervisory Committee that we then send to Interim Meeting for approval and then on to Annual Session for further approval.
- **Our current committee structure requires 181 volunteers.** By my calculations, many of our Yearly Meeting Committees exceed in size the average weekly attendance of many of BYM’s Monthly Meetings.
- **Each of our core governance committees—Trustees, Stewardship & Finance, and Supervisory Committee—are currently struggling to keep their membership numbers to the bare minimum, 4-5.** We’ve had no clerk of Stewardship & Finance for a year. We have no Assistant Treasurer. And as you heard from the Nominating Committee at Annual Session, they cannot fill those 181 volunteer positions.

Our house, Friends, is not in order. And it’s impacting our ability to do what we seek to do together. Now, we don’t have to feel guilty or ashamed or hide from the disorganization. Houses are the structures where we live our big, incredible, loving lives, and—they get messy. If you have ever lived in a group house or other communal living situation, you know that over time, clutter accumulates in every cabinet and closet. You get frustrated and fed up about having no space in the kitchen one day, only to clean out the cabinets and discover you have three panini presses left behind by various roommates over the years. Living Together: it’s messy!

It is time for BYM to go through the kitchen cabinets of our group house, our Bag of Keys, and pay down our organizational debt. Because when we pay down the debts of the past, we can invest in the right now, the living body of Friends in front of us today, and the many ways we are needed in the world right now. As we heard and saw at Annual Session and in our Monthly Meetings each week, the world needs us. We need each other.

This fall, I am proposing a year-long Study Group on our Yearly Meeting structure. The full proposal will come before our November 2026 Interim Meeting, so be on the lookout. Friends were also invited to a meeting on October 7, at 7PM to provide me direct feedback on the proposal before it goes to Interim Meeting. The goal is that by next year, Annual Session 2027, we’ll have some research and ideas on paper to begin threshing new structures for Baltimore Yearly Meeting that support thriving of Monthly Meetings and the larger undertakings we engage in together. Thank you, Friends! For more information, visit bym-rsf.org/future



Strengthening Transformative Relationships in Diverse Environments: 2026 Program Update

RAI CARTER

The summer of 2026 was amazing! BYM's STRIDE Program - Strengthening Transformative Relationships in Diverse Environments - saw many new and returning campers who brought joy and enthusiasm to our summer camps this year.

Each year, STRIDE kicks off the season with our orientation hikes, hosted in each of our city hubs: Philadelphia, Baltimore, and D.C. During these orientations, campers and parents are able to come together for a few hours of fun, sharing, and learning about camp. We go over how to pack hiking backpacks, what to expect at camp, camp songs, and recipes—along with sharing how camp has impacted our lives. Building community before camp starts helps instill trust, connection, and confidence; and it is so much fun to have a day outside as the weather breaks.

Camp BIPOC Staff Gathering

Creating truly supportive, vibrant, and growth-filled camp communities for everyone is what STRIDE is all about. Part of that work is cultivating spaces for our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) camp staff to connect around our unique experiences and perspectives and to build an affirming, healthy, and anti-racist culture for all camp staff.

The BYM Camps BIPOC Staff Gathering is a dedicated space to connect deeply, recharge BIPOC staff energy, share experiences, build community, and kickstart an amazing summer together with a supportive network. This two-day, one-night experience is a space for staff who identify as BIPOC from any of our four camps (Opequon, Catoctin, Shiloh, Teen Adventure), whether they are mixed-heritage, multiracial with BIPOC roots, or carry any identity impacted by racism or white supremacy.

During the BIPOC staff gathering, staff have space to get to know one another. We share tips and talk strategy about supporting each other and BIPOC campers during the summer, and we explore what information or requests need to be made of the wider BYM community. The group has shared in some very special programming over the years including workshops such as: Foraging 101 in partnership with Fox Haven Farm, Fire Circle and Meeting for Worship, Paper Quilt Square Art Workshop, and more!



Thank you to our lead staff team - Dyresha Harris (Catoctin), Alicia Robinson (Catoctin), Elle James (Shiloh), B'Thorough James (Shiloh), and Rai Carter (STRIDE) - who have worked together over the last three years to bring this gathering to life.



BYM Camps Gear Lending Library

Outfitting kids for camp can be expensive—and it's hard to know what gear you need when first starting out. The upfront cost of gear is a barrier to entry for families who are interested in trying out BYM Quaker Camps. Instead of buying brand-new gear, families can now borrow from our Gear Lending Library!

This summer, STRIDE launched the new BYM Quaker Camps Gear Lending Library with the help of the Outdoors Empowered Network (OEN). In the 2026 season, over 30 families from all four of our camps participated, which helped us learn where the program can grow and develop. We are excited to move this program from the pilot stage in 2026 and into full launch in the summer of 2027 for all Kindling and first-time campers.

