

InfoShare

New York Yearly Meeting
Religious Society of Friends

Volume 14
Editor: [Steven Davison](#)

December 2015

Number 6

Welcome to December *InfoShare*!

[Download a pdf file of *InfoShare*, December 2015](#)

Write for *Spark*!

The January issue of *Spark*, whose theme is "Spirit at Work in NYYM", highlights the good things that are happening these days throughout the Yearly Meeting. We would like to know what new light and life is rising up in your experience. Deadline is January 11. Contact Steven Davison, the [editor](#), for more information.

Share Your Info!

Share your meeting's news, announcements, and upcoming events with the rest of the Yearly Meeting through *InfoShare*, our digital newsletter, and in the Around the Yearly Meeting section of *Spark*. Send your items to steven@nyym.org.



Friends playing and learning at Fall Sessions

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Notes & Announcements

AVP returns to Elmira Correctional Facility

About four years ago, AVP was asked to suspend all activity at Elmira Correctional Facility, a maximum security men's prison. The reason given was lack of administrative staff to support the program, given that prisons were being closed and staff were being relocated to other facilities. This was devastating: we had worked hard for three years to rebuild the program, and it was just beginning to take off.

It turned out that no one was happy with the prison's decision to suspend AVP. The men inside, both those remaining and those who transferred in, were insistent that AVP be restored. Several men filed grievances with the administration.

Meanwhile, we on the outside also brought pressure to bear. We contacted the Deputy of Programs regularly, as several people rotated through that position (there were four different Deputies in three years). When John Mizgala became Deputy of Programs, he was committed to having AVP restored. His appointment coincided with the efforts of three men, Gregory Webb (Meaningful Magnificent), Reginald Singleton (Tenacious Tupac), and David Moore (Real-I-Real), who worked hard to have AVP reinstated.

In January of 2014, Jill McLellan and Kathleen Gale met with Mr. Webb and Mr. Mizgala to outline how AVP might be restored to Elmira. We decided on four workshop weekends a year (one set of workshops every three months). Everyone was thrilled, and we found we had a small team of strong facilitators who had transferred to Elmira and who were more than ready to go to work. Mr. Mizgala has since retired and Mr. Webb, Mr. Singleton, and Mr. Moore have transferred to other prisons; their efforts were crucial to reinstating AVP and we are grateful for all their hard work.

Since that time, inside and outside efforts have grown AVP to a vital force within the prison. We have trained more than 25 new facilitators and have a lively and committed team of more than 20 men working to bring AVP forward. In December, we will be training another group of apprentice facilitators who will join that effort.

We have a strong team of outside facilitators whose staunch support makes these workshops possible: Kathleen Gale (Courageous Kathleen), Gina Varrichio (Joyful Gina), Susan Wolf (Surprising Susan) and Tony White (Truth-seeking Tony). Without them, the program at Elmira could not go forward.

Both inside and outside facilitators attend a Support Group that meets every Tuesday evening to practice skills, strengthen team connections, and work through the logistics for planning workshops. This spring, Elmira is looking forward to hosting Forum Day for the first time ever.

We want to thank everyone who made the reinstatement of AVP at Elmira possible.

Tending the Garden—Spiritual Nurture Workshops

Tending the Garden—NYYM's Spiritual Nurture Working Group has developed workshops for meetings and individuals on twelve spiritual nurture topics: Sacred Journeys, Opening to Deeper Worship, Vocal Ministry, Experiential Quakerism, Discernment, Pastoral Care, Spiritual Support and Accountability, Prayer, Quaker Toolbox, Forgiveness, A Deliberate Faith, and Sense of the Meeting. Click the link to learn more.

Support the Sharing Fund!

Click the following to [donate to the Sharing Fund online](#) or mail your check to The Sharing Fund, 15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003.

New York Yearly Meeting is called to be an active voice for Friends' faith, values, ministry, and witness in the world by supporting Friends active witness. We do that through the patient, faithful work of Friends at the yearly, regional, and local meeting levels. The Sharing Fund, under the care of the Witness Coordinating Committee, is the principal way in which we provide collective financial support to this work.

Multiple tragedies this year brought renewed attention to race-motivated lethal incidents, but the economic and social effects of racism are far greater problems than the "tip of the iceberg" events we see in the press. NYYM's Black Concerns Committee, European American Quakers Working to End Racism, and the Indian Affairs Committee have been working for years on undoing racism. This year they are working on advancement and outreach for the White Privilege Conference to be held next year in Philadelphia.

