

# FRIENDS JOURNAL

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not lose heart." (Galatians 6:9)

## Quaker Works October 2021

October 1, 2021

By Quaker Works



This semiannual feature highlights the recent works of Quaker organizations\* in the following categories:

- Advocacy
- Consultation, Support, and Resources
- Development
- Education
- Environmental and Ecojustice
- Investment Management
- Retreat, Conference, and Study Centers
- Service and Peace Work

\***Editors' note:** We invite all explicitly Quaker-founded and/or Quaker-run groups and organizations to submit to the Quaker Works column. Most,

but not all, are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. The content is supplied by staff members of the organizations and edited to fit the style of *Friends Journal*. More details can be found on the [Quaker Works submissions page](#).

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## Advocacy

- **Quaker United Nations Office**

Switching from Quaker House to a virtual setting, Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) continues in a pandemic-conscious way to host dialogues aimed at fostering peace. A recent convening, “Advancing UN Prevention Efforts Across Sectors and Institutions: Collective Pathways for Effective Prevention,” examined the future state of conflict prevention at the United Nations (UN).

UN actors, civil society, and member state participants filled the “room,” each bringing their own unique expertise and perspectives. The event’s speakers also reflected a range of experiences—from working to promote civil society at the local and national levels to exploring the significance of networks in bridging the international divide. Throughout the discussion, speakers repeatedly turned to the need for reinvigorating initiatives around prevention and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a “roadmap” for addressing new global challenges. These challenges include climate change, changing migration patterns, new technologies, and the growing role of non-state actors.

The concluding remarks of the dialogue expressed the following: urgent action is needed by the multilateral system to meet these challenges today, so that the same system is not overwhelmed in the future. This conversation, like many others co-facilitated by QUNO, reinforced the need to capitalize on the momentum for meaningful inclusivity and to advance the prevention of violent conflict at the UN.

**[quno.org](http://quno.org)**

Learn more: **Quaker United Nations Office**

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- **Quaker Council for European Affairs**

Based in Quaker House in Brussels, Belgium, Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) brings a vision of peace, justice, and equality to Europe and its institutions.

In April, the peace program launched its new report, “Climate, Peace, and Human Rights: Are European Policies Coherent?” This report—rooted in Quaker experiences of working on climate and security issues—followed the recent adoption of a European Green Deal and calls for a more integrated approach to climate, peace, and human rights. It also calls for support of the people most impacted by climate change and for recognition of Europe’s colonial legacy and structural racism.

In May, together with Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW), QCEA organized a large online conference on peace education. The event was a success with more than 500 people registered from all over the world.

The human rights program hosted a spring series of informal lunchtime discussion events on Africa–Europe relations in the past, present, and future. The aim was to examine and deconstruct some of the ideas and assumptions about Africa–Europe relations and the contemporary repercussions of centuries-long shared history.

The program also contributed to a seminar on “Confronting racism in Ireland, the UK and the EU,” which looked at the so-called “migrant crisis,” the rise of “nativist” populism across the continent, and the impact of COVID-19 on these issues.

[qcea.org](http://qcea.org)

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- **Friends Committee on National Legislation**

In June, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), advocates, and partners succeeded in repealing the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Iraq AUMF), used as a blank check for war for nearly two decades.

FCNL’s Advocacy Teams program helped move this legislation forward. Through a network of 125 grassroots teams, more than 1,500 Quakers and friends across 44 states and the District of Columbia use their power as constituents to influence Congress. These teams bridge faith backgrounds, but their advocacy is based on Quaker traditions like deep listening and speaking to that of God in everyone.

As the United States approached 20 years of war following 9/11, Advocacy Teams urged Congress to repeal the 2002 AUMF. Finally in June, the House took action. Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) named FCNL first among groups that assisted in this monumental step in remarks on the House floor, later calling the organization “one of the most well-organized and strategic advocacy teams in Washington.” She told the Religion News Service: “I have found them to be an invaluable ally in our shared efforts to end war and advance human rights and needs.”

