

Embracing Our Call to Faith; Imagining Our Shared Future 2020 Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Epistles

Epistle from the 200th Session of the Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends held via internet June 17-21, 2020



The Quaker Quill

OHIO VALLEY YEARLY MEETING
OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting joyfully greets Friends everywhere from our 200th Anniversary Sessions! Our planned great celebrations were unexpectedly altered by the COVID-19 pandemic. And yet, we persisted, and via the internet we gathered in great happiness together for a fruitful annual session. At least one Friend noted that the virtual meeting brought us closer together by viewing each other's homes, pets, and family members. We are grateful to the Friends who creatively envisioned this new form for annual sessions and those who shepherded us in this new technology. Though we were not able to sit down to meals together as in our usual meetings at Earlham College campus, nevertheless we experienced great comradery online. There was an orderliness to meetings online that felt comfortable, as well as being able to clearly see all the adults present at once. A limitation was that most of the adults did not see our youth, as they attended different sessions.

Our gathering was strongly influenced by the racial and political tumult in the world around us. We gathered for two special meetings for worship with concern for racial justice and healing. A minute in recognition of the great social injustices that our nation has been built upon was proposed by Peace and Social Concerns Committee and accepted at our final Meeting for Business. Friends were encouraged to virtually attend the Mass Poor People's Assembly and Moral March on Washington during our sessions. Following Yearly Meeting sessions, there will be a follow-up discussion of FGC's request that monthly meetings collect age and race demographics.

Our theme was "Embracing our call to faith; Envisioning our shared future" in addition to our spirit of historical celebration. We began our first Meeting for Business by naming the Native American tribes that lived here in Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky, upon whose displacement we now live. We also named George Floyd and others whose deaths have brought our attention to the enormous work we have yet to do as a nation and as a religious society to live up to our ideals of equality for all. (*cont. p. 2*)

Dear Friends:

It was a pleasure to see so many Friends on my computer screen during Annual Sessions. Weekly on-line worship also remains a constant joy, even if centering is harder when a screen separates me from Friends. How fortunate we are that Quaker practices readily adapt to Zoom. And yet, life with COVID-19 is still a challenge, even for those of us who remain in good health, remain reasonably financially secure, and have so far been spared the death of those we hold dear. Keeping focused, keeping anxiety from hijacking mental and emotional well-being, and maintaining a sense of purpose when the calendar is empty, these are some of my struggles. Do any of these resonate with you? Spiritual practices, the balm of nature, creative outlets, and old-fashioned ways to maintain relationships (porch visits, letters, and phone calls) have helped me when I remember to turn to them. I pray we find ways to sustain our spirits and our relationships so that our Quaker communities benefit from this sustenance, too.

During OVYM's Annual Sessions, we approved a **Minute on Racism**, which is printed on page 2.

Virtual Annual Sessions did not allow time to discuss how to act upon this minute, and so in

Martha Viehmann



July I convened a virtual Front Porch Conversation on race. This was a fruitful conversation among about two dozen Friends. Several Friends talked about education as a focus. Here I was reminded of Ibram Kendi's admonition (to himself and to readers in *How To Be an Antiracist*) that education addresses individual racism, but combating racist ideas requires recognizing and changing racist policies. If you are interested in continuing our conversation about racism or in examining Quaker practices (that is, our policies) for the seeds of white supremacy, please get in touch. I hope to convene more virtual conversations on OVYM's symbolic front porch soon.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Please see Friends General Conferences Resources on Racism on page 9 and news about Lexington Meetings efforts toward becoming an anti-racist organization on page 4.

(continued from page 1)

Our greatest accomplishment in Meeting for Business was approval of the final text of our Faith and Practice after twenty-plus years of work. We are grateful to the many Friends who have taken the lead and helped us discern this document of our faith. Outside of business meeting, we began the work of collecting the histories of monthly meetings.

Two helpful plenaries enriched us. Dr. Catherine Roma shared videos and the history of her 30 years leading choirs in local prisons. We found this deeply touching and inspiring. She recounted the dismal history of the movement of the American prison system from rehabilitation to being increasingly punitive and restrictive-- a prison-industrial complex which blinds us to the personhood of prisoners. She showed inspiring videos of the transformative power of music, including a performance of the musical "Hamilton" which was partly supported by the Braddock Fund of our Yearly Meeting.

In her plenary, Emily Provance shared her overview of the relationship between holding on faithfully to our traditions, listening with openness to people today, esp. young adults, and being open but careful towards newness in revelation for our future. She prompted us to think about the ways that we may be squandering our Quaker inheritance by living through the lens of individualism, the dangers of becoming too insular and comfortable. Embracing our faith and caring for the future may require work and sacrifice.

Morning worship and worship sharing refreshed our Friendly mornings. Worship sharing queries on our theme invited us to reflect on what we value in our faith; how we find strength in difficult times; what our call to faith looks like in the contexts of environmental crisis, the pandemic, and racial injustice; and how we envision and bring about a new heavenly order on earth.

