

# New York Yearly Meeting Religious Society of Friends

## *InfoShare*

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Editor, Paul Busby, [paul@nyym.org](mailto:paul@nyym.org)

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### PoHo's Annual New Year Celebration December 30, 2011-January 1, 2012

This intergenerational conference is one of our most popular. We can only house 90 people, so register early! At this annual event we have activities for all ages including making snow people, ice skating, yoga, Pilates, cookie making, origami, sharing, storytelling, and building hot-air balloons. Did I mention dancing in the kitchen while washing pots and pans? This year, we're going to be doing more of the same. Right after our evening meal on the 31st, it's Cabaret! Bring your instruments and a song, story, poem, or skit to share with everyone on New Year's Eve. Jacki Gray, our cook, will have a Quaker midnight feast ready for us. We'll conclude the celebration with a brunch on January 1st. Come and be a part of this intergenerational celebration.

For information and registration: [www.powellhouse.org](http://www.powellhouse.org);  
[info@powellhouse.org](mailto:info@powellhouse.org); 518-794-8811.

*Loving attention to children for this event is under the care of the community.*

### FUM 2012 Chain of Prayer

The annual FUM Chain of Prayer begins January 1 and continues through Pentecost Sunday, May 27, 2012. Meetings throughout the world make a "Chain of Prayer" by signing up for a day to



pray for the ministries of FUM as well as its member monthly meetings. Some meetings have special prayer gatherings, others ask individuals to sign up for half-hour time slots and many take up a special offering for the ministries of Friends United Meeting. Without your prayer and financial support, FUM could not carry out its mission to energize and equip Friends around the world.

For your Meeting to participate, complete and submit the registration form at <http://bit.ly/sJ0dsO>. You may also print the form and mail to Chain of

Prayer, FUM, 101 Quaker Hill Dr., Richmond IN 47374. If possible, please respond early. (Example: If you want a February date, we will need your form by January 1.) We will confirm your time soon after we receive your request.

A month or more before your day on the Chain of Prayer, we will send your meeting publicity material, information on the meeting for which you will be praying, and some prayer concerns from FUM's ministries.

An FUM *Daily Prayer Guide* is available at <http://bit.ly/vtI8r2> (download and print on legal size paper).

## **Coordinating Weekend**

January 27-28, 2012

Powell House

Heather M. Cook, clerk, NYYM

All are welcome and encouraged to participate in Coordinating Weekend at Powell House on Friday, January 27 and Saturday, January 28. We will start with fellowship over dinner on Friday, and end with fellowship over dinner on Saturday, in order to give Friends the chance to worship with their home meeting on Sunday morning.

Coordinating Weekend gives Friends the opportunity to worship together, to discern how our Yearly Meeting is called to move forward in its ministry and service, and to do some nuts-and-bolts work when coordinating committees meet on Saturday. We will gather as a whole to worship and listen together periodically throughout the weekend.

Previously called Coordinating Committee Weekend, the name change reflects a growth in understanding that ministry and service benefit when we have a fuller perspective on the work being done in and through the Meeting. When we lift our gaze from our own work, we appreciate the weaving together of the different threads of faithfulness and how vital they all are.

If you or someone at your Meeting is curious about the wider faith community that is the Yearly Meeting, this weekend is a great opportunity to indulge that curiosity. Come experience what's happening, even if you're not on a coordinating committee or a committee!

Committees and working groups wanting to meet need to make arrangements with Powell House to meet before dinner on Friday or after

dinner on Saturday. Friends are also welcome to stay over on Saturday night and do committee work on Sunday.

Please register right away at [powellhouse.org](http://powellhouse.org) or call Sharon at 518-794-8811, extension 10, to give specifics about bed and meal needs, and about committee space requests.

Any questions can be directed to Heather M. Cook, NYYM clerk, at [clerk@nyym.org](mailto:clerk@nyym.org) or 908-377-9665.

### **Meeting for Discernment**

March 3, 2012, Ithaca Meeting

Jeffrey Aaron, assistant clerk, NYYM

The 2012 winter session of Meetings for Discernment will be held at Ithaca Friends Meeting on Saturday, March 3, 2012.

