



# BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

*A publication of the Brooklyn Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends*

[brooklynmeeting.org](http://brooklynmeeting.org)

January 2016



## Just in the St. Nick of Time: A Winter Celebration Report

On Saturday, December 19, a group of approximately 60 friends convened for dinner, treats and a visit from Santa. The social room was transformed into a winter wonderland via pink paper lights and a glowing Christmas tree, while a giant cardboard gingerbread house was the centerpiece of a great deal of merrymaking as younger guests raced around it while playing games of tag. Friends brought and prepared many excellent dishes to share, including lasagna and sausages, fresh salads and sides and, of course, a number of beautifully decorated sweets.

Julie Mattson-Glynn also displayed exceptional baking skills by providing no less than a

dozen actual gingerbread houses for young friends to decorate. Her constructions ably withstood even the most ambitious candy ornamentation.

There was some concern that Santa's schedule wouldn't be able to accommodate this gathering at such a busy time of year, but nevertheless he was sighted and enticed to descend with a bag of gifts. His expert distribution of presents was an impressive feat. He recognized and called each child by name, producing packages for everyone. Santa stayed just



long enough for a few pictures, receiving the gracious thanks of his audience. He then bounded back up the stairs with his sack to return to his Christmas preparations.

— Catherine Despont

## Narrowing the Generation Gap: Friends Finding Common Ground

Adults and children often seem to live in different worlds, differing in opinion and perspective. But there are some topics that offer us a chance to bridge the age gap. In the following interview, 10-year-old Max Frackman and long-time Brooklyn Meeting member Nancy Black were each asked the same questions. The goal was to learn how they might be more similar than they are different.

### What do the winter holidays mean to you?

**Max:** I think it's a time to be a family, for most of it. Everyone is coming together. For Christmas, my grandparents are coming. That'll be fun.

**Nancy:** I was brought up celebrating Christmas. My parents were Presbyterian, so I still like having a tree. We don't do that much else, because I do hold to the Quaker notion that we don't make the holidays special. But I like having a tree in the house and having the lights, and, of course, I like having the family come over. And we do give one gift to each grandchild.

### What is your favorite way to celebrate the holidays?

**Max:** I like eating. You can sit at a table and talk with everyone if you haven't seen them for a while.

**Nancy:** Listening to some Christmas music. There's a program that's recorded from King's College in Cambridge on the day before

Christmas, "A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols." I love to listen to that. And I like WKCR's Bachfest, which plays nothing but Bach for ten days.

### Do you, or did you, attend First Day School? What is your favorite thing about it?

**Max:** Yes, I'm in Spirits. I really like the games and Name Whip, where you go around and say your name and something about you or something you did lately. You get to learn about everyone in class.

**Nancy:** I did not attend First Day School here. I haven't been here that long. When I was growing up, I went to Sunday School in the Presbyterian Church.



### What do you like most about attending Meeting for Worship?

**Max:** I just like being with everyone.

**Nancy:** That's an easy answer: The silence. Being with everyone in the silence and looking around the room at so many people that I love.

--Melissa Caravanaugh

## December Meeting for Business: Applications for Membership; Reports from Nominating Committee, the Treasurer, Ministry and Council

### Applicants Read Their Own Letters

Jonathan Fluck and Paul Sireci read, for the first time, their letters applying for membership in Brooklyn Meeting. A second reading will take place in January. Jonathan has been active in the Peace and Social Action Committee as well as the monthly Spiritual Readings held before Meeting for Worship on the second First Day of the month.

### Memorial Minute for Susan Laughter

The Ministry and Council Committee presented a Memorial Minute for Susan Laughter, who passed away this past July. She was an active member of Brooklyn Meeting, serving on the Ministry and Counsel, Child Care and Mary McDowell Care Relationship Committees. On a professional level, she founded a personnel business, Wall Street Services, which provides investment banks and law firms with temporary employees. She leaves her son, Peter; daughter-in-law, Stacey Goldman; granddaughter, Eddy; and sister, Sarah Frederick.

### New York Explorers Lease Renewed

The Property Committee reported that staff is working with our tenants, New York Explorers, on concerns regarding shared space. The New York Explorers lease has been approved until June.

## Treasurer Reports on Projected Meeting Income for 2016

Income interest: \$100  
Combined Funds, NYQM: \$2500  
Meeting House Fund: \$150  
Donation from Book Table: \$100  
Member contributions: \$84,416  
Total Income: \$87,266

This income pays for Brooklyn Meeting activities. Meetinghouse maintenance is funded by New York Quarterly Meeting, which owns the building.