We were enriched by our children and youth. The numbers of children meeting online were low and yet it was amazing to see even the small children comfortable with interacting on Zoom. In the afternoons, teens discussed climate change and racial injustice and carried out their own Meeting for Business. Our teens had an especially intense experience with Bobby Trice of Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Our afternoon workshops were rich, including our Yearly Meeting history, support within meetings in uncertain times, poetry and playdough, joyful walking, Queer theology, FCNL work regarding Iran and Yemen, and "Courageous Conversations" on race.

We were grounded and felt integrated by healing presentations and experiences such as yoga, music, outdoor contemplative activities, self-massage, "havening" (a kind of healing touch), and compassionate listening.

Our own celebrations were complemented by Friends who simultaneously participated in Juneteenth activities and earth celebrations for the midsummer solstice. We sang together before our evening Plenaries, each (muted) in our homes as a pianist gave us accompaniment. Our traditional Saturday night Talent Show was different but still awesome fun. First Day morning of our 200th Sessions was completed peacefully and flowed by being united under Spirit, though physically separated.

The following minute was approved:

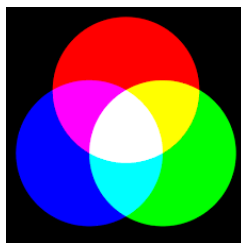
We stand with the families of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, Ahmaud Arbery, and all those who have suffered the pain of racism and its deadly consequence. We affirm Black Lives Matter and join with those insisting on radical transformation of our society.

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) can call on a long history of effort to dismantle the most blatant forms of racism that dates back to the founding of this country. At the same time, we confess to limited understanding, inadequate attention, and racist beliefs and behaviors within our religious society, including, for example, at one time segregating Black Quakers on a separate bench and preventing interracial relationships. In this time of widening awareness concerning social inequities, Friends' commitment to justice and equality is bringing more White Friends to a recognition of their personal responsibility and to a growing commitment to change. We acknowledge that once again, now is the time in which action is critically needed.

As a "Peace Church," we understand at a very deep level, that when there is no Justice, there is no Peace. We affirm our basic belief that there is "that of God in every person," and we are called by the gospel of Jesus to "Love our Neighbor! No Exceptions." We see this love as an active love and encourage the support of Black leadership, and the amplification of Black voices. We urge all to actively protect Black people from attack and arrest, and to work to dismantle systemic racism in all its forms. We stand together in love, calling for equality for all.

Epistle of Children's Program

The Children's Program of OVYM met via Zoom this year due to the Corona virus. We met for 90 minutes a day in the morning. We had 4 children in attendance ages 4, 5 and another 5 and 10. We read books about being 5 years old and about being different and about having families that are different and about playing in the mud and liking yourself. We discussed the theme of Embracing Our Call to Faith, Imaging Our Shared Future while hugging our bears and bunnies and Lego cars and pillows. We discussed the water shed and sang songs about water and we danced to a song about Lord of the Dance. We have hopes for the future that include more hugs and more Legos. We felt connected on the zoom gatherings when we sang together and danced and moved together. We shared our concerns that there may not be enough Legos and we want to be at Earlham next year where we can be together and do more things together like build with Legos and go swimming and dance and sing.



Report from Planning Committee

Planning Committee was delighted with the success of our 200th Annual Sessions despite having to hold it as a virtual gathering. Most of us would have preferred to meet in-person but we did meet and we got to see one another. As well, we were able to bring Friends in from far and wide. Friends joined our sessions from Baltimore, Cleveland and elsewhere. We are happy that so many Friends were able to join who might otherwise have not been able to. With that experience in mind, Planning is considering ways to make future sessions as inclusive as possible. We are all hoping for better times soon when we can meet in-person and enjoy each other's company.

The Planning Committee is thankful for the feedback from many Friends who filled out the on-line evaluation. Some examples of the heartening feedback we received:

(about the variety show) *LOVED IT! Sharing videos of pre-recorded talents was great and we should consider this even when we're in-person again.*

Some plenaries do better and some do worse. I think in person has a better feel for this type of venue.

I was so greatly inspired and impressed by the Thursday session!

I liked it as much or more as in person because I could see each face clearly.

Many Friends said the sessions were a better experience than they expected.

Though 2020 Annual sessions are still fresh in our memory, the planning committee has already met to discuss planning for the 2021 sessions. Much is still in the air including whether we will meet in person or virtually. We do know that the dates for 2021 annual sessions will be June 16-20. If we do meet in person annual sessions will be held at Earlham College.

Should you be interested in participating in planning next year's sessions we would value your participation. Get in touch with Carol Simmons, clerk of planning to let her know. She can be reached at csimmons45387@yahoo.com or by calling her at (937) 232-4250.

As well, annual sessions always needs Friends to help with such things as leading worship sharing or providing a workshop. If you find yourself led in this way please let Carol know.

Submitted by Peter Hardy

Miami-Whitewater Joint Quarterly Meeting

Greetings Friends,

Back in a time when we were able to meet in person, which now seems so long ago but which was as recent as last February, we had the ambitious idea that we would hold a Joint Quarter at Happy Hollow campgrounds. We were encouraged by many happy memories from earlier Joint Quarters. A few scenes from some of these earlier Joint Quarter appear below.