Meetings for Discernment are a time when Friends from all parts of the Yearly Meeting come together for extended worship to discern the presence and movement of God, Spirit, Light—in our hearts, in the lives of our meetings, and in the life of the Yearly Meeting as a whole. To encourage a broad presence from throughout the Yearly Meeting, local meetings and worship groups name appointees from their meetings to attend, but Meetings for Discernment are open to all. Worship is held during morning and afternoon periods, with a break for lunch.

Meetings for Discernment offer Friends a time for deep reflection and spiritual connection and serve as a means for the Yearly Meeting to discern what is rising up among us that may not be apparent through our usual process of committees and attending to business.

Planning has commenced and registration details will be available soon. In the event of inclement weather, an alternate date of March 17 has been reserved.

### **FWCC World Conference**

April 17–25, 2012

Nakuru, Kenya

The largest worldwide conference of Friends since 1967 comes together from April 17–25, 2012, in Kenya. The theme is “Being Salt and Light: Friends living the Kingdom of God in a broken world.” More than 1,000 Friends will gather from many parts of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe,

Latin America, and North America on the campus of Kabarak University, near Nakuru, Kenya.

More information is at [www.saltandlight2012.org/](http://www.saltandlight2012.org/). The Study Booklet for the World Conference is offered as a resource to all Friends everywhere, whether or not they are attending. It can be read online or downloaded at [www.saltandlight2012.org/materials.html](http://www.saltandlight2012.org/materials.html). Hard copies can also be purchased.

### **FGC Gathering**

July 1–7, 2012, Kingston, RI

It's not too soon to be planning for the 2012 Gathering of Friends General Conference! The theme will be "All God's Critters Got a Place in the Choir." See [fgcquaker.org/conference](http://fgcquaker.org/conference) for information,.

### **FCNL Seeks Director of Development**

The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), a nonpartisan Quaker lobby in the public interest, is looking for a dynamic, experienced director of development to increase financial support for our work to build a better world. With headquarters on Capitol Hill, FCNL fields the largest team of registered peace lobbyists in Washington and engages a vibrant nationwide network of some 60,000 activists and donors.

The director of development will be responsible for long-range fund development planning, including the possibility of a capital campaign; generating new resources; soliciting donors; leading development staff and stewarding our dedicated network of supporters for our 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(3) organizations.

A full description is at <http://bit.ly/tHc3Uc>.

To apply: Submit a letter of interest and résumé to [jobs@fcnl.org](mailto:jobs@fcnl.org). Attention: Diane Randall, executive secretary. Include results of fund development and other relevant experience and any connection you have with the Religious Society of Friends or other faith communities. Salary range commensurate with experience and within organizational parameters. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

## **Genesee Valley Meeting Formed**

Suzanne Blackburn, Genesee Valley Meeting

Dansville Worship Group has been meeting for worship on and off for over a decade. In recent years, the group has been under the care of Alfred Monthly Meeting, with several members of Alfred alternating worshipping between the two groups. Over time, attendance settled within the two groups and the time seemed right for Friends in Dansville to be more independent from Alfred. This fall, Alfred approved the formation of the Dansville group as a preparative meeting and initiated the process of subdividing into two independent meetings. A special committee was formed at Farmington-Scipio Regional Fall Gathering to work with the two groups during this transition.

The transition to a preparative meeting has been a very exciting time for us. Meeting for business and making decisions as a community has brought us closer together. At our first meeting for business on November 6, 2011, Danville Preparative Meeting renamed itself Genesee Valley Meeting, Religious Society of Friends, aka Genesee Valley Quaker Meeting. We felt led to change our name to reflect the wide geographic area we serve. We have reached out to other community groups in the Genesee Valley (south of Rochester) and are forming a friendly partnership with Genesee Valley Citizens for Peace.

We have a core group of three families (with nine kids ranging in age from 2 to 11), with other families and individuals from Alfred MM or from the local community who also attend regularly. We meet for worship on odd Sundays of the month. First Day school gathers before meeting for worship, from 9:30 to 10 a.m. One of our greatest strengths is that all of the parents sign up to lead First Day school on a rotating basis, whether for the school-age kids or the toddler group. We worship in the unprogrammed tradition from 10 to 11. The kids stay in worship about 20 to 30 minutes and then, if they would like to, leave to play together under the supervision of a volunteer childcare provider. We have several days of semiprogrammed worship planned throughout the year in which we will read stories, sing songs, share other talents with one another, and enjoy a meal together. We look forward to building up our adult religious education and enrichment program in the coming year.