The BYM Gear Lending Library is about providing access, but it is also about sustainability and sharing. Borrowing outdoor gear instead of buying it creates powerful ripple effects across our community. Together, we can reduce waste and keep gear out of landfills. The gear library makes our camping program more accessible by lowering the cost of participation. And it can help families, especially those new to wilderness adventuring, to get outside safely and confidently. On a larger scale, the gear library builds a sense of community and shared responsibility. Every borrowed sleeping bag or backpack represents a shift toward a more sustainable, inclusive, and connected camp community!



One Friend's Experience with Baltimore Yearly Meeting

CATHERINE TALL

It began when I was an attender at Adelphi Friends Meeting from 2003 to 2007. I was asked to serve on the finance committee. While I was serving, several of the committee members kept talking about Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM). I had no idea what they were talking about. I didn't understand how BYM related to our Monthly Meeting. However, I learned that there was a yearly gathering of Quakers from across BYM. I was intrigued. I wondered what it would be like to hang out with 300 Quakers for a few days.

Attending Annual Session was an inspiring experience. I got to know several members of my Monthly Meeting on a deeper level, and I got to know Friends from other Meetings. In addition, I attended some great workshops, and I got to see how 300 Quakers conduct business. It strengthened my commitment to being a Friend and a member of BYM.

When we moved to Morgantown, WV in 2007 and started attending Monongalia Friends Meeting, I realized that it had no connection to its Yearly Meeting, which was Lake Erie. Our Monongalia Friends Meeting was in the wilderness, literally and figuratively. I proposed we consider transferring our membership to BYM. When we did transfer our membership, BYM staff and volunteers embraced our Meeting. We had several visits from them to include the general secretary, the clerk, and Friends from the intervisitation committee. It felt as if our small Meeting was being supported by the larger Quaker community. Since then, many of our members and attenders have attended Annual Session and other BYM programming such as the women's retreat and the spiritual formation program.

Just in the last three years, the BYM General Secretary led our Meeting in a Visioning Weekend, we hosted a BYM Young Friends Planning Retreat, and BYM was instrumental in helping to replace the roof to our Meeting House. Last year Monongalia organized a capital campaign to replace our roof, and BYM advertised the campaign in the Weekly Announcements. We were touched that Friends from across BYM sent us donations. In total we raised \$6,000, and through our application to the BYM Building Fund, we received an additional \$6,000 to cover the remaining cost of replacement. Because

of BYM, Monongalia Friends are now able financially to keep our Meeting House. We welcome Friends from around the country. We have a sojourner room with two twin beds for Friends who would like to sojourn with us for a night or two.

In 2020 I joined the BYM Stewardship and Finance committee. I knew practically nothing about how BYM functioned. I have given just 90 minutes of my time each month and received so much in return. I now understand the breadth and complexity of BYM and how BYM operates on a shoestring to provide programming and support to 40 Monthly Meetings. I have worked with Friends who have helped me grow spiritually and intellectually. The BYM Stewardship and Finance Committee is looking for new members. If you think you might like to join that committee, please contact the BYM Nominating Committee.



BYM Takes a Stand Against Genocide and Apartheid

STEVE CHASE

During the last business meeting of Baltimore Yearly Meeting's 2026 Annual Sessions, assembled Friends were asked by BYM's Peace and Social Concerns Committee and its Palestinian and Israeli Peace and Justice (PIPJ) Working Group to endorse a 2025 joint statement signed by eight major Quaker organizations from around the world. Titled "Quakers Discern Genocide Is Occurring in Gaza and Urge Courageous Action," this joint Quaker statement opposes the US-supported Israeli genocide against the 2.2 million Palestinian civilians living in Gaza and opposes the State of Israel's apartheid policies that have harmed Palestinians throughout Israel/Palestine for decades. In addition, the joint Quaker statement calls on Friends everywhere to use every nonviolent means to work for a democratic future that secures peace, justice, and equality for everyone living in Israel/Palestine.

No one in the room responded by saying that these US-backed Israeli policies did not meet the definition of genocide and apartheid under international law. Yet, a few Friends felt it would be more diplomatic to not use these terms and urged BYM Friends to find “softer words” to describe these two painful realities. Other Friends said that our historic testimonies in support of peace, justice, and equality for all, as well as truth-telling, required us to speak plainly and not hide our moral witness behind euphemisms that minimize the realities and harms so many Friends have witnessed—especially when our government is more complicit in these policies than any other government in the world. Still others reminded BYM Friends that Quakers equivocated for over a hundred years before all Yearly Meetings in “the New World” took a collective stand against the oppressive institution of slavery. As these Friends said, we should learn from our past mistakes and moral failures.