Sadly, the risk of contracting the SARS-CoV-2 virus has led to the closure of Happy Hollow campgrounds at the time we were hoping to hold our sessions. Nevertheless, it is our intention to hold an on-line, virtual gathering for a Joint Quarter. Instead of the two days as originally planned we hope to organize a variety show on the evening of Saturday, October 17th, and on Sunday, October 18th we would have a joint meeting for worship and separate meetings for business. The success of holding OVYM annual sessions this past June using zoom makes us believe this will be a good format. Please plan to attend. Further information on registering and an agenda will be forthcoming.

Peter Hardy

Terre Hollada

Clerk, Miami Quarter

Clerk, Whitewater Quarter



OVYM and the stock market crash

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting's financial assets are housed with two institutions. An Indiana bank has our checkbook which I use to pay all our bills. We seldom pay fees, but there is also no interest paid on the balance. The Friends Fiduciary Corporation (FFC) holds our invested resources in their socially responsible, fossil fuel free, Quaker Green Fund. Our General Fund reserves, Braddock Fund, Spiritual Nurture Fund and 4 other smaller funds are at FFC. These funds usually generate gains each year, but it is more cumbersome to access the money, requiring two signatures. For example, when the Braddock Fund trustees decide to support a prison ministry, the only vehicle I have to write checks is from our General Fund checkbook. Once or twice a year I reimburse the General Fund from the Braddock fund for the checks I wrote that support the causes they sponsor.

While we have gotten some nice returns on our investment with FFC over the last 5 years, there is always risk that our funds could lose value in any given year. Even those who have no interest in financial affairs probably have heard about the great stock market decline this year. This brings up the logical question: 'How much money have we lost?' OVYM's fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. While we have suffered along with everyone else, what is not remembered is that before the crash the stock market had a long bull run up (increasing value). Before the downturn our account values were climbing. The actual value of our invested assets since July 1, 2019 increased about 2.9% as of June 30, 2020!

Submitted by Wilson Palmer, Treasurer

Lexington Friends working toward becoming an anti-racist organization

For several years a small group of Lexington Friends has been meeting to increase our awareness of white privilege and systemic racism. Over the last year, a second group formed as a reading group to focus on racial issues. In recent months as the Black Lives Matter movement expanded in outrage over the police killings of George Floyd and, in nearby Louisville, Breonna Taylor, we have decided to expand our efforts both to educate ourselves and to stand up for racial justice.

Once a week the Meeting holds a Zoom drop-in session to discuss these issues. These are lively and productive discussions. We have also formed a Coordinating Committee to organize Meeting efforts regarding systemic racism and white privilege. In mid-August we are holding a Black Lives Matter vigil along the street in front of the meetinghouse. We have invited our neighbors, the families who attend the preschool in our meetinghouse, and members of other churches. We have also written letters to our paper and local government urging the implementation of policies to increase equity for people of color in Lexington.

Some Lexington Friends have found the weekly FGC worship for white Friends confronting racism to be both a supportive and challenging experience. More information can be obtained by contacting the FGC Ministry on Racism fellow, Olivia Pandolfi, ministryonracismsupportspecialist@fgcquaker.org.

These activities are greatly increasing our awareness of racial injustice and of our responsibilities to remedy historic mistreatment and oppression. We take hope from the growing awareness of systemic racism and activism among white Americans in general. Of course, we are challenged to find ways to act in these times of Covid-19-required social distancing. But those methods and processes are emerging. We welcome questions from Friends seeking to expand their Meeting's activities regarding racial injustice. We also welcome insights from Friends about how they have accelerated their learning and about how they have advocated for practical change in their communities.

Submitted by Betsy Neale bneale@twc.com

Minute on Nuclear Weapons

Bloomington Friends Meeting, August 9, 2020

Seventy-five years ago, the United States became the only nation to use nuclear weapons, destroying the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This act caused incredible suffering to the civilian population and ushered in an age of fear.

This was not just the fear of a bomb blast killing humans and destroying cities. It was also the fear of radiation poisoning air, earth and water miles from the bomb craters, leaving living things with no way to eat, drink or even breathe that would not cause radiation sickness and slow death.

Still, nations raced to pour precious resources into creating a "doomsday machine" that could destroy their enemies, in spite of the fact that this would trigger retaliation in kind. The U.S. and the Soviet Union embraced as part of their national security policies the doctrine of "Mutually Assured Destruction," saying in effect, "If we both know we can utterly destroy each other, neither of us will do it."

And yet the catastrophe has almost happened more than once. Many accidents and misinterpretations have edged close to disaster, and the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis nearly led to open war.

Fortunately, world leaders drew back from that brink. The Nuclear Freeze movement grew; in 1982 a million people gathered in New York's Central Park to call for an end to the nuclear arms race. Every U.S. President from Eisenhower through Obama respected the need for limits on nuclear weapons. President Reagan declared, "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." Over the decades, diplomatic negotiations resulted in treaties and agreements that de-escalated the arms race and cut the global nuclear stockpile by 80%.