## Meeting Approves Donations from Socially Responsible Activities Fund

The following groups will receive donations from the Fund:  
-- African Education Committee, for schools in Tanzania: \$2500  
-- Brooklyn Meeting Community Dinner: \$1000  
-- Ministry and Counsel Committee, for Christmas mailing: \$1000.

## Six Friends Appointed to Serve the Meeting

At the recommendation of Nominating Committee, the following Friends were approved for individual or committee service: Ted Ehrhardt, Clerk; Nancy Black, Assistant Clerk; Ben Frisch, Ministry and Counsel Committee; Joan Malin, State of the Meeting Report; Melissa Cavanaugh, Communications Committee; Senta Romasco, Social Hour Committee.

## Faculty and Staff Recognition Dinner for Schools

The faculty and staff of Brooklyn Friends School and Mary McDowell Friends School will be welcomed for worship and dinner at the Meetinghouse on January 12, 2016 at 5 p.m. All Friends are invited, and can bring desserts to share.

## Minute to NYQM Requests that Brooklyn Meeting member be considered for Recorded Ministry

The Meeting responded to the recommendation of the Ministry and

Counsel Committee by approving a minute to New York Yearly Meeting. The minute asks that Beth Kelly, Brooklyn Meeting member, receive formal recognition as a member of Brooklyn Meeting. That minute is printed elsewhere in this issue.

## And Finally, a Quotation from the Clerk:

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**“Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the sky is still dark.” -- Rabindranath Tagore**

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-- *Molly Rusnak*

## Historic Quarterly Meeting Approves Separate Incorporation of Friends Seminary

After years of effort, New York Quarterly Meeting has reached an agreement that would free Friends Seminary and the Meeting from an entangled and conflicted relationship. The school and Quarterly Meeting Trustees presented this agreement to the Quarterly Meeting Corporation on December 6, 2015.

In an atmosphere of hope and relief, Friends reviewed the agreement regarding property and finance and approved it. An agreement regarding Quaker procedures and practices in the now-independent school is now being developed by the Quarterly Meeting Relationship Committee. The Quaker aspect of Friends Seminary may also receive an outside review by the Friends Council on Education.

The property settlement includes the following division of buildings: Friends Seminary will own the Masonic Temple and Townhouses, which they purchased. The 1964 building and the two landmark buildings next to the Meetinghouse will be provided to Friends Seminary with a 99-year and 75-year ground lease, respectively,

giving the school responsibility for the interior of each. The Central [office] building and Meetinghouse will be kept by the Meeting with specific shared spaces to be rented by the school. Friends Seminary will contribute to the maintenance of these buildings, \$775,000 annually, and also to a Capital Reserve Fund for large projects.

The Quarterly Meeting will provide Friends Seminary with \$20,500, for development rights needed for a campus redevelopment project. These terms will roll out sequentially at a rate agreed to by both.

Brooklyn Friends should be mindful that Quarterly Meeting funds also support Brooklyn Meetinghouse and that the old school building next to Brooklyn Meetinghouse provides rental income as part of those funds.

-- *Molly Rusnak*

## Spiritual Friendship: Seek and You Shall Find

Are you searching for deeper connections with fellow Quakers, but don't quite know how to shift from social hour conversation to something more grounded and in-depth? Do you want to be a supportive presence for another person in meeting?

We may have these connections, but they remain unspoken. So how do we find such spiritual friendships? We are working to jumpstart the process, through intention and support.

At last year's Powell House retreat, community building, engagement and the idea of intentional spiritual friendship were subjects of discussion. The idea is to create a bond with another person in meeting so that you may work together to strengthen your spirituality (whatever that may mean to you).

A small group of us met for six months, exploring what it means to build an intentional spiritual friendship as well as the ways in which those

involved come to define the scope of that connection together.

Approximately 30 people have already filled out a request form to be matched with other members. If YOU are interested in finding out more, and perhaps participating in this project, then please contact Yana ([yanaland@gmail.com](mailto:yanaland@gmail.com)).

The idea is to encourage connection and build deeper bonds. Please note that if you are matched with someone that you don't connect to for whatever reason, then you can reenter the pool and be re-matched. This is not a problem.

We hope to hear from you soon.