Throughout BYM's deliberation, people listened and prayed, raised questions, spoke with breaking voices, shed tears, and urged moral boldness and truthfulness. Toward the end of this thoughtful discussion, one Friend stood up and said, "How does it serve the moral witness of the Religious Society of Friends to say a genocide is not a genocide, and apartheid is not apartheid?" After a few more shared reflections and moments of quiet discernment, BYM came to unity and endorsed the joint Quaker statement on genocide and

apartheid—and urged BYM Friends to take courageous action to end all government and corporate support that enable these unjust, immoral, and illegal policies.

We ran out of time at Annual Sessions to consider the final PSCC and PIPJ proposal, which was for BYM to join the Apartheid-Free Communities coalition that was convened by the American Friends Service Committee in 2022 and has pledged to “oppose all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination, and oppression,” and “to join others working to end all support to Israel’s apartheid regime, settler-colonialism, and occupation.” As BYM’s outgoing Clerk said, this issue will now be taken up at the Monthly Meeting level and be a priority for consideration at an upcoming BYM Interim Meeting.

For BYM Friends interested in helping move this effort of moral witness forward, please contact BYM's Palestinian Israeli Peace and Justice Working Group by writing Steve Chase at stevechase338@gmail.com. PIPJ can provide discernment literature, online background material, as well as speakers and workshop leaders for BYM Meetings. The Working Group is also looking for additional members who share this spiritual calling. Finally, many people at Annual Sessions were moved and informed on movie night by the documentary *Israelism*, and PIPJ can make this film freely available for streaming at local BYM Meetings. To explore this option, please write Najla Drooby at najladrooby@gmail.com.



John Reuwer Challenges Israeli Blockade on Gaza through the Global Sumud Flotilla

LAURIE BRANDS GAGNE

In March, Adelphi Friends Meeting signed the AFSC sponsored Apartheid Free pledge and became a member of the Apartheid-Free Communities Coalition. Since then, we have been discerning the ways, corporately and individually, that we can live into our new commitment. In April, Adelphi member John Reuwer took a dramatic step against Israeli apartheid by joining the Global Sumud Flotilla, a fleet of more than 80 small boats attempting to break the blockade on Gaza and bring desperately needed humanitarian aid to the enclave. A retired Emergency Physician and long-time Peace activist, Reuwer served as a medic aboard a boat that was apprehended by Israeli commandos after just three days at sea. He and the rest of the crew were taken prisoner. I asked John (who happens to be my husband) about the ordeal and what he learned from it.

LG: CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR TREATMENT BY THE ISRAELIS?

JR: We were sailing in international waters about two hours west of Crete, expecting no problems at that point. When Israelis began attacking the boats, boarding them at gun point with combat troops, we were taken by surprise. As soon as our boat was boarded, they ordered us down on our knees on the deck while they ransacked it. Then they transported us to a prison ship where we were forced into crowded containers surrounded by razor wire. Those who had to sleep on the outer deck got drenched, periodically, with buckets of sea water. We were on the ship for 36 hours, subject to beatings and forced to maintain stress positions much of the time. There was little water and almost no food available to us.

LG: CAN YOU SHARE WITH US WHAT SUSTAINED YOU, EMOTIONALLY AND SPIRITUALLY, DURING YOUR IMPRISONMENT?

JR: My main support was the dedication and camaraderie of the group. It was exhilarating to be around so many people who cared deeply about the Palestinians and were willing to act on their behalf at great cost to themselves.

On the prison ship, when we weren't allowed to talk and interact, and especially when we were roasting in the hot containers, meditative practices from my Quaker and Catholic backgrounds were very helpful. I also found myself saying rote prayers from childhood, such as the Hail Mary, and one particular Scripture passage, "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice's

sake." When I was verging on complete exhaustion, I prayed, "Into your hands, I commend my spirit."

LG: IN YOUR PEACE WORK, YOU HAVE LONG BEEN A PROPONENT OF UNARMED CIVILIAN PROTECTION (UCP). HOW IS THE FLOTILLA AN EXAMPLE OF THAT?

JR: The Flotilla represents a large number of unarmed people, inspired by the Palestinians' own steadfastness (Sumud means to be steadfast), directly challenging one of the cruelest militaries in the world. There were around 500 of us going face to face with the IDF. It's true that we were not directly protecting Gazans, but from what we heard about their reactions to the Flotilla, it seems that we protected their hope.

Moreover, the vast number of people around the world who called for the release of our leaders, Thiago Avila and Saif Abukeshk, when they were detained and beaten by the Israelis long after the rest of us were freed, were practicing Unarmed Civilian Protection even if they didn't realize it. Their success is an example of the power of UCP.

LG: YOU FAILED TO DELIVER HUMANITARIAN AID TO GAZA, THE OSTENSIBLE GOAL OF YOUR MISSION. WERE THERE WAYS IN WHICH THE GLOBAL SUMUD FLOTILLA WAS SUCCESSFUL?