President Biden supports the repeal, and the Senate version (S.J. Res. 10) advanced in August. Advocacy Teams then turned their focus to getting the 60 votes needed to overcome a filibuster.

**[fcnl.org](https://fcnl.org)**

Learn more: **[Friends Committee on National Legislation](#)**

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## Consultation, Support, and Resources

- **[Quakers Uniting in Publishing](#)**

Quakers Uniting in Publishing (QUIP) membership includes authors, editors, publishers—creators of books, articles, and any media.

In late July, about 30 European QUIP Friends met for an hour as part of Britain Yearly Meeting’s Gathering. Worship-sharing Friends present heard passages of poetry and prose from eight QUIP members.

QUIP’s midyear meeting will be on October 2 via Zoom to discuss the 2022 theme, topics, dates, and how to meet (in person, virtual, or a hybrid model). Any requests for the Tacey Sowle grant, intended to assist Quaker authors and publishers in countries less affluent than those in which most QUIP members live, can also be considered.

**[quakerquip.org](https://quakerquip.org)**

Learn more: **[Quakers Uniting in Publishing](#)**

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- **Friends World Committee for Consultation (Europe and Middle East Section)**

In May, Friends World Committee for Consultation Europe and Middle East Section (FWCC-EMES) held its annual meeting online. Over 100 people joined together for meetings for worship and business, workshops, and social time. Speakers included Sami Cortas, clerk of Brummana Meeting in Lebanon, and David Gray, head of the Quaker Brummana High School. They gave moving testimony of life in Beirut and how students at the school have responded to different events. Saleem Zaru, clerk of Ramallah Meeting in Palestine, also addressed the annual meeting, sharing about the lived experiences of Palestinians.

The annual report was published, giving readers a snapshot of life in the Section across the various meetings, groups, and communities.

In July, FWCC-EMES held a gathering for its international members, bringing together Friends who are often isolated from other Quakers or are part of small worship groups.

In August, a new iteration of the longstanding Quaker in Europe course began, in partnership with Woodbrooke Study Centre. The course is designed to enable newcomers to experience the Quaker way in their own language and has been translated into ten languages over the past 15 years. The latest version had participation from 28 Quakers from 19 countries.

FWCC-EMES has continued monthly online sessions for representatives and role holders, 14–18-year-olds in the youth group, and the Peace and Service Consultation members.

**[fwccemes.org](http://fwccemes.org)**

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- **Friends World Committee for Consultation (World Office)**

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) continues to bring fellowship to Friends around the world through sharing yearly meeting news and epistles, and hosting events for all Friends.

Much of the work continues online. The sustainability program manager is supporting Quaker climate action and interfaith networks in advance of the UN climate talks scheduled for November in Glasgow, Scotland. As a World Office, FWCC brought together Friends from

across the four Sections through a webinar series called Quaker Conversations, which had 1,363 registrations, and 1,346 views on the YouTube channel. The second series of Quaker Conversations will launch in October.

In July, FWCC saw the departure of Gretchen Castle as FWCC general secretary after nine years in the role. Tim Gee, of Britain Yearly Meeting, will take up the position in January 2022. In the interim period, Susanna Mattingly will serve as the acting general secretary.

**[fwcc.world](#)**

**Learn more: [Friends World Committee for Consultation \(World Office\)](#)**

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- **[Friends Services Alliance](#)**

Friends Services Alliance's (FSA) annual meeting was held as a series of virtual sessions beginning in April and ending in July. The focus was on the importance of fostering diverse, equitable, and inclusive (DEI) environments, as well as recovery and finding a path forward through the pandemic. Topics covered included using neuroscience and mindfulness to enhance DEI with author and social entrepreneur Due Quach, as well as an exploration of racial literacy with Howard Stevenson, founder of Lion's Story.

FSA's fall calendar is filled with educational opportunities, including its annual compliance and risk management conference, plus workshops on appreciative performance reviews, collaborative decision making, unconscious bias, and teamwork strategies for success. Most sessions will be held virtually.