But now, the danger of nuclear war has risen as high as ever. The current administration has backed out of a number of agreements despite the fact that these agreements provide us with useful information, resulted in the destruction of dangerous weapons, or reduced nuclear proliferation to other nations. The administration's current maneuvers threaten to derail the much-needed New START treaty. The U.S. is considering resuming nuclear test explosions. Congress has authorized spending \$1.2 trillion for a new generation of nuclear weapons, including "usable" nuclear weapons—as though "low-yield" nuclear weapons (which are almost the same size as the Hiroshima bomb) could be employed without provoking a cataclysmic nuclear

(continued next page)

(continued from page 4) response. But as the late Senator Richard Lugar, together with other high-ranking former officials, warned: “It is unlikely there is such a thing as a ‘limited’ nuclear war; preparing for one is folly.”

Experts warn that nuclear war is just as likely today as it was at the height of the Cold War, whether it begins on purpose, through an accident or cyber-attack, or because of a miscalculation of other powers' reactions to deployment of "usable" nuclear weapons. Even a "small" nuclear war between India and Pakistan, with 3% of world nuclear arsenals, would kill two billion people—over a quarter of the world's population—as the clouds of debris would block sunlight from reaching food crops. War between the United States and Russia could well extinguish life on Earth.

The bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, was the first time nuclear weapons were used in combat. Let us make sure that the bombing of Nagasaki on August 9 was the last.

This is the time to take action. The people of the world have awakened to the fact that we face the existential threats of global warming and a mishandled pandemic, and that these threats are driven by systems of oppression that must change. In our nation, movements to save the climate, achieve racial justice, and protect voters' rights are beginning to coalesce, and abolition of nuclear weapons needs to be part of the world-saving work.

Therefore Bloomington Friends Meeting encourages all who hear or read these words to consider how to forward the cause of peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons. We ask you to do all you can to support these actions:

Urge the government of the United States to **restore the network of agreements and the process of diplomatic negotiation that brought us a measure of shared security** over past decades. Specifically, the U.S. should:

- Indicate readiness to extend the New START treaty, returning to bilateral talks with Russia whether China chooses to be involved or not
- Encourage open discussion among all nations of steps toward reducing nuclear arsenals, building on New START
- Affirm commitment to the spirit of our agreements, where possible repairing and re-entering the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA), and the Open Skies treaty.

Urge the government of the United States to adopt a **better nuclear policy**:

- Adopt a No First Use policy
- Take land-based Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles off launch-ready alert, and in fact rid ourselves of the vulnerable and dangerous land-based ICBM system altogether
- Ensure that any decision to launch nuclear weapons is reviewed by designated officials in addition to the President
- Eschew any future nuclear test explosions
- Close the door on the notion of “usable nukes”
- Replace plans to “modernize” our nuclear arsenal with plans to work toward eliminating it
- Sign and seek ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Call upon Members of Congress to **reduce the military budget**, especially nuclear expenses:

- Deny appropriations for “usable” nuclear weapons, new nuclear weapons and nuclear test explosions
- Channel saved funds into meeting human needs

Encourage voters to **explore candidates' positions on the use or abolition of nuclear weapons and to vote and support candidates as led by conscience**

Support the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a campaign that won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. ICAN describes itself as “a broad, inclusive campaign, focused on mobilizing civil society around the world to support the specific objective of prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons” in accord with the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Its U.S. partner, NuclearBan.US, offers the Treaty Compliance Campaign, by which individuals, businesses, faith communities, schools, organizations, cities and states can align themselves with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Paris Climate Agreement by undertaking to disconnect and divest, as far as possible, from both fossil fuels **and** the nuclear weapons industry.

- Learn more about these partnered campaigns (see <https://www.icanw.org/> and <http://www.nuclearban.us/about/>)
- Consider joining as an individual
- Encourage your Meeting or faith community, other organizations to which you belong, your city or town, and your Members of Congress to join the campaign

These actions may bring us to a new era of shared security and hope.

Submitted by Margaret Squires



News from Monthly Meetings

Bloomington

With encouragement and effort our Meeting continues to thrive in many ways. We opted to continue to refrain from in-person meetings at a Threshing Session in Sixth Month. We have two Meetings for Worship via Zoom each week with good attendance. We maintain our sense of community through phone calls and email, Facebook, Zoom worship sharing, cards and letters. One of our older members tested positive for Covid-19, but was asymptomatic and is now virus free. We recently held a "no contact" birthday celebration for her and another of our oldest members. We are circulating a survey that explores interest in other types of small group activities that we might pursue. On the anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki, we approved a Minute on Nuclear Weapons that we hope to publish locally as well as distribute to our elected representatives and share with fellow Quakers. We have several members active in the Braver Angels effort at reducing political polarization and have sponsored two workshops via Zoom. Though we are sad at not being able to use our new Meetinghouse we are allowing outdoor use by Girl Scouts and for a high school group's project to collect gently used shoes for charitable organizations. Still Nominating Committee is facing some problems with filling positions and a few committees are struggling with finding ways to fulfill their charges, but we are re-grouping to address these concerns.

Submitted by Christine Carver

Campus

Campus Friends Meeting is back after a three-month absence in the Canby Jones Meetinghouse on the campus of Wilmington College worshipping in a social-distancing mask-wearing circle on our benches! We managed a virtual business meeting for July and continue to meet via Zoom for our monthly book club. It remains to be seen what changes, if any will be required of us when the college opens its doors at the end of August. Campus meeting just approved moving our meeting for worship outside to the pavilion on the east side of campus now that the meeting room is being heavily used by the college.