JR: Actually, the Flotilla had three goals. Delivering humanitarian aid was one and yes, we failed at that. A second goal was keeping international attention on the plight of the people of Gaza. Coverage by many news outlets—even the New York Times—indicates our success there. A third goal was to challenge governments around the world to stand up for international law and support the long denied human rights of the Palestinians. We were gratified that 13 nations, including Turkey, Spain, Brazil and South Africa, formed a Joint Coalition to condemn Israel's seizure of our boats and France, Belgium, Ireland and Italy also made formal statements against this breach of international law. (By contrast, the U.S. government issued a statement saying that any country giving aid to Flotilla members would "suffer consequences.")

LG: HOW DO YOU THINK THE IMPACT OF FUTURE FLOTILLAS COULD BE INCREASED?

JR: The Flotilla has been sailing every year since 2008. In 2025, GSF put more boats in the water than in the previous 16 years combined. Increasing our numbers even further would be the way to amplify our impact. Imagine a 1000-boat Flotilla sailing to Gaza!

Another Happy Summer at BYM Quaker Camps

LINDA GARRETTSON AND AL BEST,
CAMPING PROGRAM COMMITTEE CLERKS

This year 534 campers spent part of their summer at one of the four BYM Quaker Camps: Catoctin, Opequon, Shiloh, or Teen Adventure.

BYM Quaker Camps are the largest ministry of our Yearly Meeting. All involved in camp want to express our gratitude to the Yearly Meeting for its support of this life- affirming program. As camp families know, delivering a safe, high-quality experience for campers is not cheap! Your giving to camp scholarships and our camp property fund help bridge the gap between camper tuition and the true costs of running camp. We are proud to report that in 2026, BYM provided \$250,000 in financial aid to 203 camp families - or 38% of campers.

SUPPORT LEVEL	NUMBER OF CAMPERS	SPONSORSHIP DOLLARS
\$4000+	2	\$8,950
\$3000+	10	\$35,975
\$2000+	41	\$109,855
\$1000+	86	\$115,513
\$500+	50	\$30,209
\$100+	14	\$4,568
NONE	331	-\$54,970
TOTAL	534	\$250,099

Thanks to the generosity of many F/friends they will never meet, these 203 campers had the opportunity to enjoy the gift of camp. To all who helped - practically, financially, and spiritually - our profound gratitude. Thank you!

BYM Youth Programs 2026-2027 Conferences

GENEVIEVE LEGOWSKI

Young Friends is BYM’s self-governed youth community where high schoolers can step into leadership roles and create a safe and loving community for themselves and their peers. They get to experience this community at weekend conferences held several times throughout the school year at meeting houses around the BYM region. All of the meals, activities, locations, and dates are planned by Young Friends! Some Young Friends have grown up attending a monthly meeting, but for others, youth cons are their main Quaker community and space. All high-school aged Friends are welcome.

Junior Young Friends is for middle-school aged Friends. Adults help plan and facilitate the activities of the week-end, and JYFs hold at least one business meeting during their cons where they build leadership skills and learn about Quaker processes. JYF cons are a place to sing, be silly, get creative, and make new friends from around BYM!

UPCOMING YOUNG FRIENDS CONS:

- September 25-27 @ Gunpowder
- November 20-22 @ Langley Hill

UPCOMING JUNIOR YOUNG FRIENDS CONS:

- November 7-8 location TBD

Fall Community Workdays at BYM Quaker Camps

DAVID HUNTER

Each fall, we join together to put our camps to bed for the winter. Friends are invited to Fall Workdays at BYM Quaker Camps! Workdays run from approximately 9:30am - 4:00pm, and break mid-day for a potluck lunch. Beverage and sandwich fixing are provided. Friends should dress for the weather - including closed-toed shoes. Those under 18 are welcome but must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Find more information and sign up for a Workday at: bymcamps.org/community-work-days

OCTOBER 17TH AT SHILOH QUAKER CAMP

We will be cleaning things up and putting things away, making some repairs and putting camp to bed for the winter. We will also be pulling the dock out of the pond for winter so be ready to get your feet wet. Join us for a beautiful fall day in the Shenandoah.

OCTOBER 24TH AT OPEQUON QUAKER CAMP

Getting camp ready for renters and for the winter will be our main objectives. We may also have some tents to take down and put away and lots of property improvement projects still need doing. Let us know if you would like to stay over on Friday or Saturday night. Come and see BYM's new site.

OCTOBER 31TH AT CATOCTIN QUAKER CAMP

Time to get ready for winter at Catoctin in the beautiful Catoctin Mountains. Come and help get a few repairs done and get things put away for winter.



GIVINGTUESDAY



Giving Tuesday offers an opportunity for BYM Friends to join people across six continents in fundraising for non-profits around the world. BYM is excited to announce that this year, we're raising funds for our **Camping Properties!** In 2026, over 500 kids participated in our four Quaker camps, where they are safe to **find and be exactly who they are**. Stay tuned to find out more as this transformational day approaches!