This year is FSA's thirtieth anniversary of supporting organizations that serve seniors. To celebrate, FSA created a timeline of key events in its history and invited members who have worked at the organizations for 30 or more years to join the FSA 30+ Club. Through the club, FSA is telling their stories and honoring their service. The timeline can be viewed on FSA's website.

**[fsainfo.org](#)**

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- **Friends United Meeting**

Rania Maayeh is the newly appointed head at Ramallah Friends School (RFS) in Palestine. The school is a ministry of Friends United Meeting.

Maayeh began her service in June, succeeding Adrian Moody. An education specialist with over 20 years of experience across the fields of higher, secondary, and primary education in Palestine, Jordan, and the United States, Maayeh is also a former RFS student, teacher, and the parent of three alumni. She most recently worked for World Vision as the education lead for Jerusalem, West Bank, and Gaza. She has also served as an English instructor and school principal.

As a Palestinian Christian, Maayeh considers the RFS community to be the place where her spiritual journey began. She attended meeting for worship as a child with her classmates at the school. Through her education and career at RFS, Maayeh developed a close affinity and spiritual kinship with Quakers. As a graduate student in Pennsylvania, Maayeh often attended Downingtown (Pa.) Meeting. She presently attends Ramallah Meeting, located near the school.

Maayeh considers Friends testimonies to be integral to the academic achievement and spiritual transformation of RFS students. “This transformation,” she notes, “can only be understood as a reflection of God’s light, which I see as constantly pushing us to strive for a more loving and whole world.”

**fum.org**

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- **Friends General Conference**

Friends General Conference (FGC) continued its virtual programming with the 2021 Gathering, themed “Way Will Open,” in late June and early July. Pre-Gathering retreats were offered for young adult Friends and Friends of Color along with their families. More than 1,000 Friends registered for worship and fellowship for the second time during the global pandemic. Nearly 250 were first-time attenders.

Gathering evening programs for the week featured Lisa Graustein on the topic of “Sacred Vessels—Quaker Practices for Holding Us All”; Community Connections, where attendees could participate in seven different facilitated conversations on a wide variety of subjects; Niyonu Spann, who led an artistic, intergenerational plenary called “Show Me the Way”; Clinton Pettus and Friends, who led a plenary called “One

Black Man's Journey in a World of Othering"; and Tara Houska, who led a plenary called "Indigenous Wisdom and Living With Our Mother."

Bible Half-Hours returned to Gathering, led by Benigno Sánchez-Eppler. Those recordings, as well as the evening programs, are available on the FGC website.

Workshops were held throughout the week on many topics, including race and justice, clerking, spiritual gifts, and Quaker history.

FGC is planning to return to an in-person Gathering next year at Radford University in Radford, Va., in July 2022. The theme will be ". . . and follow me."

[fgcquaker.org](http://fgcquaker.org)

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## Development

- **Right Sharing of World Resources**

Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR) works to redistribute resources to women's groups in India, Kenya, and Sierra Leone.

When the Board expanded its strategic planning this year, it discerned that RSWR is clearly inspired to work in another country, probably in Latin America. RSWR will soon be seeking letters of interest from nonprofit groups that would like to invite RSWR to partner with their current programs.

General secretary Jackie Stillwell has continued her virtual visits with yearly and monthly meetings and hosted a workshop called "The Power of Enough" at the FGC Gathering. This workshop asks the question: "How is my use of time, energy, and things in right balance to free me to do God's work and to contribute to right relationships in our world?" The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to impact partner countries, particularly India, where the second wave resulted in another economic shutdown. In response to the advice of Indian field representatives Dr. Kannan and Mr. Purushotham, the Board agreed to send another round of food aid to help 3,000 RSWR partner women in



India. It was distributed by partner NGOs directly into the women's bank accounts, so they could shelter in place during the lockdown.

[rswr.org](http://rswr.org)

Learn more: [Right Sharing of World Resources](#)

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- [Friendly Water for the World](#)

Friendly Water for the World has started a new Water Security program that uses local mason and support teams to site, construct, and maintain 50 25,000-liter curved-brick rainwater catchment tanks to provide over one million liters of clean water for 13 schools, a clinic, and a market in Matsakha, Kenya. This program is built on the many small successes of the first two programs with the community.