## **Farmington: Opening a Window on Mental Health**

Sally Soule, Farmington Meeting

On November 12, 2011, the Peace and Social Concerns Committee of Farmington Friends Meeting sponsored an evening of community education to help understand and deal effectively with mental-health issues.

Our evening of sharing began with a homemade meal of chili, cornbread, salad, and cookies. With a sense of satisfaction from the delicious meal and friendly conversation we gave our attention to the presenters.

The local chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) provided a program entitled "In Our Own Voice." The aspects of the program were: Dark Days, Acceptance, Treatment, Coping, Successes, Hopes, Dreams. Each aspect was covered first by an individual on a DVD and then followed up by presenters from NAMI.

The question, answer, and discussion period following the program was a success. Our gathering of close to 40 people represented a group of individuals with a wide range of experiences in mental-health issues. Questions were asked and answers were provided. Opportunities for future enlightenment were made available along with ample educational brochures.

## **End the Death Penalty in Connecticut**

The anti-death penalty community is highlighting Connecticut for action. Witness Coordinating Committee (WCC) is exploring options on how Friends can work on abolishing the death penalty in Connecticut. If you wish to work on this issue, please contact Fred Dettmer, clerk of WCC, [fdettmer@aol.com](mailto:fdettmer@aol.com), or Helen Garay Toppins at the NYYM office, [office@nyym.org](mailto:office@nyym.org).

Members and attenders who are involved with the Connecticut Network to Abolish the Death Penalty or other abolitionist groups are especially urged to participate.

## **World Ministries Committee Offers Grants**

Sue Weisfeld, clerk, WMC

NYYM's World Ministries Committee (WMC) would like Friends throughout NYYM to consider our mission when they are involved in projects where the ministry of Quaker love is making a difference anywhere in the wider world. Not all Friends may be familiar with our mission, so the following

description is to encourage submissions of grant proposals if we can be of some assistance.

We are funded by bequests and also receive money from the Sharing Fund. Given the funds at its disposal, the committee encourages applications from NYYM that describe how a small amount of money can make a difference.

Persons or organizations applying for funds should write to us with a sense of ministry, that is, with a vision of what is to be done and how it will be accomplished while spreading the Quaker message of love and peace. Grants are limited to members of NYYM or, alternatively, the "vision" should be shared and endorsed by a meeting or organization within NYYM.

In considering the applications, WMC will focus on whether the proposed work is ministry and whether it is in the wider world. From time to time we do give grants for administration and also we do fund projects in some areas of the US, although not often.

Applications should be by letter, preferably electronic, to the WMC clerk and should say specifically for what the funds are needed. Each application should designate a NYYM Friend as the main contact person for the project, and this person must accept responsibility for stewardship of any funds granted to the project. If funds are granted, a report is due in about nine months with an update on the project.

WMC meets two to three times per year via teleconference, and applications are accepted throughout the year. To learn more or to submit a grant, please contact the WMC clerk, sweisfeld @juno.com.

### **Friends Peace Teams to Indonesia**

“Where we consistently fail is where you succeed: reestablishing education and livelihoods, healing trauma, and reducing violence.”

—*Indonesian Director for Disaster Relief, referring to Friends Peace Teams to Indonesia, 2007*

Nadine Hoover, of Alfred Meeting, continues to coordinate Friends Peace Teams' Indonesia projects. Friends are encouraged to visit their Web site, [www.fptindonesia.org/](http://www.fptindonesia.org/), from which the following is adapted.

Friends Peace Teams to Indonesia connects communities of conscience in Indonesia with the world and provides opportunities for conscientious service to those who believe peace is possible and war is an unnecessary evil. With friends and partners in Aceh, North Sumatra, West Java, and

Central Java, we support community discernment, acts of conscience, nonviolence, trauma healing, developmental play, ecologically peaceful livelihoods, and social justice.

Building mutual friendships requires entering other worlds – worlds very different from our own and finding our common humanity. We are building friendships among people in Indonesia with people around the world.