-- **Yana Landowne**

## **End of Life Decision-Making Workshop Scheduled for Feb. 28**

On February 28<sup>th</sup> from 1-4 p.m. Pastoral Care and ARCH will be leading a workshop on "Quaker Values & End of Life Decision Making." Anyone 18 and over is welcome and encouraged to attend; a donation of \$10 is suggested. Together, we hope to enable each other to make informed decisions with the guidance of Friends values.

Please register with Electra Cummings ([cummings.electra@gmail.com](mailto:cummings.electra@gmail.com))

These thoughts, from Henri Nouwen, give us much to consider:  
"Is it possible to befriend our dying gradually and to live open to it, trusting that we have nothing to fear? Is it possible to prepare for our death with the same attentiveness that our parents had in preparing our birth? Can we wait for our death as for a friend who wants to welcome us home?....Will our death give new life, new hope and new faith to our friends?....How can we prepare ourselves for our death in such a way that our dying will be a new way for us to send our and God's spirit to those whom we have loved and who have loved us?"

We hope to see you there.

-- *Yana Landowne*

## **What is a "Recorded Minister" in Quaker Meetings?**

Brooklyn Meeting has requested New York Yearly Meeting to record a member as a minister, and Friends may wonder what this means. The following, an excerpt from *New York Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice*, helps to explain:

"Some meetings may wish to continue the practice of recording ministers. In cases where a member has spoken in the public ministry to the edification and spiritual help of the congregation and has rendered this service to such an extent as to afford a basis for judgement as to the nature of these gifts and calling, the meeting on ministry and counsel should carefully consider whether there is evidence of a gift in the ministry that should be officially recognized."

The Meeting then sends a minute to Yearly Meeting Coordinating Committee for Ministry and Counsel. Further information is on page 127 of the 2014 edition.

-- *Molly Rusnak*

## **Request to New York Yearly Meeting, from Brooklyn Monthly Meeting, Regarding the Ministry of Beth Kelly**

Brooklyn Monthly Meeting is satisfied that our member, Beth Kelly, carries a gift in the ministry that we consider of suitable character to be recorded by New York Yearly Meeting's Ministry Coordinating Committee. In accordance with NYYM's Faith and Practice, we are forwarding this minute to the Ministry Coordinating Committee with our trust in the process of discernment and recording her gift.

Beth's gift for spiritual accompaniment first manifested in her work as a sexual assault survivors advocate in the late 1990s, and continued to develop as her interest in Quakerism also grew. She first became a Quaker at 57<sup>th</sup> Street Monthly Meeting in Chicago in 2008 and transferred her membership to Brooklyn in 2014. 57<sup>th</sup> Street Meeting first recognized her gift and endorsed her ministry of chaplaincy in 2012. Beth works as a professional hospital chaplain at NYU Lutheran Medical Center, where she serves in pediatrics, behavioral health and other medical units as necessary. Her qualifications for the ministry are exemplary, including her undergraduate degree from Earlham College, her Master of Divinity Degree from Chicago Theological Seminary and her total of seven units of Clinical Pastoral Education [CPE]. CPE is the experiential postgraduate study required for certification as a professional chaplain. A minimum of four units are required for this certification.

While her ministry serves the diverse needs of patients in crisis in her professional setting, Beth's pastoral care ministry is also of professional value to our Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. Her ministry currently manifests in her service with our Brooklyn Monthly Meeting Nominating Committee and our New York Quarterly Meeting Ministry and Counsel Committee, which she also serves as co-clerk. Both of these appointments are exceptionally challenging for many reasons, and Beth fulfills this service with joy, competence, compassion and resilience -- exactly the qualities that are most needed for the work of these committees.

Perhaps most importantly, Beth's one-on-one interactions with Friends in our Monthly and Quarterly Meetings speak of her quiet gifts for deep listening and for bringing out the healing possible for each of us. At her request she receives ongoing support from a committee composed of members of Brooklyn Meeting. We recognize Spirit at work in her ministry and seek to record this gift

as our commitment to nurture and care for it.

-- Brooklyn Meeting Ministry and Counsel Committee

## Meeting Property Committee Displays Proposed Plan for Meetinghouse Entrance

An architect's drawing of a suggested renovation of the Meetinghouse foyer is available on the bulletin board in the social room. Plans for the bathrooms include wheelchair access, with a reduction in the number of toilets providing the necessary space.