Submitted by Patricia Thomas

Clear Creek

Clear Creek Monthly Meeting began using Zoom to gather for Meeting for Worship and other meeting activities when Earlham College shut down due to the virus in mid-March. That seemed to go reasonably well, considering how new many of us were to the technology.

By early July, after the state of Indiana had begun opening up, it was decided to experiment with Meeting for Worship out of doors by the meeting house (and with social distancing), but also attempting to maintain the Zoom option for those of us who chose that option, and for second hour activities. This has presented more technical issues, as the College's Wi-Fi tends to be a bit unreliable.

These experiments continue as we work on technical problem solving. After some experimentation, we now use one phone for audio and a separate one for video contact between in-person and home worshippers, and with the help of portable speakers. It is now working well.

Otherwise there is not much to report, as most of us stay mostly at home to avoid infection.

Submitted by Palline Plum

Community

The pandemic goes on, and Community Friends Meeting continues to meet over Zoom. Meanwhile, an ad hoc committee proposed criteria for when to start meeting in person again, and suggested a set of options for the meeting to consider. At our most recent August Meeting for Business, the meeting approved the criteria for when to begin holding outside Meeting for Worship and authorized the ad hoc committee to determine the time and the date for those meetings to begin. It was agreed that such meetings would not be scheduled at the same time as our regularly scheduled First Day meetings, which will continue on Zoom. Guidance to the committee was to err on the side of caution. It was suggested to keep attendance lists for purposes of contact tracing, should the need arise, but there was not total agreement on this. While everyone is eager to experience the Spirit among us in person, we are super aware of the need to take every pre-caution for our members' health.

During this time, we are pleased that the Religious Education committee has continued to provide First Day School sessions, virtually, for the children of the meeting over Zoom. One recent session involved the reading of a book called "The Day You Begin," which shows how a child can feel excluded because of the color of their skin, the curl of their hair, coming from another country, or eating different food. It shows how children begin to feel confident and included when others make connections with them and invite them to join in. The lesson included a discussion of what it was like to be teased or have our feelings hurt, or to feel shy. The children drew pictures of being kind. Then they brought their favorite toys to show one another, and they played and talked together. Their favorite toys were hot wheel cars! Writes RE Committee chair, Lisa C.: "It was wonderful to see the children and give them the opportunity to connect with each other, and for them to feel part of the Meeting community!"

This year saw the resurrection of our meeting's monthly newsletter, Community Companion, after a period of having no editor to publish it. We are all grateful to Doug Burks, who also serves as our clerk, for taking on this job! It's wonderful to have the minutes of our Meeting for Business as well as general community news shared again via this virtual newsletter, especially during this time of so much physical separation. One recent issue featured eight members' stories and reflections about their experience doing Meeting for Worship over Zoom. One member wrote about her experience of wondering why no one else had their videos turned on, but went ahead and began centering into the silence. Later she realized that her Zoom had frozen, and she had been worshipping by herself! She reflected that the worship was meaningful, regardless, and was a good reminder that we're never really alone, but that Zoom just makes some of our connections visible and audible.

(continued next page)

(cont. from p. 6) Our meeting's library has a new website where members can sign up to reserve books! A youth member took it upon himself to create this as a way to allow members to visit the library virtually and reserve a book. The caretakers at our meetinghouse will locate the book and place it on the front porch for the member to pick up. A selection of books and pamphlets are currently available, and more will be added as the library gains in use!

Peace and Social Concerns requested and obtained meeting's approval of a statement written in response to the Department of Justice and Homeland Security request for public comments regarding EOIR Docket No 18-0002:RIN-AA94. The statement was written in opposition to proposed restrictions on asylum seekers, which would make it illegal for refugees to claim asylum when they enter the U.S. "We at Community Friends Meeting (Quakers) of Cincinnati, Ohio unconditionally condemn all forms of torture. For this reason, we have a long history of assisting asylum seekers. We oppose the proposed rules, which would certainly send powerless human beings back into situations of torture and death." Examples of Community Meeting's history of supporting refugees were given, including our participating in harboring an undocumented family from El Salvador in the 1980's.

Submitted by Paulette Meier

Dayton

Our meeting is still adjusting to the changes this pandemic presents. Dayton Friends continues to have Wednesday check-ins by phone, but many Friends still feel isolated.

Our Meeting Retreat has been postponed until after Covid virus risks are diminished, and the Adult Discussion with Gail Koehler from Lexington Meeting has also been postponed.

We are forging ahead with improvement projects however! Phil Henry oversaw getting a water heater and a second air conditioner installed. Also, Nikki Tousley planted trees in the yard, and progress has been made on the patio. We are also looking into making the side yard of the meeting more of a children's space.

Our First Day school continues to have regular attendees, which is a joy! Phyllis Tonne plans to hold a children's music class outdoors with social distancing. The meeting will provide masks for the parents and children who attend.

Al Scarpelli had surgery in June and a follow-up in July. We are glad to report that he returned home in good health!

