2020 IMPACT REPORT
RESPONDING Faithfully
Dear Friends,

Looking back over the events of the pandemic year, our spiritual paths are being shaped by emerging questions. The writings of Friends who have had similar challenges in their lives offer guidance in our search for answers. Rufus Jones in his book “The Inner Life” writes:

“New dispensations may await us; the Kingdom may come in ways we never dreamed of; the beyond may be more momentous than we have ever expected, but always and everywhere ‘the within’ determines ‘the beyond,’ and character is destiny.”

FGC has been wrestling with a whirlwind of twists and turns along our path: radical changes in the way we congregate for worship and communicate, our annual Gathering, and our endeavors to become an anti-racist faith community.

Along this path we have created new initiatives to bring our community closer together and expand our outreach. We faithfully hold our commitments to People of Color, families, young adults, older Friends, and LGBTQ+ folks.

This Impact Report comes in the spring of a new year—a good time to dream and plan for the future. The dreams of our community and the vision we share with seekers can only come to fruition through our united efforts to be inclusive, supportive and self-challenging in looking for “that of God” in everyone.

Throughout 2020, FGC has been laying the groundwork toward the “new dispensations” that await our blessed community. Thank you for responding faithfully as we make this journey together.

In the Loving Spirit,

Marvin Barnes
Presiding Clerk
AFTER FACING THAT AN IN-PERSON 2020 GATHERING, ALREADY TWO YEARS IN THE MAKING, NEEDED TO BE POSTPONED, STAFF AND COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS RALLIED. In just 12 weeks they created an online experience that truly reflected its theme: “Sink Down to the Seed Sown in the Heart.”

Balancing time zones, work and school schedules, and the economy, the first-ever virtual Gathering offered multiple participation options. The 2020 virtual Gathering with 1008 participants from around North America and beyond had one of the highest attendance rates in recent years. Participants attended evening plenaries with Dr. Amanda Kemp and Valarie Kaur among others. There were 27 workshops and more than 300 people participated in the daily Bible Half-Hour with Carl Magruder. The number of first-time attenders tripled compared with 2019!

Throughout the week, Friends created community virtually. Lynne Piersol of Swarthmore Friends Meeting remembered being “grateful for the technology that allowed this year’s Gathering. I took the week off from work, so it felt like a vacation—something I could do for me.”

Friends found new ways to build meaningful relationships. Lynne shared how “during the free time breakout rooms, my husband made a connection with someone who lives in England. They formed a faithfulness group with three others and have been meeting virtually every month since.”

Over 100 attendees participated in six anti-racism workshops and one on self-care for People of Color. As part of FGC’s consideration of language justice, volunteers provided Spanish/English interpretation during the evening plenaries.

FGC said a grateful goodbye to Ruth Reber who after five years retired from her position as Gathering Coordinator. Stepping into the Coordinator position, Lori Sinitsky of Green Street Friends Meeting described what it was like to start her new job during the pandemic:

“Instead of driving golf carts, Friends Zoom-hosted worship, workshops, and hangout rooms. It was a lot of change in a short time for us Friends. It was stressful at times. Personally, it was a strange way to start a new job. But the spiritual rewards of connection across the miles was especially sweet in this unprecedented time. It truly was a Gathering like no other.”

LOOKING AHEAD

The 2021 Gathering, “Way Will Open,” will once again be virtual, and like the 2020 Gathering will be affordable and accessible. It will offer opportunities for deep worship, 55 workshops, and engaging plenaries with Lisa Graustein, Niyonu Spann, and Tara Houska. There will be expanded hang-out times, author events, daily Bible reflection with Benigno Sánchez-Eppler, Quaker Arts, and much more. Events run from June 25 to July 3, 2021. For more information or to register: FGCquaker.org/Gathering.

Special thanks to Baltimore Yearly Meeting for their partnership in hosting the 2021 virtual Gathering.
Like many Friends, Anthony Stover of Germantown Friends Meeting is committed to helping the Religious Society of Friends grow and thrive. “When we look more broadly at what the Religious Society of Friends has to offer—simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality—who wouldn’t want that in their life?”

