



Brooklyn Meeting News

Brooklyn Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

brooklynmeeting.org

October, 2019

Updates from the Communications Committee

Dear Friends: The Brooklyn Meeting Newsletter is back! In addition to publishing the articles that Friends submit, we would love to include more visual and artistic contributions. Please send your poems, photographs, or other artwork (maybe a creation from "Explore the World of Collage Art") to newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org.

- Inquiries and suggestions about the newsletter can be sent to newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org. To contribute to the newsletter, please see the submission guidelines on page 6.
- To submit an event for the weekly email, please write to events@brooklynmeeting.org. Submissions must be received before 9pm on Sunday evening to be included for the upcoming week.

You can view and download digital copies of the newsletter at <https://www.brooklynmeeting.org/newsletter.html>

Catching Up

What are Quakers?

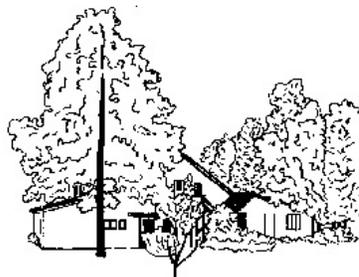
On Sunday, September 22, 2019, a few Friends gathered after Meeting for Worship to hear and respond to the traveling ministry of Don Badgley, member of Poughkeepsie Friends Meeting. His topic was "The Joys and Miracles of Experiential Faith." He recounted that he had worked developing an answer to a question often posed by non-Quakers:

"What are Quakers?"

He provided what he called an "elevator response." I thought it was worth circulating more widely among our faith community:

"Imagine a community of faith that is not dependent in ancient doctrine or scriptures, but based entirely on and in the direct and immediate Experience of the Divine Light - what most people call God. Quakers seek and trust this Living Spirit as the definitive Authority."

-- Nancy Black



NYYM New Young Adult Field Secretary

New York Yearly Meeting has hired Marissa Badgley as an Interim* Young Adult Field Secretary. Building on her work organizing the year-long Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series of workshops and conferences that ended this summer, she will continue organizing workshops and weekend retreats for young adult Friends and seekers. Online worship groups and video conferences will increase accessibility and expand participation to include Friends with difficult schedules or locations.

Marissa plans on exploring mentor opportunities and is willing to travel to speak to meetings to offer workshops about engaging young adults. She is also available for one-on-one spiritual consultation and support.

*This position is funded for 2019 and is contingent on budgetary approval for 2020.

Looking Forward

Brooklyn Meeting Retreat

November 8-10 at Powell House, this retreat will be an intergenerational weekend based on the theme "Sharing our Spiritual Journeys." The registration deadline is October 27th.

Registration forms are at the meeting house - this year's retreat is pay-as-led and open to all in the New York Quarterly Meeting.

Email retreat@brooklynmeeting.org with any questions.

The communications committee encourages attendees of all ages to consider sharing their experiences through an article, drawing, or other visual means for the next newsletter.

Anna Curtis Center (L) and Pitt Hall (R), Powell House



A Very Brief Summary of Business Meeting, First Day, First of Ninth Month 2019

Out of silence, a passage from Jean Toomer's *The Flavor of Man*, William Penn Lecture (1949) was read. Marilyn Stotts' membership letter was read a second time and approved. Friends welcomed her. Maria Arias will convene a welcoming dinner. Jennifer Apodaca's membership has been transferred here from Albuquerque. She too was welcomed; Elizabeth Blake will convene a welcoming dinner.

The Community Dinner Committee's report was accepted after discussion, including compostable waste collection. Erin Hughes was nominated / approved for this committee. A passage from *Young Friends Committee, 1926*, is read and considered in silence. Friends discuss the Epistle from NYYM Summer Sessions, staff support for young adult friends and youth, the concept of membership in NYYM, a vision of future-selves as Quakers, and work the witness against mass incarceration.

Finance and Collections' report is accepted. The treasurer gives an oral report; written report to be delivered next business meeting. There was strong support for the request for a 10% increase in the NYYM donation to \$52,000.

Approved committee nominations: David Cater - Property; Benjamin Warnke - Child Care; Liz Laube - Social Hour. Senta Romasco's release from the book table committee was accepted. The property agreement with Friends Seminary has been closed and is available to Friends in the NYQM office.



Friends and Climate Concerns

On Friday, September 20th, Friends showed their support of the Student Climate Strike and joined with other adults and teachers, students from the Brooklyn Friends School, Berkeley-Carroll, St. Ann's, Mary Mc Dowell, Packard, Poly Prep, Brooklyn Tech, and other schools in the "Student Climate March" over the Brooklyn Bridge.