Due to Covid-19, the meeting chose to donate half of funds to local organizations, and half to global organizations.

It was noted that our Meeting Handbook is out-of-date. So we are taking this time to make the changes that are needed.

The meeting garden is thriving, and the goldfinches have been enjoying the sunflowers we planted!

Submitted by Scott Hadley

Eastern Hills

Summer has brought both new challenges and new hopes for us at Eastern Hills Friends Meeting. Our members are keeping in contact via outside activities, such as maintaining and improving our grounds. Our butterfly garden is flourishing. In addition, Ministry and Counsel has promoted community by facilitating small group gatherings held in outdoor settings.

Support for racial and social justice has been at the forefront since late spring. On the national level, Eastern Hills has stayed active in the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). Locally, members have remained active in such organizations as Greater Anderson Promotes Peace (GAPP) and West End Community Council.

While Eastern Hills Friends continue to meet on line, we are working hard to create an environment that allows in-person worship in a safe socially-distanced setting that will still provide close contact with those who are more comfortable attending virtually. If all goes well, hybrid meetings could begin in September.

In the interim, we continue to be active online. Eastern Hills is happy to have participated in the planning, conducting, and attending of the Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions in June and the Wilmington Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions in July.

Submitted by Eric Heineke



More meeting news next page!

Lexington

Lexington Friends Meeting, like many meetings, has been gathering via Zoom since mid-March, when it became clear that it was no longer safe to meet in person, due to the pandemic. For many Friends the Zoom option has been a satisfying way to stay in touch and gather together for weekly worship and monthly meetings for business. We have been delighted to have regular participation from Friends who live beyond driving distance from Lexington. One Friend has even attended from New Orleans! Overall, a large number of the Friends who attended in-person worship continue to attend most Sundays, averaging 30-35 Friends. Unfortunately, for a few of us, these virtual meetings are not comfortable or sustaining. We miss these Friends and try to stay in touch with them.

Another major problem has been that virtual meeting does not work for our children and youth and thus their parents also. Some Lexington Friends have organized a few virtual sessions for our youth. We have decided to experiment with a new Sunday schedule one Sunday later this month. Worship will begin at 9:15 am followed by several break-out rooms from which to choose – introductions, adult education/exploration, youth worship or program, and children's storybook. Parents feel that this earlier worship will give them more time on Sundays for family activities.

For several months now, many Lexington Friends have been engaging in a number of activities aimed at increasing our understanding of systemic racism and white privilege. We are also beginning to take actions to express our concerns about remedying the racism that is epidemic in our society. See separate article on page 4 for more details.

Submitted by Betsy Neale

Miami

Our Meeting avoided in-person gatherings for about 2 months due to the pandemic. Then, with small numbers, large Meeting house, and warmer weather, we could maintain social distancing and open doors. We average about 5 attenders in person, since several Friends stay home due to health considerations. Friends have commented recently on how reassuring it is to meet in person, and to hear the constant ticking of the old clock. We deeply value shared ministry, both vocal and silent.

We were able to hold our annual Meeting for Worship at Fort Ancient in July. Friends from other Meetings joined us, with 19 in attendance. The potluck meal was not quite the same. . .

On a more personal note: We (Phil and Gretchen Stone) left COVID-free Tasmania to return to Ohio for 6 months or so. One attraction is that son Pete and his partner are here for the summer, while they convert a van into a mobile home. The farm feels like a welcoming oasis, as does Miami Monthly Meeting. We also appreciate having time to dive into electoral politics again.

Holding all of you in the Light,

Submitted by Gretchen Stone

North Meadow

North Meadow Circle of Friends has a new clerk of meeting, Jane Rapinchuk. We continue to meet weekly on Zoom, and have also tried hybrid meetings, as some people have met outside the meetinghouse, with social distancing and masks. We are still working to get technology to work for us, so that we can combine in person and zoom meetings. We are having ongoing discussion about how to use Zoom, since not all members have felt comfortable with this technology, both because of technical issues, and because of spiritual and privacy issues.

We are enjoying our glimpses on Zoom of Shannon Effler and Matt Holdzkow's 5 month old baby boy. We have had to suspend the First Day School because of COVID, and miss our younger members.

We are also looking for a new tenant for one of our upper floor apartments.

Submitted by Jane Rapinchuk

Oxford

We are small enough in number and meet in a large enough space that we have been meeting, masked, in person. Distant Friends tell us that they join us in Spirit and we are grateful for our communal worship. We are delighted that our First Day school was led by our youth member, from whom we learned about "The Gospel According to David Bowie."

The annual project of collecting materials for school bags and hygiene kits for Church World Service brings us together to help others in need. The beautiful school bags (see photo) are sewn by a member of the local Church Women United.

We are very much looking forward to celebrating our 30th anniversary as an independent meeting. We will host a video conference meeting on August 30 for Friends near and far.

Submitted by Cecilia Shore



Yellow Springs

Since our last report, Yellow Springs Friends have spent much time and attention considering if, how, and when to reopen Rockford Meetinghouse. This has required consideration about our own Meeting activities, but also about those of other groups that have typically used the building. Though we are not yet ready to open, Friends have laboriously drafted and reviewed detailed guidelines and rules for a time when we can safely return to the building.

