

Dear Friends,

April 4, 2024

How are we called by Spirit? How do we actively incorporate Spirit's guidance in all we do? How might we develop a more compassionate community in which we recognize, honor and nurture each individual's gifts?

Work within SAYMA is progressing. Here are some updates of activity since our November Representative Meeting:

- SAYMA's Annual Sessions and Retreat will be held June 20-23, 2024, at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. Activities will begin midday on Thursday with lunch at 12. This is the last call for submitting workshop proposals for annual sessions and retreat; here's the link to the workshop proposal form:  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdo74II0nmC3N9qGUTq6eIV7-P0BEMu9ypHznvNdWtri8C27w/viewform>
- Susan Phelan is looking forward to retiring from her position as Administrative Assistant on July 15. She will begin orienting Rob Collins of Birmingham Friends Meeting to the position on May 15. We are deeply appreciative of the support and service Susan has been providing so faithfully.
- The Personnel Committee, assisted by the Finance Committee, has drafted a job description for a bookkeeper:  
[https://www.sayma.org/online\\_documents/bookkeeper\\_job.pdf](https://www.sayma.org/online_documents/bookkeeper_job.pdf) Resumes should be sent to [personnel@sayma.org](mailto:personnel@sayma.org) by April 30.
- The Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for Yearly Meeting Planning Committee clerk, SAYMA clerk, and Treasurer. As SAYMA seeks a new treasurer, filling the bookkeeper position will alleviate some of the load of that office. We are very grateful to Kendall Ivie for his many years of service as SAYMA treasurer; he must retire from this position as he manages health and family concerns.
- The Nominating committee needs four new members, one of whom would serve as committee co-clerk; therefore an ad hoc Naming Committee will be set up.
- The ad hoc Faith and Practice Revision Committee is activated, with the addition of Joel O'Brien, a young adult Friend from Asheville Meeting. He is a graduate of both the Arthur Morgan School and Scattergood Friends School.
- The Finance Committee requested and helped SAYMA co-clerks establish an ad hoc Assessment Committee to explore monthly meeting assessments. Friends serving on this committee are Connie Hill (Birmingham Meeting treasurer), Diane McCluskey (Chattanooga Meeting treasurer and SAYMA Finance Committee member), and Paul Mangelsdorf (Atlanta Meeting Finance clerk).

The committee reports for the **April 6 Representative Meeting** are posted (as they arrive) on the SAYMA website ([sayma.org](http://sayma.org)). Please review these before the meeting, so you have time to reflect and season any responses. The meeting will be held at the Atlanta Friends Meetinghouse in Decatur, Georgia, and will also be accessible on Zoom for Friends not making the trip in person. Registration is required and will close Friday evening, April 5. Here is a link to the registration form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeMQstvKGR90MDmJSIquaRb5aF2fQ7zbZGaY5iECMH217Nh0Q/viewform>.

We continue to work toward conflict transformation in our yearly meeting. Conflict is a natural process in communities, heralding that the beginnings of change are already upon us. How do we ask Spirit to guide us in recognizing conflict as an opportunity for both personal growth and deeper spiritual connection within our community?

Because we were unable to cover all items on our business agenda at the November meeting, we offer here, *as a reminder rather than “rules”*, guidance from Friends General Conference: [Participating in Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business](#).

Six wider Quaker organizations have united to form a coalition named Quaker Coalition Uprooting Racism (QCUR). The contributing organizations are Friends General Conference, American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on Legislation, Quaker Volunteer Service, Pendle Hill, and Friends Committee on Education. QCUR has published a document that outlines a few of the behavioral patterns that cause racial harm, linked here:

[Racial Wounding and Racial Justice in Quaker Communities](#). An epistle from the SAYMA Friends of Color focus group, out of their lived experience, is linked here:

[SAYMA BIFOC Epistle. June 2023](#)

As our term as your co-clerks draws to a close, we are thankful for the warm support we have received. We are thankful for the blessings of spiritual growth and new friendships that have come our way. Our wish list for SAYMA in the future:

- Creation of processes for both clearness committees and reconciliation work for tension between Friends
- More avenues for deeper sharing beyond and between monthly meetings
- Spiritual deepening retreats
- Continue the work of becoming a more inclusive and anti-racist community

Friends, what is on your wishlist? Please let us hear from you.

Holding our yearly meeting and each of you in the Light,

Daryl Bergquist and Margaret Farmer

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