Ripples start where Spirit moves
Dear Friends,

I am honored to share with you FGC’s 2017 Annual Report, Ripples start where Spirit moves.

Borrowed from the 2017 FGC Gathering, this annual report theme carries echoes of a speech delivered by Robert F. Kennedy at the University of Cape Town 52 years ago. Kennedy bridged the racial equality movements in South Africa and the United States when he said: “Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope.”

As Friends, Spirit has called us to continue strengthening the ripples of hope that lead to equality for all people. In 2017, FGC embarked on our Institutional Assessment on structural racism. In the coming months, the FGC Assessment Taskforce will look at internal structures and policies, conduct surveys, and create recommendations to lift barriers that hinder full participation within FGC. When Central Committee meets in October 2018, we will have the opportunity to reflect on the recommendations and implement change.

Addressing structural racism within FGC is one ripple moving into the wider current of our Quaker faith. FGC lovingly holds the many faces and voices of Friends and meetings within this fluid tapestry. In the pages to follow, you’ll read stories from various Friends of how FGC has built connections and nurtured spiritual journeys. This annual report, like FGC, is for and about each of us.

I thank you for all the ways you contribute to FGC. Together we grow more deeply into our Quaker faith, and into being a community where the ripples of equality become not just a hope, but a reality.

Faithfully,

Frank Barch
Presiding Clerk
Spiritual Deepening Groups in Monthly Meetings

We experienced transformation in ways we could not have expected.

We never know when a place, passage, or comment will spark something within us. It may be something we’ve heard or read many times before, but in a moment everything changes. A hidden truth is revealed. That moment of transformational awareness is what FGC’s Spiritual Deepening Program seeks for Friends.

Twice a month, Leslie Jardin, Debby Churchman, and Sabrina McCarthy co-facilitate an in-person FGC Spiritual Deepening group at Friends Meeting of Washington. The trio participated in a spiritual journey group for over 30 years before they discovered something “profound and unexpected” in Spiritual Deepening.

“People don’t realize what a contemplative practice Quakerism is. It surprises people in a good way,” Leslie shared.

“Spirit is really present in the groups,” Leslie related, “We added a second session each month for people to talk about their own deepening experiences — to have a time to be heard and witnessed.” This additional time for reflection inspired one member to make a career change while others felt their interior lives deepen.

When the meeting started the Spiritual Deepening Program it wasn’t “evident how deep it would enable us to grow,” Leslie recalled, “FGC gives us programs and experiences we would not have come up with on our own that are anywhere near this deep. It’s profound.”

In 2017

Close to 300 seasoned Friends, newcomers, and curious seekers enrolled online in one or both Spiritual Deepening eRetreats: Silence & Light and The Beloved Community.

Looking Ahead

A third new eRetreat, Becoming Patterns and Examples, will be rolled out in 2018 along with improvements to FGC’s online learning platform.
The Institutional Assessment on Racism

How is the status quo being protected?

QVS Fellow, Amirah Fadhлина asked at an FGC staff meeting, “What does a courageous space look like to you?” The question grew out of FGC’s Institutional Assessment and work in addressing structural racism.

To kick off the Assessment process, Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training facilitated FGC staff, the Institutional Assessment Task Force, and other stakeholders in exploring how white dominance and structural racism have been embedded within US and Canadian institutions — including FGC.

For Institutional Assessment Task Force member, Keira Wilson, “It’s about learning to have uncomfortable conversations and sit in uncomfortable spaces. When I hear ‘That’s the way it’s always been,’ I push in. It’s a rallying call for me now.”

Keira likes to use health metaphors. “Imagine,” she said, “a mole that you’ve have for a long time. It’s been benign. But if you don’t check it, you don’t know that it has turned cancerous. We need to check on the things that have seemingly been there forever.” She continued, “If we want to be a healthy community we need to check in. This is not a sedentary game, it is an active pursuit — to become as healthy and as welcoming as we can be.”

In 2017

Forty-three members of FGC attended the initial Institutional Assessment Training.

Looking Ahead

In the fall of 2018, FGC will share with yearly and monthly meetings our learning and recommendations about structural inequities within FGC policies, decision-making, and culture.
The “and” between a Person of Color and a Quaker does more than join two identities, it bridges two realities. While Friends strive to see the Divine within each person, there’s an external world operating under a paradigm where skin color matters. To build the Beloved Community, Friends cannot be color blind, but rather, color brave.

Quaker Voluntary Service Director of Equity and Inclusion and Philadelphia City Coordinator Oskar Pierre Castro has been working on youth and career development, peace activism, decolonization work, and labor rights for more than twenty-five years. “The work is in equity issues. You have to approach it with an open heart, an open mind, and be vulnerable.”

Oskar attended his first FGC Gathering in 2008. Going to another Gathering wasn’t on his radar until Vanessa Julye, coordinator of FGC’s Ministry on Racism program, invited him to attend the 2017 Pre-Gathering Retreat for Friends of Color.