We work with people in Sumatra and Java who:

- do not support violence or war
- do not take sides

and who have survived

- thirty years of war
- a global tsunami
- 8.9 richter-scale earthquakes
- flooding from deforestation and illegal palm plantations and logging

We share a faith—across religion, class, and culture—in the power of a Living Spirit to give life, joy, peace, and prosperity through love, integrity, and compassionate justice among people who live in simplicity and equality.

### **Schenectady Friends & World Ministries Aid to Zimbabwe**

Since “land reforms” were introduced in Zimbabwe in 2000, very little food has been produced, a problem complicated further by widespread drought. Violent confrontations, political abuse, and prevention of food distribution to those who do not actively support the ruling party has resulted in rampant starvation throughout the country. Attempting to help as best they can, Quakers in the Matabeleland region (Bulawayo Monthly Meeting) distribute the staple maize meal to some 3,000 surrounding village inhabitants, a discriminated-against ethnic minority within Zimbabwe, who have little else to stave off famine.

For several years, Schenectady Meeting Friends have worked to raise money that they wire to Bulawayo Friends, who then use the funds to give 25 kilos of maize meal every month to Matabele families in the southern part of the country, thus preventing wholesale starvation. It is a true example of what Quaker love can do!

Annual grants from NYYM’s World Ministries Committee have helped, but the need for more funds remains desperate. To help, contact David Gerhan, treasurer, Schenectady Meeting, Box 638, Schenectady, NY 12301-0638.



## News from Casa de los Amigos



Casa de los Amigos is a Quaker center for peace and justice in Mexico City. The following is adapted from an e-mail we received from the Casa. Please visit [www.casadelosamigos.org](http://www.casadelosamigos.org).

As we reflect on 2011, we have many reasons to be thankful. For the past five years at the Casa, each year has been more important than the last. Since our 50th-anniversary celebration in 2006, we've strengthened and focused our peacework, transformed our volunteer program, made constant improvements to our Hospitality work, and hired more permanent staff. We'd like to share a few notes and numbers from 2011 that we think will help paint a picture of life at the Casa.

Migrant and refugee guests housed via our Solidarity Lodging program: 94

    From El Salvador: 12

    From Nigeria: 11

Number of incredibly cute Congolese toddler refugees: 3

Total number of overnight guests: 1,318

Number of days the Casa closed this year:  $\frac{2}{3}$

Pounds of coffee consumed (so far): 193.6

Number of art openings of photo exhibits inspired by the work of José Clemente Orozco: 1

Volunteers who worked in the Casa this year: 23

Applications received at Haverford College for the Casa's 2012 Migration Field Study: 21

Pesos needed to get new curtains for the conference room: 13,738

Age of current curtains: unknown

Number of first-time donors so far in 2011: 41

Days from today until the General Meeting of Friends in Mexico is held at the Casa: 192

Years since the General Meeting was last held in Mexico City: 19

Number of goats allowed to be roasted on the patio by Cameroonian prince to honor the three-year anniversary of his mother's death: 1

Number to be allowed next year: 0

Jars of honey, jam, and chiles from small cooperative in Puebla sold at the Casa: 707

Sunday potlucks: 47

Mothers on the “Caravana de Madres Centroamericanas” who came here this month searching for their children who disappeared on the migrant trail through Mexico: 33

Lost children found on this trip: 1

Amid all this activity, a few highlights of the year have been:

- Standing among the cheering crowd, watching the refugees from the Casa Spanish classes perform the play *La Pequeña Carlota* at International Refugee Day.
- Taking the first step onto the newly refinished wooden floors in the Casa’s reception and dining room.
- Feeding breakfast to 25 campesinos from across Mexico, at the Casa for a festival on biodiversity.
- Being asked to provide expertise and consulting in the establishment of two migrant shelters in Mexico City.

We hope these moments begin to describe some of our work in 2011. Yet the real heart of the Casa is the immediacy of the daily work and life given to us. This means that every day—not only for the big events—we are a community working to build the world we want to see. It is the practice of Hospitality, of organizing, of taking time to be present with people from all over the world, and of opening our doors to anyone who walks in, whether it’s a foreign consul or somebody from our block. We need your support to do this good work!