December 1, 2026



Save the Date: 2027 BYM Women's+ Retreat*

The 2027 BYM Women's+ retreat will be held March 5 – 7 at Pearlstone Center in Reisterstown, MD. The Women's+ of Adelphi Friends Meeting are leading the planning and preparation for the annual event. The theme for the 2027 retreat is Community, Courage, and Creativity: Unlocking the Precious Power of Our Differences. All are welcome!

The retreat offers Friends the opportunity to gather in a safe and supportive environment to explore, harness, and celebrate the richness of our many differences* – and experience the power and possibility that flow from sharing and learning from them with each other.

Registration will open in October 2026.

*The BYM Women's+ Retreat welcomes women with differing sexual orientations, gender expression, abilities, ages, races, economic status, and theological perspectives.

Questions? The planning committee of Women's+ from Adelphi Friends Meeting can be reached at women-sretreatplanningcommittee@bym-rsf.org or check the website: Women's Retreat : Programs & Services : What We Do : Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

Faith & Practice Committee Seeks Input

The Faith and Practice Committee seeks input from BYM's worshipping communities regarding revisions to the Faith and Practice section on Prejudice and

Discrimination. We invite each worshipping community (meeting, worship group, committee, camp, etc.) to conduct one or more listening sessions and then share with us what you discern our Faith and Practice needs to say on the topic. An invitation letter is here: <http://bit.ly/BYM-FandP-2026-06>. Information, advices, and queries for conducting the listening sessions are available here: <https://bit.ly/BYMFandPresource1>.

We held a short information and example listening session at Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting, and a longer one at Annual Session. We plan to schedule an additional (online) information session this fall focused on how your group might season your input before submitting it to our committee and the form the submissions

might take.

We would appreciate a progress report from your worshipping community by the end of November. We will do all we can to facilitate your community's work and are willing to assist by being present with you as you meet. Please reach out if you have any questions.

Working Group on War & Militarism

The Working Group is grateful for the time we had with Friends at last month's Annual Session. Indeed, the world seems to be on fire and there is much to attend to, but in touch with the Spirit, and working together, we know that all good things are still possible.

We are buoyed in noting, regarding nuclear weapons, that it was Spirit-led People Power, both abroad and here, in the 1980s that successfully turned the tide. Such a movement is needed now, and together, with the Spirit, it can happen.

We invite Friends to engage with us in these efforts. Our approach is 3-fold: 1) Educate ourselves and other Friends about the increased threat of nuclear war (we'd be glad to give a presentation at your Meeting); 2) Seek Unity on actions we and other Friends can take to help reduce the risks; 3) Coordinate with sister organizations who share the goal of eliminating the threat. Our methods include Congressional meetings, webinars and other group discussions, letters, and other actions. February's expiration of the New START Treaty, as well as the emerging concern of Artificial Intelligence interfacing with nuclear weapons systems, is adding much urgency to this work.

James Wagner and Stan Becker, Working Group Co-Clerks (your.james.wagner@gmail.com, 240-586-1215; sbecker2@jhu.edu)



Community News

RICHMOND FRIENDS MEETING

Social actions related to current domestic and global crises have figured prominently at RFM in recent months. Two events grew out of the American Friends Service Committee's Love as Action series. On June 14, the community hosted a one-hour silent Meeting for Worship on the median strip of a prominent city avenue. Joining about 35 other Meetings from coast to coast in similar action, about 71 individuals, half from our Meeting, participated in deep silent worship, song, and messages in support of peaceful resilience. Later, on July 4, we again joined Meetings nationwide in worship sharing around the theme of how to respond with love to the challenges we face in America today.

On August 16, our liaison to the AFSC presented a program focused on what the organization is doing regarding the immigration crisis. In related action, an informal Immigrant Solidarity Group compiled a member-and-attender guide to about two dozen local organizations supporting the immigrant community. The ways of offering support were divided into mutual aid, "in the streets," and long-range planning and communication. One such action, taken on by the RFM community, involved food collection for at-risk families.

In July the Peace & Social Concerns Committee sponsored a threshing session regarding the AFSC's "Apartheid-Free Pledge," which stresses working to end all support to Israeli apartheid. A variety of expressed perspectives will help guide the committee as it weighs a way forward on the pledge.

The Race and Racial Justice team continued its focus on having Courageous Conversations in Multi-Racial setting with two forums. The first asked participants to share about a conversation they've wanted to have but are afraid or shy to initiate. Why? What stands in the way? How might fear be overcome? The second focused on courageous conversations that have already been held. What worked? What didn't? In both cases, what might be learned from the experience?