The Pre-Gathering “helped prepare [Friends of Color] to deal with the wider body of the Gathering and the sense of white privilege,” Oskar shared. “It created a brave space to be ourselves” and provided a “spiritual context to have conversations about negative experiences among Quakers and the wider society.”

The Friends of Color and their Families Autumn Retreat offered another opportunity to strengthen relationships. “It’s really hopeful to continue in ways to be in greater community in between events,” Oskar observed, “It builds continuity and connection.”

Ministry on Racism

Community building across a diaspora of cultures

In 2017

Attendance at Pre-Gathering Retreat for Friends of Color and their families increased by 50% from the prior year. During the Gathering, the Ministry on Racism program sponsored 8 workshops, and held daily gatherings for Friends of Color and for European Americans addressing racism.

Looking Ahead

In 2018 we will begin implementing the Institutional Assessment recommendations to address structural barriers that inhibit full participation by Friends of Color within FGC.
The FGC Gathering

“We met together in the unity of the Spirit, and of the bond of peace. And holy resolutions were kindled in our hearts as a fire . . .”
— Quaker Faith & Practice, Britain Yearly Meeting, 19.08

Friends describe a week at the Gathering as a time when spirits are ignited and hearts joined. The Gathering travels beyond the push and pull of daily living into the challenges of spirit-led activism and the vitality of Quaker faith. Bonds are formed. Commitments made. Lives nudged toward faithful change.

Ida Trisolini remembers the wide-eyed amazement of her children at their first Gathering in 2008: “All these people are Quaker?”

Being in a large Quaker community at any age can be revelatory, but it is especially powerful for a young Friend. Ida shared how “many Quaker children usually don’t find another Quaker in school. Even First Day School tends to be small within age groups.” Finding hundreds of young Quakers can be life changing. Ida has heard young attenders exclaim how “this is the only week of my life where I can see who I am.”

“Children feel listened to and valued,” Ida observed after serving two years as Junior Gathering Co-Clerk. “Children learn to take risks in sharing. They feel vulnerable, and from that place, form deep and powerful friendships.”

This holding of trust and vulnerability is in part what makes the Gathering so meaningful in Friends lives. “The Gathering,” Ida reflected, “is the Beloved Community in the truest sense.”

In 2017

Over 1100 Friends connected and found spiritual rejuvenation at the Gathering in Niagara, New York.

Looking Ahead

The 2018 Gathering in Toledo, Ohio promises inspiring plenary speakers and workshops that will encourage courageous conversations on racism, transformation, and liberation, in addition to workshops on clerk ing and spiritual practices.
QuakerPress gives writers an opportunity to contribute to the legacy of Quaker thought, while QuakerBooks brings those writers to the attention of thousands of interested readers.

QuakerBooks provides Friends with a curated inventory of titles that feed seekers. “We become better witnesses when we read and speak with knowledge and information,” said Margaret Dent of Fredonia Meeting (NYYM).

Operating year-round with a vibrant online presence for Friends of all ages and interests, QuakerBooks can also be found at yearly meetings and Quaker conferences. Browsing at QuakerBooks remains a favorite Gathering pastime.

Recently, QuakerPress released two new titles now available through QuakerBooks, Debbie Humphries’ *Seeds that Change the World*, and the second edition of *Faith and Play*.”
Quaker Cloud: Websites for Meetings

Nearly 150 meetings use Quaker Cloud to create and manage their websites. With features that are clear, inviting, and informative, the Quaker Cloud helps meetings attract new members and provide committees a secure, accessible place for minutes, directories, and business documents—all while receiving ongoing technical support from FGC on Quaker Cloud features.

“It’s wonderful to have a platform where the technical aspects are managed,” Vicki Berenson of Madison Friends Meeting (NYM) said of the benefits of using Quaker Cloud. “The support and response have been good. And it was great to see our suggestions incorporated into the updated [2017] design improvements.”

CIRC: Christian and Interfaith Relations Committee

CIRC represents FGC within the World Council of Churches, the Parliament of World Religion, other ecumenical bodies, as well as, the broader Quaker community.

Through CIRC, FGC participates in ecumenical and interfaith work for peace and justice, and the end of racism.

Friends Meeting House Fund

In 2017, the Friends Meeting House Fund (FMHF) partnered with Everence Association to expand its capacity to offer affordable mortgages for Friends meetings. FMHF continues to provide small grants for meeting house repairs or improvements, and for making meeting houses more sustainable and energy efficient.
Dear Friends,

Over the years, FGC has supported the spiritual journeys of tens of thousands of Friends. Together we have deepened in faith, bonded in community, and united in testimony. Together we have reached across boundaries to advocate for social justice, peace, and truth. This is the legacy we, as Quakers, uphold.

FGC nourishes Friends across the USA and Canada in these endeavors. FGC strengthens our faith each day through service, education, and support. As the needs of our community and our ways of communicating evolve, FGC evolves.