We gathered on the steps of Borough Hall with our signs and left for the bridge together from there. When our group of six Friends started crossing the bridge, it was packed from beginning to end with students. Lots of cars were honking their horns and drivers and passengers alike waved in support of the students. They in return waved their signs with messages like "There is no planet B;" "I am the Lorax, I speak for the Trees;" and "Climate Change is not a Conspiracy" a little higher. We Friends walked with our own sign, "Brooklyn Society of Friends... Quakers," with a downward green CO2 arrow on it.

After our walk over the bridge, a few of us continued to Battery Park where young people, especially women, were leading chants like "Hey-hey... ho-ho... fossil fuels got to go," or "Tell me what Democracy looks like... This is what Democracy looks like!" The chants rang out from all over - from the sidelines, from people standing on lamppost, and standing on top of trucks. In terms of energy and intensity, it seemed to match the more vigorous labor or peace rallies of the past. Several faith-based organizations, unions and businesses were also visible and participating in support of the students.

At Battery Park, Greta Thunberg, spoke to the crowd. Greta started this climate movement for young people by not going to school, and when she spoke she said: "we (students) are doing this for them (adults) to act and for a safe future." Young people have taken her message to heart. All over the world, students and young people were out for the climate strike. It thus became truly a day when our young people held the future of our planet, as well as their own, in the light. We were witness to this.

-- Paul van Linden Tol



All things are bound together. All things connect. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls also the children of the earth.

CHIEF OREN LYONS, NATIVE AMERICAN FAITHKEEPER

Budget Saturday 2019

On September 28, over twenty-four Friends from around the Yearly Meeting gathered at the historic Purchase Meeting to consider the upcoming budget for New York Yearly Meeting. The Yearly Meeting Financial Services Committee hosts the event and the task is to generate next year's budget. Were we successful? Well, not quite...

During our summer sessions, we agreed to add a youth and young adult field secretary to our Yearly Meeting staff. The cost of doing this seems daunting as the Yearly Meeting faces challenges in meeting the budget with our current staffing. Yearly Meeting pays its staff \$327,000 in 2019. The cost of adding a new staff member could run at least \$80,000 including benefits. It is somewhat sobering to note that in 1999, we budgeted \$127,000 for staff salaries - this line has more than doubled in the past twenty years.

We spent time going over the budget, looking at each line. One consideration is that even without adding a new person, we were seeing a possible \$30,000 deficit based on the committee requests for 2020. The sense of the meeting was that we will cut back on donations to other organizations such as Friends United Meeting, Friends General Conference. A task group reported on the efforts of Yearly Meeting Trustees to redirect some trust funds that had been directed to some committees such as Barrington Dunbar, Indian Affairs, Prisons, Powell House and Oakwood to the operating budget. This would not be going against the original directions of the trusts, rather, we would be changing a prior Yearly Meeting redirection. That effort, along with some liquidation of Yearly Meeting assets, could provide funding for a new staff person. We agreed to receive by October 15th, a modified budget from Financial Services that would incorporate the new staff position and reduce the deficit. Such a budget may cut back on cost of living increases for staff and support for Oakwood Friends School (our Yearly Meeting boarding school), Powell House and programs for Sessions committee. All Friends' meeting will receive the budget so that we can consider it during Fall Sessions gathering at Powell House (a week before our own meeting's retreat).

As a meeting, we agreed to meet the Yearly Meeting's request to increase our "covenant donation" to Yearly Meeting ten percent - the new amount will be \$52,000. We minuted our strong interest that a new staff person be hired. Brooklyn Meeting members will look at the proposed budget to see that this happens. It is interesting to note that as staff costs have gone up 2.5 times since 1990, our Quarter's contribution to the Yearly Meeting has gone up only 1 and a half times (\$56,500 in 1999 to \$84,739 in 2019). And our Quarter's membership as a percentage of the whole Yearly Meeting has gone up from 13% in 1990 to 18% in 2019 (Brooklyn Meeting has grown 25% over that time period!) Much of the increase in staffing costs is being covered by more trust funds being transferred into the operating budget and a general decrease in contributions to other groups.

I attended Budget Saturday as a representative from the Yearly Meeting personnel committee. In my opinion, I am glad that Brooklyn Meeting is carrying more of the Yearly Meeting costs. I hope that Friends find this information useful and I am happy to answer any questions Friends may have.

-- Ben Frisch

"What's a Quaker?" and Other Queries

A "New York minute" is shorter than an elevator speech, subway spiel, or sidewalk greeting. When I wear my Quaker Witness for Peace button in public, I don't expect more than a glance. It's a silent plea for someone, anyone, to ask which way to the Peaceable Kingdom.

Wouldn't you know, the "Q" in Quaker on the button is so faint I could be any old peacenik. We're still so humble no one knows who Friends are.