### Christopher Sammond’s Travel Calendar December 1, 2011–January 31, 2012

#### **December**

2 Visit Attica Prison Preparative Meeting, Attica NY

4 Visit Genessee Valley Preparative Meeting, Dansville, NY

9–11 Meet with Priorities Working Group, Poplar Ridge MM, Poplar Ridge, NY

23 Visit Cayuga Prison Worship Group, Moravia, NY

## January

- 1 Visit Buffalo MM, Buffalo, NY
- 8 Visit Brooklyn MM, Brooklyn, NY
- 10 Speak on the Peace Testimony, Brooklyn Friends School, Brooklyn, NY
- 14 Visit Auburn Prison Preparative Meeting, Auburn, NY
- 27–29 Attend Coordinating Weekend, Powell House, Old Chatham, NY
- 20 Visit Catskill Mountain MM, Grahamsville, NY

## General Secretary's Report Fall Sessions 2011

Our financial condition is an aspect of our spiritual condition. How we are in our connection to God, in the coherence of our community, in our faithfulness, in our inspiration to fulfill the work we are led to do, and in our joyful response to God's presence, guidance, and empowerment, are reflected in our budget and our commitments of our time and talents.

We once again are facing a challenging budget situation. This may seem like pretty familiar territory. I have not experienced an easy budget process in all the years I have been here, and judging by what I have read from the past two or three decades, having a challenging budget process, with concerns about what will be cut and where the money will come from to support the Yearly Meeting programs, has been more of the rule than the exception. So this may seem like the same old place we have been in, and therefore not much to worry about. But I would say that this year is somewhat different in the degree to which we are not just trimming the little bits of fat remaining, but really cutting into the bone with our proposed budget, impeding our capacity to give vital nurture to the Yearly Meeting as a whole. We cannot continue in the course we are on, of trying to whittle away the budget a little more each year without addressing the larger issues which impede our work as a community. Fortunately, I believe that we are now addressing those larger issues, but that it will take some years for that work to bear fruit.

Two years ago many of us had assumptions that the economy would improve and that that improvement would work its way down to the level of nonprofits, always the last segment of the economy to recover, in two more years, at most. Well, we are there now, and while Wall Street has recovered moderately well, the rest of the economy has not. We can't

expect an improved economy to pick up our budget for at least another two years, if then. Meanwhile, in some of our monthly meetings, the patterns of giving are changing. Many meetings have been largely sustained by several donors who have been exceedingly generous over the years. And in many of those meetings, those Friends are moving away as they enter retirement. As yet, other Friends have not increased their donations to offset this loss. In some meetings smaller numbers have also meant a smaller base of Friends contributing to their meeting.

The way we have been doing things will not work much longer. We are straining at the seams, and by this "we," I mean most all of us in the Yearly Meeting—monthly meetings in their budgets and the yearly meeting with its budget. Our monthly meetings have been incredibly supportive of the Yearly Meeting budget, stretching mightily to maintain a flat level of giving. We are hearing from them that with the changes in demographics and giving patterns, that many are concerned about maintaining that level.

I believe that the change that is being forced upon us could ultimately be to our benefit. We are being asked to grow and change the way we do things. If we do, I think we could do very well. If we continue in our old ways of doing things, we will continue on the trajectory we are on, and it is untenable. It is not just untenable in terms of our budgets, monthly meeting and Yearly Meeting, but in terms of the health of our Society.

For some years now, the Yearly Meeting budget has been pared down and pared down, keeping it relatively flat over the past six or more years, despite increases in fixed costs, all the while expanding programs. We have done this partly by cutting out what we could, by economizing mightily, partly by reducing our support of the umbrella Quaker organizations, and partly by tapping funding sources outside our operating budget. Grants from the trustee-managed accounts and from outside sources have been vital in nurturing our growing edges, such as the Young Friends in Residence (YFIR) program, the ARCH program, and the young adult field secretary position.

In our Yearly Meeting operating budget most of our energy and resources are being devoted to trying to maintain what we have. And, with our current patterns of doing things, we are struggling mightily to do even that. We are not finding room to fund our growing edges. "Maintenance budgets" stifle our capacity for the Yearly Meeting to nurture those growing edges, where new life in the Spirit most needs our support.

I think it is easy to assume that the reason that we have pared down to maintenance budgets is that we haven't the resources in these difficult economic times. While it might be easy to maintain the attitude that we always stretch to meet our budget, that this situation is no different than other years, that our vision will always outstrip our resources, and that we will therefore always be in this uncomfortable spot, I would like to present an alternative vision. I don't see us as lacking in resources. I see us as having an inadequate vision to inspire Friends to share their resources.