In 2017, the Institutional Assessment began the work of illuminating the barriers to participation that structural racism has erected within FGC. This Assessment process is leading FGC toward empowering change.

Together we are creating the Beloved Community. The work you have read about in this annual report happens with your support. Your financial contributions allow FGC to sustain our commitment to nurturing a vital Quaker faith.

I invite you to support FGC and the future and vitality of our beloved faith. You may donate by using the attached envelope, online at www.FGCQuaker.org/Donate, or by calling our development office at 215-561-1700, extension 3048.

Together we create the ripples of a vital Quaker faith, growing ever outward, moved by Spirit.

In Service,

Barry Crossno
General Secretary
Friends General Conference is a forum for yearly meetings to collaborate and nurture a vital Religious Society of Friends.

Central Committee guides FGC and is comprised of 112 Friends from across the US and Canada. Members are primarily representatives from the 15 yearly meetings and 13 monthly meetings which are affiliated with FGC. The Committee gathers once a year to make FGC governance decisions. Additionally, most committee members engage in year-round subcommittee work.

If you would be interested in representing your yearly meeting within FGC, contact your yearly meeting’s nominating committee.

Officers
Frank Barch (PHLYM)
Presiding Clerk
Marvin Barnes (LEYM)
Assistant Clerk
Rebecca Haines Rosenberg (BYM)
Recording Clerk
Mathilda Navias (LEYM)
Assistant Recording Clerk
Joan Sampieri (LEYM)
Treasurer

Clerks
David Bantz (AFC)
Communication Policy, Strategy and Infrastructure
Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch (PHLYM)
Nurturing Ministries
Carol Bartles (ILYM)
Friends Meetinghouse Fund
John Hunter (PFYM)
Discernment, Planning and Priorities

Nancy Moore (BYM)
Acting Clerk, Publications and Distribution
Dorothy Day (PHLYM) and Dot Walizer (BYM)
Christian and Interfaith Relations
David Haines (NEYM)
Long Range Conference Planning
Constance Lezenby (PHLYM)
Property
Douglas Mertz (AFC)
Development
Frank Perch (PHLYM)
Finance
Jada Jackson (PHLYM)
Personnel
Sally Weaver Sommer (LEYM)
Nominating
Elaine Russetta
Deepening Subcommittee Clerk (CNM)
Cliessa Nagle
Assistant Clerk, Personnel

Who Represents You on Executive Committee?
Alaska Yearly Meeting
Jim Cheydelor
Baltimore Yearly Meeting
Michelle Bellows
Canadian Yearly Meeting
Anne-Marie Ziliacus
Illinois Yearly Meeting
Janice Domanik
Lake Erie Yearly Meeting
Robb Yurisko
New England Yearly Meeting
Michelle Riendeau
New York Yearly Meeting
Jill Nanhfeldt
Northern Yearly Meeting
Ellie Greenler
Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting
Paul Kriese
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Carl Stanton

Piedmont Friends Fellowship
Karen McKinnon
South Central Yearly Meeting
Jan Michael
Southeastern Yearly Meeting
Ed Lesnick
Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association
Rebecca Sullivan
Intermountain Yearly Meeting
David Nachman
At Large
Anne Pomeroy (NYYM)
Karen Snares (NYYM)
Katrina McQuail (CYM)
Financial Stewardship  
October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017

Funding Sources
- Individuals and Bequests $649,695
- Monthly and Yearly Meetings $141,604
- Funds and Foundations $100,862
- Program Revenues $825,322
- Investment Income $61,059
- Program Reserves $152,470
- General Reserves $326,000

Total Funding Sources $2,257,012

In addition, volunteers contributed more than $37,000 in unreimbursed expenses in FY 2017.

For more information about FGC’s finances, please visit fgcquaker.org/finances

Funding Uses
- FGC Gathering $730,708
- Religious Education and Ministry on Racism $219,136
- Bookstore and Publications $173,712
- Other Ministries $109,503
- Administration and Governance $381,835
- Communications $129,977
- Development $261,507
- Transfer to Reserves and Endowment $250,634

Total Funding Uses $2,257,012

Make a Legacy Gift to FGC

Paul Kriese, an FGC planned giving donor, has pledged half of his estate to the Quaker faith he loves. “FGC is not just an organization, it is my religious home,” said Paul. For him philanthropy and Quaker faith are linked, “I was given a gift of making a living and it is my responsibility to share—to honor God’s gift of ability.”

You, too, can leave a legacy for future Quakers:
  • Make a gift to FGC that provides lifetime income plus a tax deduction
  • Include FGC in your will and estate plans.

To learn more, contact Traci Hjelt Sullivan at 215-561-1700 x 3004 or visit us at www.fgcquaker.org/planned-gifts.
“Together we have deepened in faith, bonded in community, and united in testimony. Together we have reached across boundaries to advocate for social justice, peace, and truth.

This is the legacy we, as Quakers, uphold . . .”

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