Here's the rub: I don't either. After displaying the slogan for a few weeks, I set it aside because I don't know how to respond to the question: "What's a Quaker?"

Oh yah, we believe in "that of God in everyone." Well, who doesn't? And if that doesn't grab a stranger's attention, try "We're pacifists." So, what Christians don't believe in turning the other cheek? And what's so exceptional about "continuing revelation? All New Yorkers are born-again.

"No, no, no," I would say. "We don't just talk about these things we work every day to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth." Well, who doesn't?

"Wait. We objected to the Vietnam War, opposed nuclear weapons, championed civil rights, campaigned for women to vote, reformed prisons and mental hospitals, fought for abolition of slavery, befriended native Americans." Yada, yada, yada.

The response: My denomination does good works too.

And try to explain what the heck are unprogrammed Friends. Sounds like we forgot to buy the latest app for our smart phones.

Oh, Oh. I've got it. "We worship together in silence until the Spirit taps us on the shoulder and whispers, 'Move over Friend. You haven't made enough room for me in your life.'" Now that'll grab them.

-- Carl Blumenthal

The Ribbon Project

Have you heard of it? Are you making plans? Got any ideas? The project was inspired by Justine Merrit's visit to Hiroshimas's Peace Memorial Museum. She came-up with a ribbon event for the 40th memorial anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The August 1st 2020 project will be for the 75th anniversary. For more information on the project, go to <https://theribboninternational.org/>

Brooklyn Friends are involved. Join them. Make a panel to express what you love most about the world and want to protect from what is endangered on this earth.

Powell House Youth Director Position Announcement

Are you looking for a role where you can help young people experience what it is to be loved unequivocally? To guide them through the process of truly knowing themselves and helping them see how they can make a difference in the world?

If you desire to be in a role where you are making a marked difference in the lives of young people, we invite you to apply to the role of Youth Director of Powell House. Powell House is the conference center of New York Yearly Meeting. The Youth Program hosts approximately two weekend retreats a month for children ranging from 4th to 12th grade. The Powell House Youth Directors will be responsible for creating programming that is impactful and meaningful for attendees, manage logistics of the program and be accountable for programming enrollment and advertisement. This is an opportunity to make a significant impact and enrich the lives of hundreds of children.

Powell House Youth Director

Requirements:

- Direct experience working with children and adolescents and creating impactful programming for youth.
- A clear understanding of the practices and values of the Religious Society of Friends, as well as a desire to share Friends' values with young people.

Powell House Youth Director compensation includes salary, housing, some meals, and a complete benefit package. If interested, please contact:

Regina Baird Haag
Co-Executive Director,
Elsie K. Powell House, Inc.
regina@powellhouse.org

Brooklyn Meeting Fifty Years Ago

The Rusnak family joined Brooklyn Meeting (then a Preparative Meeting of New York Monthly Meeting) in 1969, while we were renovating an old house in Boerum Hill. We were invited to attend Meeting by Helen Buckler, a journalist and author who had founded the renovation community. Though she had been disabled for years, she was very active as a Quaker. There were five of us, my husband, myself and three children. Our baby had recently been adopted and was from an interracial background.

The Meeting was large. Though attendance was somewhat less than it is today, it was more regular, with few visitors, and the same families every First Day. There were obvious signs in the Meeting room of the conservative members who had joined from the Lafayette Street Meeting when it was laid down. I was surprised to see an American flag in front of the Meeting room. Also, the big red Bible we still keep on the table in front was often used in messages. Friends knew the Bible so well they could come up and immediately find the verse to go with their message.

Because the Meetinghouse and Brooklyn Friends School next door were joined so that we could go back and forth, the space we used was very different from the present. Our First Day School classes met in the school building. Our Social Room was the school cafeteria which is probably why we still have the long tables there.

The mixture of conservative and more liberal beliefs and customs created considerable conflict but was also enriching. One serious and lasting discussion was over what to call the Christmas party. In those days it was a large festive event for everyone, not just children. Numbers of Friends from other Meetings would also come. There was a traditional pageant with costumes, as well as Santa Claus. Individual children performed music. However more liberal Friends did not like the "Christ" in the word "Christmas" and insisted on an alternative, though it seems they could accept the "Christ" in "Christmas Tree" - that is how we ended up with "Christmas Tree Festival."

Another issue that we have less problem with today was inclusion. There were concerns about including a developmentally disabled child in First Day School. Some Friends were also not welcoming to young people serving in the military, leading to the loss of two families to the Meeting.

-- Molly Rusnak

Perhaps community is a constellation. Each one of us is a light in the emerging collective brightness. A constellation of light has the greater power of illumination than any single light would have on its own. Together we increase brightness.