As a new school year approached, the Religious Education Committee sponsored an annual workshop and teacher-planning day. This year's theme was "Introduction to Neuro Diversity," with a presentation from the Autism Society of Virginia. In another education-related action, a group of mentors for students at Redd Elementary, primarily serving low-income students of color, re-formed for a second year.

Submitted by Margaret Edds

HOMEWOOD FRIENDS MEETING

Homewood Friends is a bustling, lively place these days. Typically we have 60-70 at worship and 20-25 at business meeting—double what we had pre-pandemic. Many of our newcomers are young adults. Our worship is grounded and centered. Very gradually our newcomers are being incorporated into the working life of the Meeting. Every Sunday, one member cooks a fabulous vegetarian simple lunch that facilitates lots of conversation after Meeting for Worship.

In June we celebrated the marriage of Beatrice Kenison who grew up in the Meeting. This spring has brought the sadness of the deaths of members Mibs Pell, Kathleen Wilson, and Alex Shook. We have welcomed new members Jossie Dowling, Jen McCann, Megary Sigler, Fin Sigler-McCann, and Thom Price. Our nursery is bustling with children. We have a small First Day School for 1st-8th graders.

The Meeting House is much used by Homewood Friends and community groups, especially Hinenu Baltimore, the Jewish congregation with which we share space. After 100 years of sweltering heat in the summer we have installed an HVAC system that will cool and heat the Meeting Room, supported by the 66 solar panels on our roof. The Meeting House served as a comfort station for the Baltimore Pride Parade and we held a Pride event called "Drag as a Spiritual Practice: Drag Divinity and the Public Universal Friend" with Rev. Marge Erin Spread.

Our experiment with peace and justice work seems to be working. In Spring 2025 we laid down our Peace and Social Justice Committee due to dysfunction, followed by two well-attended threshing sessions. Those led to the formation of a small Peace and Justice Coordinating Team which is supporting the work of three Spirit-Led Action Groups (SLAGs) on Palestine/Israel, Immigrant Support, and Public Witness. Perhaps more SLAGs will evolve where three or more Friends are led. The Palestine/Israel group is leading us to consider whether or not Homewood will sign the Apartheid Free Pledge. The Immigrant Support group sponsors workshops to support immigrant families getting papers in order to protect families if a family member is taken by ICE. The Public Witness group supports a weekly vigil for peace in Iran and participation in AFSC Love as Action monthly silent witnesses.

ADELPHI MONTHLY MEETING

In the last three months, Adelphi Friends have watched our “new” Meeting House rise from the ground. We’ve seen photos of the excavations, the foundations, the framing and the walls as they grew. Now we see details of plumbing, electrical and all other connections (except for the people) that make a Meeting House. We hope to share photos in our next report—we anticipate that we may move into our renovated and expanded space sometime in November.

We have been meeting at Friends Community School, a project that was birthed within Adelphi Meeting decades ago, and is now able to invite us into their space as guests each week. Relations between the school and the Meeting have grown stronger in this new arrangement—we follow each other’s news with great interest each week.

We have taken this “between space” time to look deeply into some questions at our own growing edges. We’re looking more carefully at the meaning of Meeting for Business, and at how we want these Meetings to reflect our commitment to anti-racism. We will continue this searching in a series of “second hours” in the fall on what the Yearly Meeting’s queries on anti-racism means to us as a community and individually. We’ll follow on with a study of the Pendle Hill pamphlet on “Racial Wounding and Racial Justice in Quaker Communities.”

We’ve explored some of the more difficult questions about war and genocide in second hours on Israel and Palestine, and on conscientious objection to participation in war. We considered and approved a minute proposed by Sandy Spring Meeting on the war against Iran.

In our “between space,” we’ve come together to reach out to the wider community in a variety of ways. For some of us, that reaching out included joyous participation in the Pride Parade in downtown DC and staffing an information table about Quakers. And many Friends happily joined some of the street-side war protests along major roads in our two counties and in DC.

For some of us, reaching out has meant joining teams to provide practical support for two immigrant families impacted by the unpredictable actions of the anti-immigration enforcement agencies. It has also prompted us—earlier in the year—to join in a lawsuit opposing the administration’s declaration that it could enter religious spaces to enforce immigration laws. (We’ve tracked the positive progress of that lawsuit throughout this last quarter.)

We also reach in—to one another—in a resilient web of connections. Small groups meet in women’s groups,

men’s groups, faithfulness groups, and a few continuing “change group” discussions. We continue to have a monthly “Friends and Fiber” gathering for people to share knitting, stitching, and stories—and we provide an online space for “Poem as Portal” gatherings.

Each month, some Friends come together to discuss a film—on themes of diverse culture and life experiences—for our Second Friday Film series. In the last three months, we’ve discussed “Little Richard: I Am Everything” (official trailer here, “The Librarians” (intro here) and “Dogs of Democracy” (summary here.)