Good Hygiene, the first program, has seen the production of almost 6,000 liters of Meta soap, achieved national certification, and helped battle COVID-19. Building Better, the second program, has resulted in the training of local community members in the fabrication of 11,000 (and counting) interlocking stabilized soil blocks.

Each 25,000-liter curved-brick tank costs \$1,600, a 60 percent savings over the cost of a commercial plastic tank. And \$600 of that cost is local labor—labor that will generate an income for Matsakha masons, thereby creating a direct economic benefit for the people of Matsakha. The new Water Security program will eliminate people having to drink water from contaminated wells or rivers. Students will no longer have to walk for water during school hours to provide for their classmates. People will be able to wash their hands—with soap—before meals and after latrine use. And the program will result in a substantial employment boost in the community.

[friendlywater.org](http://friendlywater.org)

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**Education**

- **Friends Council on Education**

Friends Council on Education is celebrating its ninetieth anniversary this year with the QuakerEd Talks speaker series, a set of virtual events that started in April with a conversation on COVID-19, healthcare, and social justice featuring Dr. Wayne Frederick, president of Howard University, and Crissy Cáceres, head of Brooklyn Friends School. The celebration kick-off continued at the spring annual meeting, which featured a panel of heads of color reflecting on their leadership journeys and the future of Friends education; and the gathering for heads of schools included a conversation between nationally known author Anand Giridharadas and Bryan Garman, head of Sidwell Friends School.

Also this past spring, Friends Council launched a new peer network for educators supporting LGBTQIA+ students in Friends schools. In addition, staff is supporting a new student group—Student Environmental and Sustainability Network (SEASN)—for cross school networking on climate change and eco-justice.

Friends Council is collaborating with Rationale Partners on a research project to investigate the financial implications and performance of multi-campus schools and to provide school leaders with a comprehensive resource for use in decision-making in this area. This important data, which is currently lacking in the independent school sector, will be a potential resource for Quaker schools. The project is funded by grants from the Edward E. Ford Foundation and the BLBB Charitable foundation

**[friendscouncil.org](https://www.friendscouncil.org)**

Learn more: **[Friends Council on Education](#)**

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- **Faith & Play Stories**

Faith & Play Stories offers a publication and materials for 16 stories that explore Quaker faith, practice, and witness using the Montessori-inspired Godly Play method. Training is available for Friends interested in spiritual formation through storytelling and being a part of a growing community of practice.

In June, a new website was launched. The new site offers an in-depth look at all aspects of Faith & Play Stories, including communities, resources, training opportunities, and story materials.

The leadership team met in July, and progress was made on both new stories in development and the published stories being reviewed with a concern for language and materials used to tell the stories. A reworking of “John Woolman Visits the Native People at Wyalusing” seeks to decenter Whiteness and bring forward the voice of the Lenape people.

Online introductory sessions continue and are scheduled for local and yearly meetings.

In August, an online event, “Starting Again: A Faith & Play Refresher for Fall 2021” was hosted for Friends already using Faith & Play and Godly Play stories. Training has resumed this fall for the core training, “Playing in the Light,” using a hybrid model that combines remote sessions and an in-person weekend gathering.

**[faithandplay.org](http://faithandplay.org)**

Learn more: **[Faith & Play Stories](#)**

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## Environmental and Ecojustice

- **[Quaker Institute for the Future](#)**

Since January, Quaker Institute for the Future (QIF) has undertaken two research and communication projects on major issues of U.S. public policy: (1) Meeting the Acute Needs of the Nation Requires Monetary System Reform; (2) Responding to the Threat of Irreversible Global Warming.

The first project prepared a policy paper for communicating with Vice President Kamala Harris through a personal channel made available to QIF. This paper is also being circulated among Friends and others. It will be available on QIF’s new website soon.

The second project is preparing an epistle to Friends everywhere on the threat of continued global warming to the continuation of life on Earth, as we know it. The purpose of the epistle is to share the information and analysis the Institute has assembled and offer suggestions for action to influence the U.S. government on climate change policy.