Ruth Kinsey, beloved pastor of Farmington Friends Meeting, has shared in a message to her meeting the concept she calls "minimum-wage tithing." The premise is simple: if everyone who is active in the meeting assumed only an income based on full time work at a minimum wage, and tithed on that amount only, she showed them that they could double or triple their budget.

Let's do the math for the whole Yearly Meeting, understanding that we will be dealing with some gross approximations, but good enough for illustration purposes. If our roughly 3,500 active Friends each assumed an annual income of 2080 hours at \$7.25 per hour, or \$15,080 per year, and tithed on that amount to their monthly meetings, that "minimum-wage tithe" would net over \$5¼ million.

Our monthly meetings give anywhere from 10–60% of their budget to NYYM, as led, but most are on the higher end, so let's err on the high side and estimate an average of 50% of the budgets of our monthly meetings are currently going to support of the Yearly Meeting. As the Yearly Meeting's budget is about \$520,000, the net non-YM portion of our monthly meeting budgets would be roughly the same, or perhaps a little more. So cumulatively, monthly meeting budgets and Yearly Meeting budget, we are currently operating on about \$1.4 to \$1.7 million, or roughly a third of a minimum-wage tithe.

In our current practice, very few Friends give at this level. In the two meetings I have been a part of in NYYM, Bulls Head-Oswego and Poplar Ridge, only 5–15% of Friends give at this level. Most give a quarter or less than that. What concerns me most, and it also concerns monthly meeting treasurers that I talk to, is that a significant number of regularly attending Friends give \$50 or less each year. I have heard that some Friends, especially newer ones, have had no idea that their meeting might be in need of contributions. We are sometimes so reluctant to talk about financial matters outside of business meeting that those who don't attend have no

idea how our finances work.

So while our monthly meetings are struggling mightily, I might even say in some instances, heroically, to support the work of the Yearly Meeting, we are not, as a group, giving much more than 3% of a minimum wage income to support the life of our part of the Society of Friends. While I know that there are many individuals who cannot afford even that amount, due to manner of employment, fixed income, children in college, or who out of conscience live below a taxable level, I believe that most of our Friends worshiping with us are making much more than minimum wage.

I am not advocating we move to a tithing system, or go back to an apportionment system, abandoning covenant donations. Acting as led, rather than in a prescribed fashion, is the heart of who we are. But as tithing is a predominant way in which other spiritual communities express their joyful commitment to the mission they feel called to, I think it serves as a good illustration of the point I hope to make. That is, that we, as a body, underfund our monthly meetings relative to the resources at our disposal.

We have the resources. When Powell House's boiler blew, and they needed \$49,000 right away, the money appeared. When Ithaca monthly meeting became clear to buy and remodel a building for a new meetinghouse, they raised over \$300,000 in a matter of months. When Old Chatham monthly meeting became clear that they needed to not build their meetinghouse on Powell House property, but instead buy land costing almost as much as what they had raised to build their meetinghouse, they bought the land. And then they raised the money for their meetinghouse a second time.

We have the resources. Much of the time, we just aren't inspired to use them in support of the Society of Friends. This isn't because we aren't good and generous people. We are. It's because there is a disconnect between those doing the work in the name of the Yearly Meeting, and those paying for it. Many Friends in our monthly meetings know little or nothing of the work going on in their name. It's pretty hard to be inspired to support something you know virtually nothing about. And it is an open question as to whether the work being done through the Yearly Meeting budget is an accurate expression of the needs, leadings, and desires of the Friends who make up this Yearly Meeting. It could be. We hope that it is. But we don't know for sure.

If we have a coherent vision that is grounded in the discernment of our

communities, and it is clearly communicated, and the extent of the needs to support that vision, both locally and in the larger Yearly Meeting, are made known, I firmly believe that we will have all the support we need to do that work. And, we will be healthier spiritually for doing so.