Last summer, the Prisons Committee sponsored the construction of a mock solitary-confinement cell at Silver Bay, as part of their work to end the ravages of long-term solitary confinement, and they plan to take this work into the wider community in the coming months. The Barrington-Dunbar Committee supports monthly meetings in their work with communities of color. The Indian Affairs Committee gives scholarships to economically disadvantaged students of color. The Alternatives to Violence Project is laying the groundwork for expansion into additional prisons, where they will help people by offering them better conflict-resolution skills. The work of these committees doesn't make headlines, but it does give hope.

Friends in Chatham-Summit Meeting worked for four years to realize their vision of an Alternatives to Violence Project Day Camp, and the Sharing Fund provided substantial, ongoing financial support. After the AVP Day Camp launched this summer, a mother of one of the campers appreciated the positive impact the Day Camp had had on her children so much that she traveled to the 2015 Fall Sessions of the Yearly Meeting to tell us about it.

West Africa was ravaged this past year. First, Ebola raged through the summer, devastating families, communities, nations. The fields of dead farmers went untended, the shelves of dead merchants unstocked, and economies staggered. Then autumn brought unusually heavy rains, preventing harvests and threatening severe famine. The Sharing Fund responded by partially funding four of seven projects in Sierra Leone developed by Right Sharing of World Resources to increase that country's food supply.

These are only a few of the many types of leadings supported by the Sharing Fund. [Now we ask again](#) for your financial support so that we can continue to facilitate Friends' ongoing witness and can nourish emerging leadings. Only with your help can the Sharing Fund continue to serve as the principal financial support for our collective witness to the world.

~ Mary Eagleson, clerk, Witness Coordinating Committee

FUM Chain of Prayer

Friends United Meeting will hold its "Chain of Prayer" for 2015, January 1 to May 24. This year FUM is especially focusing on the idea of being "energized" and they are calling on Friends to make this a primary feature through the 2015 "Chain of Prayer." They ask that your meeting please return your signup sheet by January 31 to FUM. For more information go to www.fum.org, info@fum.org, or call 765-962-7573. This is a great opportunity to energize your meeting and to connect with other meetings.

Climate change information from QUNO

[Download QUNO's climate science paper.](#)

The Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva monitored the Paris climate change talks and has prepared a brief paper that summarizes the latest findings and which also links to the call to conscience set out in the Quaker Statement on Climate Change.

Quaker Council for European Affairs

[Download *Around Europe*](#), the latest newsletter of the Quaker Council for European Affairs.

In the week of December 7, 110 Quakers from across Europe took part in a Quaker conference on the theme: Castle or community: Quakers' role in building a new Europe. To read a summary report please visit: www.qcea.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Report.sla_.pdf.

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Job Opportunities

Communications Officer in the Africa Ministries Office (FUM)

Friends United Meeting announces the opening of a new position of Communications Officer in the Africa Ministries Office (Kisumu, Kenya). The job description found at www.fum.org/jobs details the qualifications and duties of this position, which is designated for a North American candidate. Applications will be received until the position is filled.

For more information and to submit a resume and cover letter, contact: Eden Grace, Director of Global Ministries, Friends United Meeting, 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond IN 47374, edeng@fum.org, 765-962-7573.

Full-time pastor, Adirondack Meeting

Adirondack Friends Meeting (gathered in 1767) is seeking a full-time pastor. Our programmed meeting is open and affirming, and includes waiting worship as well as a pastoral message. We are a small faith community with an enduring commitment to our Quaker heritage and to all in our Meeting. Our Meetinghouse and adjacent parsonage are nestled in the southern Adirondacks of upstate New York.

Please submit your letter of interest and resume to:

Ministry and Council/Search Committee
Adirondack Friends Meeting
27 Saratoga Avenue
South Glens Falls, NY 12803
adirondackfriendsmeeting@gmail.com

Fiscal and Property Manager, Friends General conference

Friends General Conference (FGC), with a \$2.2M annual budget and 15 staff, provides programs and services to Quakers and spiritual seekers in the United States and Canada. The Fiscal and Property Manager is responsible for financial management, including full charge bookkeeping, monitoring income and expenses, paying bills, securely handling income, reporting, and coordinating annual budget preparation. S/He is also responsible for the management of the property that houses FGC's main office.

The ideal candidate will:

- Have three (3) years or more of applicable bookkeeping and accounting experience.
- Have significant experience with Quickbooks or equivalent products.
- Be highly responsible and able to work independently and expeditiously.
- Be able to occasionally travel and to work a few weekends.
- Be able to think strategically about fiscal issues and fulfilling FGC's mission.
- Be familiar with and supportive of the Religious Society of Friends.

A complete job description is available at www.fgcquaker.org/jobs.