[quakerinstitute.org](http://quakerinstitute.org)

Learn more: [Quaker Institute for the Future](#)

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- [Quaker Earthcare Witness](#)

Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) is a network of Friends working to inspire Spirit-led action toward ecological sustainability and environmental justice. QEW has grown out of a strong leading among Friends that the future depends on a spiritual transformation in humans' relationships with each other and with the natural world. For over 30 years, QEW has helped Friends in North America integrate earthcare into their daily lives.

Over the summer, QEW members engaged in nonviolent direct action as part of the Indigenous-led resistance to the Line 3 tar sands pipeline construction in northern Minnesota. QEW is working in coalition to train, support, and mobilize Friends to engage with this movement.

QEW is hosting online monthly worship sharing sessions as well as regular workshops on a range of issues related to climate disruption. QEW speakers visited a dozen meetings and churches in the spring and summer for adult First-day school and Second Hour presentations.

The QEW newsletter, *BeFriending Creation*, inspires and encourages organizing and action, and its other publications offer a Quaker perspective on environmental issues.

QEW recently hired a new staff assistant, a position which will increase its capacity to serve Friends and the earth during this time of global emergency.

[quakerearthcare.org](http://quakerearthcare.org)

Learn more: [Quaker Earthcare Witness](#)

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- [Earth Quaker Action Team](#)

Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT)'s current campaign, Power Local Green Jobs, is focused on pushing the utility company PECO to make a significant shift toward solar, prioritizing job creation in Black and

Brown communities, which have been most affected by the fossil fuel economy. Following a series of actions this summer, EQAT is celebrating some success as a result of efforts with allies and partners. For example, PECO is actively collaborating with solar stakeholders and is seeking proposals for local solar projects in ways not seen before the campaign.

EQAT was presented with an opportunity to join the “Vanguard’s Very Big Problem” campaign. Vanguard is the world’s biggest investor in coal and one of the two biggest investors in oil and gas. EQAT will be partnering globally with other activists to target flows of fossil fuel investment money. The aim is to push Vanguard, alongside a network of local to international partners, to invest its customers’ savings in sectors where business models do not jeopardize communities or our planet’s future.

**[eqat.org](http://eqat.org)**

Learn more: [Earth Quaker Action Team](#)

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## Investment Management

- **[Friends Fiduciary Corporation](#)**

Friends Fiduciary witnesses to Quaker values by directly engaging some of the largest corporations on a variety of environmental, social, and governance issues. Climate change, while impacting everyone, has and will continue to disproportionately affect communities of color and lower income communities, making it both an environmental and a social justice issue.

This year, Friends Fiduciary engaged the rail company Norfolk Southern on the issue of climate lobbying, ultimately filing a proposal asking Norfolk Southern to evaluate its direct and indirect lobbying for alignment with the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to below 2 degrees celsius. Friends Fiduciary believes companies that publicly support environmental sustainability should not be financially supporting trade associations or other organizations that lobby against climate initiatives. From a business perspective, this exposes the company to reputational risk; from a values perspective, this is

inconsistent with the Quaker values of integrity, transparency, and stewardship.

The proposal received support from a remarkable 76 percent of shares voted, the highest approval percentage for any climate lobbying resolution to date. Friends Fiduciary continues to engage on this issue and hopes this vote indicates a shift among the largest institutional investors to recognizing the urgency and material risk of climate change.

**[friendsfiduciary.org](https://www.friendsfiduciary.org)**

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## **Retreat, Conference, and Study Centers**

- **[Woolman Hill Retreat Center](#)**

Major renovations to the main building of Woolman Hill—began in January—have been successfully completed, increasing accessibility while maintaining the homey character of the space. A modest new wing offers first- and second-floor bedrooms and bathrooms, along with small sitting nooks and a spacious foyer area. Improved and additional ramps, three new septic systems, and a new well were also installed. Group use of the facility began again in July.