Meanwhile, one Friend contributed use of his 20' x 24' canopy, which has been erected outside the meetinghouse, providing a space for early Meeting for Worship gatherings, and twice-monthly BYO dinners and BYO lunches. Several AA meetings are using the space each week, as well.

Two Meeting members live at Friends Care Community, and a small group of Friends have been gathering on the lawn just outside their windows, for Meeting for Worship on Sunday mornings. Other Friends continue to meet via Zoom at 11:00. In these ways, members and attenders have at least some opportunity to worship together. Indeed, some who had moved away have been able to join us, which would not have been possible previously. Nevertheless, attendance is declining slowly, there is generally less ministry, and reactions to worship by Zoom are mixed.

During this time of extraordinary challenge, our revitalized Communication Committee, principally Annie Blanchard its clerk, has continued to play a most essential role. The Committee has established a Google calendar for Zoom links and downloads. Members have needed (and continue to need) assistance learning to navigate and communicate in virtual environments, and the Communications Committee members has provided that support. And, from mid-March through July, our newsletter, *The Quakershaker*, increased from monthly to weekly distribution via email, in order to keep Friends informed as conditions and practices changed rapidly. Having settled into some more predictable routines now, the Committee is able to return to a more sustainable level of activity.

Connections are challenging to maintain, but an ad hoc committee is currently addressing that need. Some Friends are actively involved in Black Lives Matter demonstrations, and undoubtedly find connection and meaning in those activities.

Submitted by Ann Cooper



Friends General Conference



“To be a people and a nation transformed requires the engagement of all Friends. Emptying oneself of prejudice while dismantling systemic racism is ultimately not the responsibility of people of color. It’s the responsibility of white people--the people who built the system, the people who visibly and invisibly benefit from the system. While changing the system at a national level requires political engagement, ultimately this is deeply spiritual work. It’s about our relationships with one another, with ourselves, and with God. We must all work to see our meetings and the broader society become places where that of God is honored in all people.”

Letter from General Secretary Barry Crossno and Presiding Clerk Frank Barch

Many helpful resources can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/FGCRacismResources>

Source: Vital Friends newsletters

Right Sharing of World Resources

“The work of Right Sharing would not be possible without having teams in Kenya, India, and Sierra Leone to provide hands-on support for the groups of women as they apply for, receive, and utilize RSWR grants.” You can learn more about these in-country teams at the source for this article: <https://www.rswr.org/meet-our-teams>



Friends Committee ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION

“Join FCNL November 14-17, 2020 for Annual Meeting and the Quaker Public Policy Institute online!” The online format will enable Friends from all over to:

Gather in virtual community, just weeks after the 2020 election, to chart our advocacy course for the coming year.

Reaffirm and act on our commitment to justice, equity, and inclusion.

Lobby your members of Congress.

Come together in worship, laughter, and resolve.

Learn more and register at the source for this article: <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/annual-meeting-and-quaker-public-policy-institute-2020-27>

American Friends Service Committee

Current campaigns feature:

“It’s time to invest in our communities, not policing.” <https://www.afsc.org/defundpolice>

“The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the injustices of our world. It also reminds us of that we are all interconnected—and that our health and well-being are dependent on how we treat each other.” <https://www.afsc.org/content/caring-each-other-during-covid-19>

“Are there human rights violations hidden in your investments?” <https://investigate.afsc.org/>

Source: AFSC website

AFSC Midwest Become an AFSC Liaison

An AFSC Liaison is a member of a monthly meeting or church who engages their meeting in AFSC activities. The Liaison’s roles include announcing AFSC activities and forwarding engagement opportunities to your meeting’s newsletter, listserv and/or social media sites; participating in AFSC Quaker conference calls; and mobilizing your meeting for specific engagement opportunities.

Contact Lucy Duncan at LDuncan@afsc.org for more information.

Source: email from: Sharon Goens-Bradley, Interim Regional Director



Wilmington College will celebrate its 150th anniversary with a series of online events, to be announced soon.

<https://tinyurl.com/WC150events>

From College website

World Quaker Day 2020

4 Oct 2020

The theme for this year’s World Quaker Day is: *What does it mean to be a Quaker today? How do we share our message?*

You can learn more about the theme of World Quaker Day from Simon Lamb, Clerk of FWCC when he spoke on the theme of *What does it mean to be a Quaker today? How is God calling us to give witness?* (<https://tinyurl.com/SimonLamb>)

Source: <https://www.fwccemes.org/calendar/world-quaker-day-2020>



Regional Friends

Indiana Yearly Meeting

Annual sessions were held with social distancing precautions July 23-25 at Quaker Haven Camp. Business sessions were live-streamed for those who could not be present. The keynote speaker and worship leader was Christian musician and author Michael Card.

Pat Byers will serve as General Superintendent of Indiana Yearly Meeting beginning January 1.