Not to mention committees!

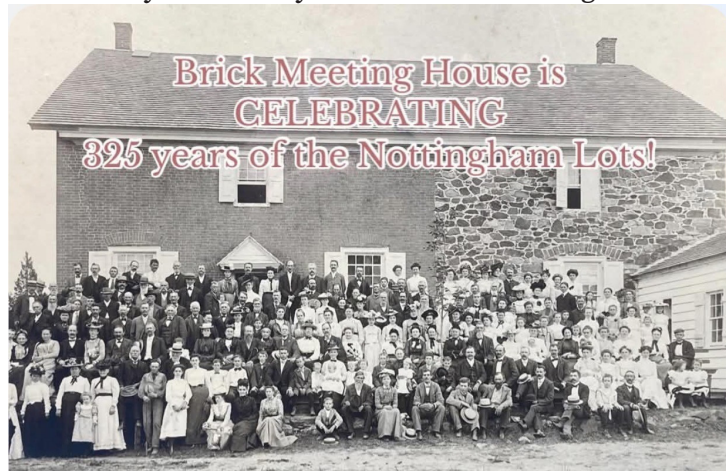
In all of this, our worship seems to have grown wider and deeper. Nearly every week we welcome new “seekers” who have found us in a variety of ways. We are enjoying a new (for us) practice of intergenerational worship-sharing four times a year—in any month that has a fifth Sunday. Young Friends in our First Day School classes decide ahead of time about some queries they would like to explore and, after some quiet worship, we break into small groups and consider the queries together.

Our Meetings for Worship are often full of messages and sometimes completely quiet. In those times together, we draw guidance, hope, and strength from gathering as a community in the presence of the Spirit.
Submitted by Ruth Flower

NOTTINGHAM FRIENDS MEETING

THE 325 YEAR NOTTINGHAM LOTS CELEBRATION

Nottingham Lots 325th Anniversary Committee of Brick Meeting House hosted a Nottingham Lots Celebration! Saturday Sept. 26, 2026, starting at 10 a.m., we enjoyed a day full of activities, food, exhibits, historic trade demonstrations, history lectures, local history displays and building community. Sunday Sept. 27, 2026, we had 10:30 a.m. Worship, and at 11:30 a.m., we had a lecture followed by a cemetery tour of Brick Meeting burial



CHARLOTTESVILLE FRIENDS MEETING

Charlottesville Friends held their annual end-of-summer swim party and potluck at a local county park just below the Blue Ridge Mountains on August 8th. Traditionally on Labor Day weekend, we gathered earlier this year as the swimming lake was closing due to an earlier start to local schools. About three dozen Friends enjoyed the opportunity to swim, hike and have an afternoon of fellowship.

An adhoc committee of the Meeting, working with a community task force, recently established a Free Fridge on our property, providing perishable and non-perishable foods for neighbors especially those concerned about driving/traveling to local food banks. The fridge has been well-stocked, with many items needing to be replenished daily.

A Friend is working on organizing a monthly Meeting for Healing to begin this fall, a traditional Quaker practice in which Friends gather to bring healing Light and energy to friends with physical, spiritual, or emotional needs (more information about Meetings for Healing at <https://www.friendsjournal.org/meeting-worship-healing/>).

We began our fall schedule on Sept. 6 with our Connections adult education hour resuming between our early and later worship times. Our religious education committee is also planning an October camping weekend for families at Sherando Lake, a park and campground in the area. *Submitted by Jon Nafziger*

DUNNINGS CREEK FRIENDS MEETING

This update is informed by, and includes quotes from, Susan Williams's (Clerk of the Peace & Social Concerns Committee) State of The Meeting Statement.

"This past year has been one where we have indeed helped one another tenderly... As a Meeting, we have individually and collectively reached out to members experiencing difficulties of life...

Dunnings Creek has faced real difficulties this past year with a huge material plane problem of mold in the restrooms and vestibule...Many weeks with no restrooms, and many of cold and snowy weather have resulted in a challenge to our cohesive community. We miss being together. It takes a toll on our joy. BUT! "That's life, there are always challenges with opportunities to grow."

We returned to the Meeting House in Spring, and welcomed 19 BYM Young Friends and Mentors to our Meeting House with great joy.

We continue on a process of preparation and discernment for our next community offering of a Still Listen-

ing Event to promote understanding of the experience and history in Bedford County of minority populations. We look forward to new opportunities for interfaith cooperation and collaboration.

Dunnings Creek continues to connect with our neighbors along the road to our rural Meeting House with small gifts (plants in spring and a note Hello Neighbor). The sense is that it has become an expected, welcome treat.

Outreach is being coordinated by Meeting members to let potential interested members of the wider community know about us.

We welcomed several new regular attenders to Meeting.

We enjoyed silent worship, fellowship, and recreation at our annual August Picnic at Stony Creek Lake.