The coat closets and bars for hangers are eliminated, as hooks are provided instead. The Meeting Welcoming Committee reports that approximately 130 coats need to be stored. According to the plan, 85 hooks will be provided. To provide wall space for the hooks, the custom-designed welcoming cabinet will be removed from the entrance area. This includes the guest book, informational pamphlets, name tags and other welcoming items, as well as the antique Quaker pictures.

Friends are invited to contact the Property Committee members with comments and suggestions.

-- Molly Rusnak

## Quaker Values and the Great Outdoors: Report from the Hikes with Worship

*Robert Matson has been an attender of the Brooklyn Monthly Meeting since January 2010. He is a volunteer trip leader for the non-profit Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) for which he has led about 100 hiking, backpacking, skiing, bicycling and adventure travel trips. Robert's outdoor recreation training includes the National Outdoor Leadership School's (NOLS) Winter Outdoor Educator program, the AMC's Mountain Leadership School and Maine Waterways' Maine Guide training program. In addition, Robert is a Wilderness*

*First Responder, certified through Wilderness Medicine Associates.*

In the spring of 2011, I offered to lead the first of what would turn out to be five years of Hikes with Worship for the Brooklyn Monthly Meeting. I was not the first to do this; I personally was inspired by Héloïse Rathbone who stood to announce a hike soon after I began attending Meeting in 2010.

Looking back now, from December 2015, I can count 25 Hikes with Worship that I've led, with over 120 different people participating. In addition, while we're counting stuff, those intrepid hikers have visited eight different state and county parks, have gone on two overnight camping trips and have organized nine Meetings for Worship/Planning/Dinner to support the light, clarity and effort required to continue these hikes with worship.

serious accident, injury or illness. Zero hikers were lost (at least corporally) for even a moment, zero trains or buses were missed, and, although safety whistles and flashlights were "required gear" (with whistles given to those who forgot them), there were zero occasions when either flashlights or whistles were needed. For a group of city-dwellers walking around in the woods, that's pretty spectacular.

Besides hiking and sitting in silent worship – usually at a viewpoint at mid-day -- group activities included swimming in backcountry lakes, canoeing, blueberry picking, flower and leaf peeping, group meal-prep and shopping for ingredients, pumping and treating water, helping one another to wash hands without running water, hearing (or not hearing) prowling bears, painting Easter eggs, seeing Manhattan from far away, making delicious hot drinks, traveling to and from park lands, navigating unmarked trails, playing



I usually described the hikes as "moderately strenuous," in consideration of the terrain of the ungraded, rough hiking trails that are typical of the Hudson Valley and Appalachian Mountain areas near the city. That may have discouraged some people or made others feel left out. However, we also had an admirable safety record, with only one sprained ankle, one report of blisters, and zero reports of Lyme disease, ticks or any

games, and, of course, sharing meals and snacks and the pleasure of good weather.

We also had the experience of looking out for one another: loaning warm clothing to another who got cold, sharing food and water with those who forgot their own and helping care for and evacuate the one hiker who couldn't walk on their own. We had hours without the interruption of cell

phones, time to express ourselves freely, time to tell jokes and stories and get to know one another. Several times, couples came on hikes as a date. A few of them found opportunities (if not always privacy) to make out. We got exhausted and fell asleep on the bus on the way home. We saw big snakes. By George, we had a lot of good, clean, healthy fun.

Speaking personally, the hikes with worship created special connections with other Quakers, whom I saw in new lights. I feel that the activities we do with others – sitting next to one another in silence, sharing committee work, making a meal, talking leisurely over coffee, stepping into cold water to ford a stream – all of these create

unique connections by the nature of the shared activity: THIS is how I feel about this person while we cook; THIS is how I feel about this person while we make polite conversation; THIS is how I feel about this person while we walk together; THIS is how I feel about this person when we're hungry and tired.

By the end of a hike, I always thought everyone's faces looked more relaxed and unselfconscious. In the openness of the outdoors and the plainness of the natural world, especially under the influence of fatigue and fresh air, I believe people can become more honest about who they are; there's no point pretending to be something you're not when the only witness is a mushroom. That self-honesty can be

habit-forming. It can be infectious, too. And we'd all start to catch it, little by little.

While we were never blazing trails nor being the "First Ever" to do what we did, the past five years of hikes with worship were -- for me certainly, and I think it's true for others -- a wonderful pathway for discovering ourselves and each other. I'm glad to have had this opportunity to discover Friendship and friendship within the light of the Brooklyn Monthly Meeting.