This past year, Woolman Hill—in collaboration with Beacon Hill Friends House and Peter Blood-Patterson—carried out a well-received virtual program series, Walking with the Bible, featuring nine different guest presenters. The center is planning to return to offering in-person programs in the coming year.

In the spring, a local beekeeper made arrangements to install several hives in the orchard on campus. A former board member has been sorting through archives as part of a writing project about the rich history of Woolman Hill. And the center continues to participate in the Western Massachusetts Retreat Association, a network of retreat centers in the region.

**[woolmanhill.org](https://www.woolmanhill.org)**

Learn more: [Woolman Hill Retreat Center](#)

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- **Silver Wattle Quaker Centre**

Silver Wattle is located on a peaceful 1,000-hectare property overlooking Weerewa (Lake George) close to Canberra; it offers small courses, conferences, and group or personal retreats with facilities accommodating up to 25 people. A new center coordinator, Brydget Barker-Hudson, began in March.

Despite COVID-19 disruption, Silver Wattle managed to host a residential course on finding the Inner Light, an artists' gathering, and a Buddhist retreat. Online courses have been well supported. The need for contemplative community has been affirmed by an increased number of sojourners at Silver Wattle despite COVID-19 restrictions. Onsite courses will hopefully resume later this year.

Silver Wattle staff has used this fallow time to reinvigorate the volunteer community, refine priorities, and improve facilities, including the productive garden, shearing shed, camping facilities, and wheelchair accessibility. The participation of resident volunteers helps sustain a community at Silver Wattle.

[silverwattle.org.au](http://silverwattle.org.au)

Learn more: [Silver Wattle Quaker Centre](#)

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- **Powell House**

Elise K. Powell House has started the reopening process. The move from online conferences to meeting in person was marked by a Garden Club Day held on June 26. This one-day event was held outside with masking and distancing protocols in place.

The first in-person youth conference since closing in March 2020 was held August 13–15. The conference included the annual send-off ceremony for graduating high school seniors. Along with masking and distancing, it was held with limited capacity.

Sojourning has continued to be a source of spiritual renewal while a reopening strategy is slowly phased in. It is one of the few ways that

visitors have been able to enjoy the grounds throughout the period of being closed due to the pandemic.

Virtual programming has been a strong point of connection across the Powell House community and beyond. “How Are the Children?,” an event held May 25, drew in a group of 30 people to talk about Quaker meetings and families during post-pandemic times.

Powell House recently launched its capital campaign with a goal to raise funds for renovations to Pitt Hall—one of the conference buildings—as well as for other projects on the horizon.

**[powellhouse.org](http://powellhouse.org)**

Learn more: **[Powell House](#)**

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- **[Pendle Hill](#)**

Over the past six months Pendle Hill has offered a variety of mostly virtual programs serving over 24,000 participants. These include a monthly reading group, the First Monday Lecture series, and daily meeting for worship (averaging 130 participants). Staff members have worked to safely reopen the campus for groups and sojourners.

This past spring and summer, the “Opening the Bible Today” program (supported by the Bible Association of Friends in America and the Friends Foundation for the Aging) offered several online lectures and workshops, including a four-week series with John Dominic Crossan on the history, theology and evolution of Jesus; a workshop on fierce women in the Bible (with Melissa Bennett); a book launch with author and translator Sarah Ruden; and the *Illuminate* speaker series in collaboration with Barclay Press. Other recent virtual programs focused on spirituality, contemplation, worship, arts, self-discovery, and blended worship communities (in partnership with Woodbrooke).

Pendle Hill also hosted a couple enrichment retreat on facing transitions in March; a weekend workshop on Mary Watkins’s *Mutual Accompaniment and the Creation of the Commons* in April; and the annual young adult conference, Continuing Revolution, in June.

Three new pamphlets were released: *God’s Invitation to Creative Play* (Jesse White); *Reflections from a Solitary Meeting for Worship* (John Andrew Gallery); and *Friending Rosie on Death Row* (Judith Favor, with Rosie Alfaro).