We are now part way through that process of addressing what I would sum up as: Vision, Communication, and Development. We need to be working from a common vision. Arriving at a common vision will involve better communicating as to what we are doing, and a lot of grassroots listening about what is needed to nurture our monthly meetings and individual Friends, how we are being led, and how what we are currently doing needs to be better aligned with the needs and leadings across the Yearly Meeting. If we do that work well, I believe Friends will be inspired to support the work. Communication and Vision are thus intertwined. Our Priorities Working Group has been designing a process whereby we can do this work of listening, communicating, and envisioning together. Expect a request from one of them to visit your meeting.

In the area of Development, it is clear that we need to do a better job of supporting our monthly meeting budgets. If our monthly meetings are doing well, the Yearly Meeting organization will do fine, if its vision is consonant with the whole of the Yearly Meeting and is communicated effectively. The Development Working Group has been responding to the Financial Services Committee's request that we create a Development Committee. Much of the preliminary discussion has been about how the Yearly Meeting can better support our monthly meetings in their fundraising efforts. What we have found so far is that there is much that we can do in this area. We have been looking at how other yearly meetings do this work and also whether some sort of development function in support of the Yearly Meeting's work is feasible and advisable. We have arrived at a tentative "yes" to this question and will be bringing that discussion to General Services Coordinating Committee this Fall Sessions.

We are doing what needs to be done to move into a different pattern of how we fund the Life of our monthly meetings and our Yearly Meeting. I anticipate us drawing together behind a common vision, having a broader understanding of the work we do, and moving into a different attitude and practice around funding our work. If we do this well, we will embark on a different trajectory, one that nurtures our growing edges, one of less stress, strain, and struggle, deeper faithfulness, and more coherent community.

In closing, I would like to tell a story about my friend Sandy, when I was new to Twin Cities Friends Meeting. I had been attending meeting a year or two and was deeply impressed and surprised when I learned that Sandy was giving \$25 a month to the meeting. Sandy was a single mom, who worked very hard to make ends meet, at a job that didn't pay terribly well. In today's dollars, her giving would be more like \$50–75 per month. At the time, I had my own building-contracting business, and was able to be pretty comfortable. Yet Sandy was giving way more to the meeting than I was. It was her commitment, and she honored it resolutely. What I also saw was that living that commitment deepened her relationship with the meeting. She was more a part of it than I was, partly because she gave, and partly she gave because she was more connected. I was more of a consumer, appreciating what the meeting had to offer but not invested in that deeper relationship.

I lost out on a great deal due to that attitude, one that fortunately changed over time.

If we all behaved as my friend Sandy did, a single mom with a mortgage, a young son, and very limited means, we would all be the richer for it. And so would our meetings. And that will not happen unless and until we are inspired to do so by the vision and the work set before us. We have some work to do to get there. Let us be faithful to it.

### **Peace Studies at the University of Basel, Switzerland**

The World Peace Academy (WPA), in cooperation with the Advanced Study Center at the University of Basel, offers a nine-month full-time master of advanced studies (MAS) in Peace and Conflict Transformation every year from March to November.

Students can begin the program in March, June, or September each year. It is also possible to obtain an advanced certificate for 12 weeks of courses or to take individual one-week courses. The program is accredited by the University of Basel, which issues the MAS diplomas. Courses are taught in English by leading specialists in their field from around the world.

The University of Basel, founded in 1460, is Switzerland's oldest university. It has about 11,000 students and over 300 faculty members.

The program is addressed to students from any discipline interested in peace and conflict resolution. A first university degree (bachelor's or equivalent), or comparable professional experience, is required.



Students who complete the full program of nine months of courses and write a thesis obtain a master of advanced studies in Peace and Conflict Transformation issued by the University of Basel, worth 70 credits according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

Costs: 15,000 Swiss francs (currently about €12,000 or US\$17,000) tuition for nine months of study, including thesis advisement. For part-time students, costs are 250 Swiss francs per ECTS. Rooms cost about 500 Swiss francs per month. Meals, health insurance, and travel costs are extra.

A limited number of partial scholarships is available on a competitive basis.

WPA has a rolling admission policy. You can apply at any time before the beginning of a trimester (March, June, September), and if you qualify and space is left, you will be admitted. Those who need a Swiss visa are advised to apply at least 10 weeks in advance.

For more information and to apply, see [www.world-peace-academy.ch](http://www.world-peace-academy.ch), or write to [info@world-peace-academy.ch](mailto:info@world-peace-academy.ch), or call +41 61 556 2369.