– Robert Matson

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## Submission Guidelines

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The Communications Committee welcomes Brooklyn Meeting News contributions from all Meeting members and attenders. Our newsletter includes a variety of content which may be of interest to our community, including but not limited to:

- Recaps of recent Meeting events
- Previews of upcoming events
- Issues pertaining to our Quaker faith and history

The newsletter is published on the first Sunday of each month, and we request that submissions for the next issue be submitted by **January 25<sup>th</sup>**.

General Guidelines:

- Please send an email to [newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org) so that we may briefly discuss your contribution, as regards its timeliness, appropriateness, and length.
- Contributions should

- generally be brief, between 150-450 words in length.
- Please send your newsletter submission as an attached Word document.
- Keep in mind that contributions will be copy edited, and may not appear in the newsletter in exactly the same form as how they were submitted.

Thank you for your interest - we look forward to your input!

## Regularly Scheduled Activities

### Meetings for Worship

9:00–9:50 AM and  
11:00 AM–NOON on Sundays,  
in the meeting room  
6:30 PM Tuesdays,  
in the meeting room

### Childcare

Sundays during 11:00 AM worship, for  
children of 3 months to 3 years, in the care  
of an early childhood teacher and dedicated  
volunteers

### First Day School

10:45 AM – 11:45 AM, Sundays, September to  
June. Three classes, roughly related to age:  
Bodies (4-6), Minds (7-9) and Spirits (10-12).

### Social Hour

12:00 PM Sundays,  
Ground-level dining room

### Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

1:00 PM, first Sundays, in the meeting  
room

### Hymn Singing around the Piano

10:00 AM, first Sundays, in the meeting  
room

### Readings of Spiritual Texts

10:00 AM, second Sundays, in the meeting  
room

### Worship Sharing

10:00 AM, third Sundays, on the third  
floor

### Community Dinner

1:00 PM-3:00 PM SET-UP  
3:00 PM-4:00 PM MEAL/SERVING  
4:00 PM- 5:00 PM CLEAN-UP, COME FOR  
SOME OR ALL!

Last Sunday of every month, ground-level  
dining room; volunteers appreciated for  
this monthly dinner for anyone who wishes  
a free hot meal. Children encouraged to  
volunteer.

Contact: Andres Colapinto,  
[acolabus@gmail.com](mailto:acolabus@gmail.com)

## Upcoming Events

Ongoing additions to upcoming Meeting events are regularly added to the Meeting website at <http://www.brooklynmeeting.org/calendar>.

**To submit an event, email [events@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:events@brooklynmeeting.org)**

### January

#### *January 12<sup>th</sup> 5:00PM- 7:30PM Meetinghouse:*

**Appreciation dinner for Brooklyn Friends  
School and Mary Macdowell School**

Brooklyn Meeting has invited the faculty and  
staff from Brooklyn Friends School and Mary  
McDowell Friends School to come to the  
Meeting House on Tuesday, January 12 from  
5:00 - 7:30 p.m. There will be a Meeting for  
Worship and a gourmet dinner.

#### *January 30<sup>th</sup> 2:00PM Meetinghouse*

**African American Response to the Atomic  
Bomb**

Peace and Social Action Committee will co-  
sponsor a speech delivered by Professor Vincent  
Intondi, from Montgomery College in Maryland.

### February

#### *February 28<sup>th</sup> 1:00PM- 4:00PM Meetinghouse:*

On February 28<sup>th</sup> from 1-4 p.m. Pastoral Care and  
ARCH will be leading a workshop on “Quaker  
Values & End of Life Decision Making.” Anyone  
18 and over is welcome and encouraged to  
attend; a donation of \$10 is suggested. Together,  
we hope to enable each other to make informed  
decisions with the guidance of Friends values.  
**Please register with Electra Cummings  
([cummings.electra@gmail.com](mailto:cummings.electra@gmail.com))**

*Send additions to Regularly Scheduled Activities or Upcoming Events to [events@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:events@brooklynmeeting.org).*

*Send inquiries or suggestions about the newsletter to [newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org).*

*The Monthly Meeting Newsletter is published by the Communications Committee of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting.  
Current members: Melissa Cavanaugh, Catherine Despont, Ben Hill, Molly Rusnak, Lucy Sikes, and Anna White.*