JOHN O'DONOHUE, POET AND AUTHOR

Upcoming Events

Ongoing additions to the Meeting calendar can be seen at <http://www.brooklynmeeting.org/calendar>

Friends General Conference E-Retreats

FGC's next online retreat will be "Weaving a Wider Welcome," from October 27nd - November 22nd. For information, see: <https://www.fgcquaker.org/deepen/spiritual-deepening/spiritual-deepening-eretreats>

Earlham School of Religion Prospective Student Visit Day

The School is holding a prospective visit day on Friday, November 1. (Supply is limited) but this includes accommodations for two nights for potential students and a guest and includes a attendance at the Ministry of Writing Colloquium. Information can be found at: <https://esr.earlham.edu/Fall2019VisitDay>

New York Yearly Meeting Fall Sessions

November 1-3 is the next gathering of yearly meeting, at Powell House in Old Chatham. Registration is available online. Information is also available online at the New York Yearly meeting website:

<https://www.nnym.org/session/fall-sessions-2019>.

Why come? On Friday, Jens Braun, member at Quaker Intentional Village in Canaan will share an intergenerational program on the challenges of living our faith. The rest of the weekend will include gathered worship, meeting for business, committee meetings, display spaces, and creating the Blessed Community one hug at a time.

FCNL's Annual Meeting and Quaker Public Policy Institute

Friends Committee on National Legislation will gather and worship with Quakers and friends to lobby to end the U.S. strategy of endless war in Washington D.C. November 14-17. Registration, details, and more information:

<https://www.fcnl.org/updates/annual-meeting-and-quaker-public-policy-institute-2019-27>

Upcoming Events at Pendle Hill

Pendle Hill is a Quaker study, retreat, and conference center welcoming all for Spirit-led learning and community, located on 24 tranquil acres in the heart of a Quaker community in Wallingford, Pennsylvania. Pendle Hill's events calendar is available online at <https://pendlehill.org/calendar-view/>. You can subscribe to their monthly e-newsletter at <https://pendlehill.org/enews-opt-in/>.

Selected highlights:

- **Clerking: Serving the Community with Joy and Confidence** (<https://pendlehill.org/events/clerking-serving-the-community-with-joy-and-confidence/>) will be co-led by Arthur Larrabee and Steve Mohlke, November 22-24, 2019.
 - December 12-15: Join fellow Quakers in a long weekend of **Practicing Our Quaker Heritage of Mysticism and Resistance** with plenary talks, panel discussions, workshops, and small group interaction focusing on the integrity of our faithful listening and discernment and acting in the world as guided by the Inward Light.
 - New Years Retreats: December 28, 2019 - January 1, 2020 - Three Retreats to leave 2019 and greet 2020 with intention: **Music in Nature** with Karl Middleman (<https://pendlehill.org/events/new-years-music-in-nature/>); **Open Heart, Peaceful Mind** with Valerie Brown (<https://pendlehill.org/events/new-years-open-heart-peaceful-mind/>); **Awaken Your Creative Heart** with Damiani Celebre (<https://pendlehill.org/events/new-years-awaken-your-creative-heart/>)
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Submission Guidelines

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. We ask that submissions for the upcoming issue be submitted by the 15th of the month before to allow time for the Communications Committee to prepare the newsletter.

Please send your article, artwork, letter, essay, poem, photograph or other item in an email to newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org.

Contributions should generally be brief — aim for between 150-450

words in length. Please send your newsletter submission as an attached Word document or high-resolution image file.

Keep in mind that all contributions are copy edited and subject to editing for length. Your item thus may appear in the newsletter in slightly modified form.

We look forward to your input in creating a newsletter we all wish to read!

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

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

Social Hour

12:00 PM on 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

Outdoor Worship

6:00 PM, every Thursday,
weather permitting, spring
through September. Outdoor
worship takes place under the
Quarterly Meeting's care in
Battery Park (Manhattan) at the
Labyrinth just north of Castle
Clinton

Worship Sharing

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

Prayer Healing Meeting

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

Community Dinner

1:00–3:00 PM (set-up)
3:00–4:00 PM (meal/serving)
4:00–5:00 PM (clean up)
Last Sunday of the month, in the
ground-level dining room
Come for some or all!
Volunteers ARE appreciated for
this monthly dinner for anyone
who wishes a free hot meal.
Children encouraged to
volunteer.

To submit an event or a change to the list of regularly scheduled activities, email events@brooklynmeeting.org.

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The Brooklyn Meeting Newsletter is published by the Communications Committee of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting. Current members: Dan Bodah, Ben Frisch (clerk), Heather Buchan, Bethany Rickwald, Adam Seigel-Isaacson, and Esme Spanier.