Submitted by Ellen Prentiss Campbell

PATAPSCO FRIENDS MEETING

Patapsco Friends continue to enjoy the successful clerks team, an experiment this year started by the Nominations Committee. We recommend it! Also continuing is our semi-monthly pot luck, our monthly meditation circle and Course in Miracles discussion group. Our fall retreat continues to be held at Hebron House, where several Friends speak about their individual spiritual practices, a rich experience for all. Our First Day School of about 8 children and their teachers meets most weeks, although families were away this summer.

Some of our practices are returning after a hiatus during the pandemic. We are holding a pamphlet discussion in alternate months and a member has restarted the publishing of the "Quaker Heron," Patapsco's occasional newsletter. A return to traditions, even if on Zoom, is welcome.

Our members are experiencing life changing events. The father of one member passed on, and Friends will joyfully celebrate the marriage of a member in late September.

New this fall to our Meeting will be Joe's return from a 40 incarceration. Joe was a member of the Meeting held each week at Hagerstown MCI. We also celebrate the weekly Meeting attendance of Kent. He gives a message occasionally.

An overnight campout is planned for late September, to coincide with a Peace Walk and pot luck. There might be hot dogs! We will have a Second Hour to visit a green burial site to learn about it.

Submitted by Jean Pfefferkorn

FRIENDS MEETING OF WASHINGTON (FMW)

Friends Meeting of Washington is one of the largest Meetings within Baltimore Yearly Meeting and the only remaining Meeting within the District of Columbia. The first Meeting for Worship took place in January 1931. Friends from all over the country contributed funds for the construction of the Meeting House which provided a place of worship for President Herbert Hoover and his wife, Lou. We have started preparations for our Centennial Celebration which will take place in 2030.

FMW is experiencing exciting growth in attenders, including Young Adult Friends and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Members and attenders are active in many peace and social concerns activities, including feeding breakfast with So Others May Eat (SOME) and the annual Shoebox Project that provides backpacks loaded with hats, gloves, and toiletries to the DC homeless community.

A DC Jewish congregation, DC Minion, rents space in FMW's building for their worship services. Over the past year, FMW representatives met with them to solicit their input on a proposed banner for the fence along Florida Avenue to promote peace in the response to the turmoil in Gaza.

Friends Meeting of Washington's Quakerism 101 class is a free online introductory class on Quaker beliefs and practice which consists of the following five sessions: Quaker Worship & Vocal Ministry, Quaker History, Quaker Faith & Practice, Living Your Quaker Testimony and Quaker Process. These sessions provide a strong foundation of understanding to begin your spiritual journey into the rich tradition of the Quakers, Religious Society of Friends. The Q101 class is offered twice a year in the spring and fall.

Contact: Ann Herzog at lannherzog@gmail.com for information on the upcoming fall session.



BYM 2026-2027 Program Year

UPDATED 08/27/2026

Sept 11-13	Spiritual Formation Fall Retreat Clagett Center, Adamstown, MD	March 13	Interim Meeting PA Meeting, TBD Agenda items due Feb 5 Supporting docs due Feb 11
Sept 25-27	Family Camp Opequon, Harper's Ferry, WV	March 30	Spring Interchange Deadline Annual Data Requests Due
Sept 25-27	Young Friends Con Gunpowder Meeting, Tentative	April 10-12	Young Friends Con Shiloh Quaker Camp, Tentative
Nov 7-8	JYF Con Location TBD	April 15	Spiritual State of the Meeting Reports Due
Nov 14	Interim Meeting Opequon Quaker Camp, Tentative Agenda items due October 9, Supporting docs due October 15	April 17	Budget & Apportionment Meeting Held Online
Nov 20-22	Young Friends Con Langley Hill Friends Meeting	Apr 30-May 2	Jr Young Friends Con
Dec 15	BYM Camps Registration Opens www.bymcamps.org	May 14-16	Spiritual Formation Spring Retreat Shepherd Spring, Sharpsburg, MD
Jan 2	Winter Interchange Deadline	May 14-16	Young Friends Con The Clearing VA
Jan 8-10	Young Friends Con Herndon Meeting, Tentative	May 27-29	Camp Alumni Campout Shiloh Quaker Camp
Jan 15	Annual Data Requests Sent to Monthly Meetings	June 12	Interim Meeting VA Meeting, Tentative Agenda items due May 7 Supporting docs due May 13
Feb 12-14	Young Friends Con	June 26	BYM Camps Begin, tentative
Feb 28	Budget Requests Due	Jul 19-25	Annual Sessions @ Hood College Agenda items due June 12 Supporting docs due June 17
March 5-7	Women's Retreat Pearlstone, Reisterstown, MD	Aug 16 - 20	Staff Sabbath Week
March 6-7	JYF Con		

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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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