**[pendlehill.org](http://pendlehill.org)**



Learn more: [Pendle Hill](#)

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- **Friends Wilderness Center**

Friends Wilderness Center (FWC) is a 1,400-acre wilderness preserve on the western side of the Blue Ridge Mountains near Harpers Ferry, W.V. It was established by Quakers in 1974 for “perpetual spiritual use.” FWC offers a variety of scheduled events, including guided hikes, meditation, and journaling in nature. Also offered are opportunities to hike and explore, camping, and overnight stays in Niles Cabin (guest bedrooms and shared bath with home-cooked meals).

After 22 years at FWC, Sheila Bach retired as general manager, and is moving to Friends House in Sandy Spring, Md. Kimberly Benson is the new general manager, and she brings many gifts to the position. She and her family took up residence at Niles Cabin this past summer.

In the summer of 2019, FWC welcomed the China Folk House Retreat (CFHR) to the property. CFHR preserves a farmhouse from the village of Cizhong, Yunnan, that would have been inundated by a dam on the Mekong River. This house was disassembled and is now being reassembled on the FWC property. CFHR is dedicated to fostering cultural and educational exchanges between the United States and China, and to providing a site for exchange and education for students of all ages across the greater Washington, D.C. area.

**[friendswilderness.org](http://friendswilderness.org)**

Learn more: [Friends Wilderness Center](#)

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- **Friends Center**

Friends Center completed the sale of its building at 1520 Race Street to Friends Select School on August 3.

Most organizations with offices at Friends Center have continued largely to work from home during the coronavirus pandemic. Friends Center took the opportunity during the downtime to make two major improvements to the Race Street Room—the main worship room in the Race Street Meetinghouse.

First, the AV system was upgraded to simplify hosting hybrid meetings combining participants in person and participants online using videoconferencing software. As a result, in July, Central Philadelphia (Pa.) Meeting began holding meetings for worship on Sunday with an in-person option for the first time since March 2020. Attendance is typically about half in person and half online.

The second improvement was a change to Friends Center's geothermal HVAC system that enabled it to provide modern air conditioning in the Race Street Room for the first time. (Historically the room had an early form of air cooling: Fires were lit in chimney pots during the summer. They were connected to a network of vents that created a breeze and drew hot air out of the space. However, that system was disabled in the first half of the twentieth century.) The air conditioning has made worshipping in the room possible even during recent hot spells.

**[friendscentercorp.org](http://friendscentercorp.org)**

Learn more: **[Friends Center](#)**

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- **[Beacon Hill Friends House](#)**

Beacon Hill Friends House (BHFH) is an independent Quaker nonprofit organization and 20-person residential community based in a historic house in downtown Boston, which provides opportunities for personal growth, spiritual deepening, and collective action.

This past summer, BHFH staff wrapped up a master planning process with an architectural preservation firm to help care for its building. The house also began welcoming people into guest rooms and outside groups back into the space.

In June, BHFH celebrated over 40 events in the virtual series MIDWEEK: Experiments in Faithfulness before taking a summer hiatus. This weekly facilitated spiritual practice restarted in September. BHFH also held a book talk with some of the co-authors of *The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations*: gkisedtanamoogk (Mashpee Wampanoag); Alma H. Brooks (Maliseet, St. Mary's Reserve, New Brunswick); Marilyn Keyes Roper (Quaker, Houlton, Maine); and Shirley N. Hager (Quaker, Chesterville, Maine).

This fall, offering hybrid programs will be considered to allow Friends from anywhere to participate (including lectures and workshops). In September, BHFH welcomed two volunteer program fellows who will

help expand and deepen the public offerings, including hybrid programs.

[bhfh.org](http://bhfh.org)

Learn more: [Beacon Hill Friends House](#)

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## Service and Peace Work

- [Quaker Voluntary Service](#)

The tenth cohort of young adult Fellows started the Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS) program this summer. These 33 young adults are living in one of five program cities: Atlanta, Ga.; Boston, Mass.; Minneapolis–Saint Paul, Minn.; Philadelphia, Pa.; and Portland, Ore. Fellows work at local social change organizations, live in intentional community with one another, and consider how Quaker faith and practice is embedded in their lives.