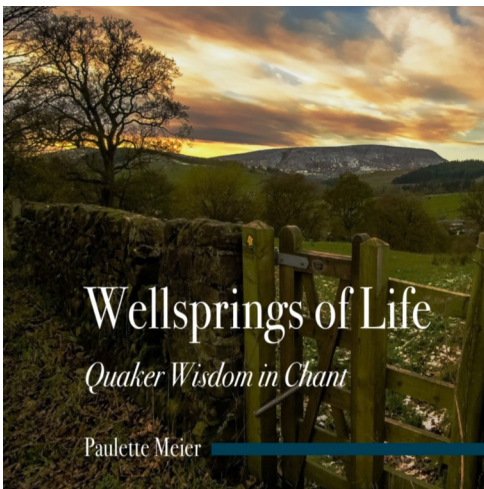
IYM will become Associate members of Evangelical Friends Mission. They will continue to be part of Friends United Meeting, but this new alliance allows new mission partnerships.

Summarized from IYM Communicator

New Association of Friends

A World Quaker Day picnic is planned for October 4 at the Levi and Catharine Coffin Meetinghouse in Fountain City IN. This site was important in the Underground Railroad: “Anti-Slavery Friends from Western Ohio to Iowa met there annually from 1842-1855.”

Source: <http://www.newassociationoffriends.org/events>



Now available on CD

Paulette Meier's latest album of Quaker-inspired chants is now available in both digital download and CD disc format. The 19 chants feature words from Quaker writers spanning the centuries, from Isaac Penington and Mary Dyer to Thomas Kelly and Catherine Whitmire. The multiple repetitions, the more regular meters, the Instrumentation, and the harmonies make the songs on this album very singable! You can order CDs from Quaker Press or directly from Paulette via her website at

www.paulettemeier.com.

Source: email from Paulette Meier

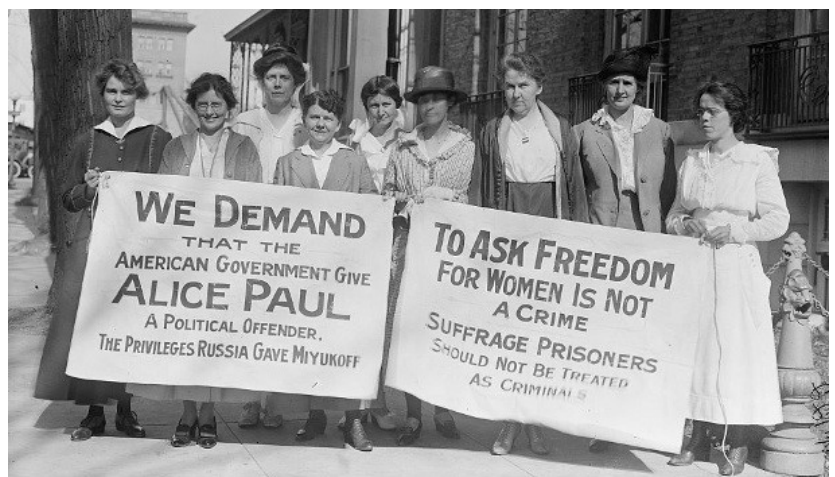
Quakers and the American Women's Suffrage Movement

“The Women's Suffrage Movement in the USA is widely considered to date from the First Women's Rights Convention, held in Seneca Falls, New York State in 1848. This meeting was instigated by five women who had been closely involved in the abolition of slavery, all but one of whom were Quakers.

Seventy-two years later, it was the actions and treatment of another Quaker woman – Alice Paul – which led at last to the passing of a Women's Suffrage Bill by the US Congress...

Paul was arrested, along with others, on charges of ‘obstructing traffic’ and sent to the Occoquan Workhouse in Virginia. When she began a hunger strike to protest conditions there, Paul was moved to a psychiatric wing and force fed. Press coverage of this, along with continuing demonstrations, led to an outcry about prison abuse of suffragists...

When women in the US were granted the vote in 1920, only one of the sixty-four women who had signed the Seneca Falls Declaration had lived long enough to cast her ballot: the Quaker, Charlotte Woodward, who in 1848 had been a young worker in a glove factory.”



Sources: <https://tinyurl.com/QuakersSuffrage>

<https://www.historynet.com/alice-paul.htm>

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

3960 Winding Way

Cincinnati, OH 45229

We're on the web:
ovym.quaker.org

The Quaker Quill is published three times a year by Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. The first annual issue is published September 15, so the submission deadline will be August 15. The second issue will come out February 15, so the submission deadline will be January 15. The third issue will come out June 1, so the submission deadline will be May 1.

Contact: quakerquill@gmail.com

Cecilia Shore, editor.

Thanks to Susan Lee Barton for proofreading.

Printed on 100% recycled paper.

The principal factors which influenced my life are 1) nonviolent tactics; 2) constitutional means; 3) democratic procedures; 4) respect for human personality; 5) a belief that all people are one.

Bayard Rustin

Inside this issue:

OVYM	1-5
News from Monthly Meetings	6-9
Events and News	9-11

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Officers

Martha Viehmann, Presiding Clerk

Rachel Ernst Stahlhut, Assistant Presiding Clerk

Rex Sprouse, Recording Clerk

Lisa Cayard, Assistant Recording Clerk

Wilson Palmer, Treasurer

(Vacant), Assistant Treasurer