To Apply:

Send cover letter, resume, and three references to Barry Crossno, General Secretary, Friends General Conference, 1216 Arch Street, 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107, barryc@fgcquaker.org, by January 31, 2016.

This is a full-time position with health and retirement benefits based in FGC's Philadelphia office. Salary will be commensurate with experience. This position reports to the General Secretary (Executive Director) of Friends General Conference and works closely with the Treasurer. The expected start date is May 14th, 2016. FGC is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Spiritual Deepening Program Director, Friends General conference

The person hired to become the Spiritual Deepening Program Coordinator will have a passion for making the full depth, joy, and fire of Quaker faith and practice highly available, teachable, and experiential for all those who are or would become part of our faith communities. This position will work with FGC committees and staff, especially the FGC Spiritual Deepening Working Group (SDWG) and Committee on Nurturing Ministries (CNM), to launch, coordinate, promote, evaluate, and improve the Spiritual Deepening Program (initial program development is mostly complete). This position will also have the responsibility of coordinating the FGC Yearly Meeting Visitors Program. Yearly Meeting Visitors Program duties are primarily clustered in the spring and summer.

The ideal candidate will:

- Have a college degree
- Have the ability to explain Quaker faith and practice to newcomers
- Be able to work effectively with committees and volunteers (includes some evening conference calls)
- Be highly organized and able to work expeditiously as well as independently
- Have strong writing and computer skills
- Be an active and seasoned member of the Religious Society of Friends
- Be able to travel periodically, including some weekends

A complete job description is available at fgcquaker.org/jobs. A preliminary description of the Spiritual Deepening program is available at fgcquaker.org/deepen/enrichment/spiritualdeepening.

Send your cover letter, resume, and three references to Barry Crossno, General Secretary, Friends General Conference, 1216 Arch Street, 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107 with copies to Nicole Rayborn nicoler@fgcquaker.org. Please include "Spiritual Deepening Program Coordinator" in the subject line of the e-mail. Applications received by Monday,

January 11th at 5pm will be given priority consideration.

This is an 80% time position (four days per week) with health and retirement benefits. The person holding this position can work from FGC's Philadelphia office or from a remote office that has broadband internet and access to a major airport. Salary will be commensurate with experience. This position reports to the General Secretary (Executive Director) of Friends General Conference and works closely with the Clerk of the Committee for Nurturing Ministries. The expected start date is approximately March 7th, 2016 depending on the amount of time required to complete the hiring process and the availability of the chosen candidate. FGC is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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Upcoming Events

Creating One Spiritual Community

Integrating Children into the Spiritual Life of the Meeting
Saturday, March 12, 2016 • 9am–4pm • Brooklyn Meeting

[Download a flyer.](#)

How can our meetings better integrate our children into the spiritual life of our Meeting? How can we give them a voice in their experience of Quakerism and an awareness of Quaker process? Participants will leave with new energy, new ideas, and new tools to implement these ideas.

Sessions will explore both the worship and the community aspects of Quakerism, including:

- Children in the circle of meeting life: joys and challenges
- Supporting children's spiritual development
- Hands-on approach to teaching children Quaker process

* Some parts of the day will be multigenerational and childcare will also be provided.

Who should attend? Religious Education Committee members, Ministry & Counsel Committee members, Parents, Families, and anyone with a concern for the spiritual life of our children. ***It is recommended that meetings send two or more participants to the session. There is no cost to attend.***

Facilitators:

Mary Harpster has served on Ministry & Counsel and Religious Education Committees. As a First Day School teacher she develops programming that gives the students input into meeting life.

Melinda Wenner Bradley leads religious education workshops for yearly meetings, FGC, Pendle Hill, and Friends schools. She serves on the NYYM Youth Committee, and is the former clerk of the Children's Spiritual Life Committee of Philadelphia YM.

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Staff Travel Calendars

General Secretary, Christopher Sammond

Note that the General Secretary has several other dates pending as of December 21. You can keep up to date on his schedule by visiting our [Staff Travel web page](#).

December

12–13	Visit Matinicock Meeting, Locust Valley, NY
16	Visit Greater Canandaigua Worship Group

January

9	Meet with Development Committee, NYYM Office, NYC
16	Meet with the Leadings and Priorities Assessment Working Group 15th Street Meetinghouse, New York, NY
29–30	Participate in Coordinating Committee Weekend, Powell House, Old Chatham, NY

February

12–13	Co-facilitate retreat for Manasquan Meeting, Manasquan, NJ
26–27	Support Meetings for Discernment Session, Westbury Meetinghouse, Westbury, NY

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