In February, QVS hired its first alumni coordinator to engage the more than 230 (and growing) community of young adult alumni. This position added capacity to allow QVS to better support the ministry and vocational discernment of young adults even beyond the QVS fellowship year. The “Alumni” and “Quaker Service Testimonies” categories on the QVS blog share the impact of a QVS year and where alumni find themselves today.

[quakervoluntaryservice.org](http://quakervoluntaryservice.org)

Learn more: [Quaker Voluntary Service](#)

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- [Quaker Social Action](#)

In July, UK anti-poverty charity Quaker Social Action (QSA)—which has long campaigned on the affordability of funerals in the UK—released a report about public health funerals. Local authorities

(councils) in England and Wales have a legal duty to provide a public health funeral (a simple funeral) in cases where “no suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body have been or are being made.” This might be because the deceased had no living relatives, or because family and friends simply do not have the means to pay for a funeral and/or are not eligible for government assistance with the costs. In 2020, the average cost of a funeral in the UK was £3,837 (about \$5,300), according to research by Royal London.

QSA had found that some of the users of its funeral costs helpline appeared to be eligible to access a public health funeral, but were unable to find—or were turned away by—the relevant local authority department. QSA investigated this issue by researching public health funeral information on local authority websites and by telephone. The survey of 40 local authority websites found that 65 percent were not following government guidelines—either providing no information about public health funerals, or no specific contact details. QSA’s report received national media coverage, and QSA hopes that it will help create pressure for change.

[quakersocialaction.org](https://quakersocialaction.org)

Learn more: [Quaker Social Action](#)

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- [Prisoner Visitation and Support](#)

Throughout the pandemic, prisons have been closed out of necessity. During this time of lockdown, isolation, and fear, Prisoner Visitation and Support (PVS) visitors have maintained close contact with prisoners through letter writing. PVS visitors have found themselves creatively keeping an open line of contact with prisoners—some even learning sufficient Spanish to write to Latinx prisoners. More than 400 visitors offer friendship and a listening ear, which can help prisoners with personal growth and the developing of peaceful strategies to cope with prison life.

An important part of PVS training holds that each prisoner has worth and potential and that no one is defined by their crimes. One prisoner who has been visited regularly over 20 years by PVS volunteers recently commented: “Being able to say it out loud is liberating. Being able to say it out loud to someone who really cares makes all the difference.”

[prisonervisitation.org](https://prisonervisitation.org)

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- **Friends Peace Teams**

Friends Peace Teams (FPT) works among people in more than 20 countries who are choosing to be part of efforts toward a transformed, sustainable world. FPT focuses on building person-to-person relationships in order to create a foundation for grassroots, Spirit-led change for peace and social justice.

FPT continues its peace work through in-person workshops and online. Power of Goodness stories, available on the website in seven languages, aim to inspire hope. Peace Literacy and Peace Libraries help educate youth. Partnering with Friends Women's Association in Burundi helps educate women about reproductive health and recover from gender-based violence. FPT's African Great Lakes Initiative programs create safe places in Burundi for neighbors to share stories so they can heal from land conflicts, the main cause of food insecurity.

The next *Peaceways* issue is due out in October on the theme "Making Peace with the Earth."

**[friendspeaceteams.org](http://friendspeaceteams.org)**

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- **Friends House Moscow**

This year, Friends House Moscow (FHM) started funding a project in Kaluga that works with local schools to help integrate migrant children into the host community. Kaluga is a mid-sized city about 190 km (120 miles) southwest of Moscow. In the past, no extra time or resources were allocated for the support of migrant children, so this project is essential to ensure their successful integration into Russian society. Specifically, the project trains teachers in how to interact with children who come from a non-Russian culture and do not speak the language. It also provides books and board games in order to help speed up the children's language acquisition and their knowledge of Russian society and culture.

Twenty schools participate in this project, and the funding from FHM supports the participation of ten of these schools. It is estimated that over 1,000 children have been helped so far. Initial feedback from