“FGC HAS STRENGTHENED MY OWN PERSONAL SPIRITUALITY,” ANTHONY SHARES. “I’VE DEEPENED MY UNDERSTANDING AND LISTENING. IT’S ALSO HELPED ME MOVE FORWARD WITH COURAGE ON THINGS THAT MATTER TO ME.”

“I’ve seen attrition across the board in Quaker meetings and within the Religious Society of Friends. When there’s attrition, some voices can become louder as if to fill up the space and other voices aren’t heard,” Anthony expresses. “That’s the benefit of having affinity spaces like the ones [for Friends of Color] provided by FGC. They give people with shared experiences time to be heard.”

“There are a lot of challenges for people that look like me within the Religious Society of Friends. I want to bring hope. I want to be a part of the process that moves anti-racism forward. There’s going to be pain, and we are going to make a lot of mistakes,” says Anthony. “Because of FGC’s platform, I feel motivated to bring Light to the challenge of racism. I came to Friends 20 years ago for spiritual food, and today that energy is being transformed within me.”

Anti-racism work is an opportunity for Friends to live into the testimony of equality and become a more vibrant faith community through this deep spiritual practice.

MINISTRY ON RACISM Program

Forty-seven Friends of Color from the USA, Canada, Mexico, and Switzerland following a weekend of shared worship and support composed the Outgoing Epistle of the 2020 Virtual Pre-Gathering of Friends of Color and their Families. The letter described how “a deadly pandemic is secondary to the long-time pandemic of racism in our lives” and served as an affirmation of community and call to action. The Epistle became the basis for a Spiritual Deepening eRetreat for people of European descent and inspired two cohorts across yearly meetings actively addressing racism.

Friends of Color throughout 2020 joined in weekly and monthly virtual worship, weekly virtual worship sharing, and bi-weekly virtual open houses. Yamilka Hayes of Multnomah Friends Meeting spoke about how “Worshiping at a meeting where I’m one of only three Friends of Color can be challenging at times; therefore, being able to spiritually connect with other Black, Indigenous, People of Color Friends means so much to me, even if it’s only online. It is very heartening, edifying, and validating to listen to the experiences of other People of Color within Quakerism and learn about the Spirit-centering ways they handle the challenges they face in their respective meetings.”

LOOKING AHEAD

The Ministry on Racism Program is exploring requests for new retreats for youth and interracial couples and will provide a Quaker presence at the 2021 virtual White Privilege Conference.

The Quaker Coalition to Uproot Racism (QCUR), a partnership between FGC and other Quaker organizations, is planning a virtual consultation series to advance anti-racism work within the Religious Society of Friends. Also in the works is a Gathering workshop for white Friends to build anti-racist facilitation skills.
In 2018, support from generous donors and a grant from the Friends Foundation for the Aging helped upgrade Spiritual Deepening eRetreat technology. Two years later those gifts made a crucial difference in FGC’s ability to nurture community virtually.

“I connected with Friends I did not know before the eRetreat,” Indiana Friend, Donna Eisenhower shared. “A group of us had a very good experience and continued on to the next one and the next one. We came to know one another through the forums and became very comfortable speaking freely.”

New Spiritual Deepening eRetreats and worship sharing groups provided more options in virtual learning. Thirty-two participants ages 20 to 42 enrolled in the Silence and Light for Newcomers with 24 having no prior experience with Quaker faith. A new eRetreat, Building a Meaningful and Connected Life, (thanks to a grant from Friends Foundation for the Aging) helped participants explore the spirituality of meaning-making, renewal, resiliency, and life transitions.

A collaboration between the Ministry on Racism and Spiritual Deepening Programs welcomed 41 participants to FGC’s first book discussion groups for Ibram X. Kendi’s How to Be an Antiracist and Valarie Kaur’s See No Stranger.

In anticipation of a return to in-person meetings and youth programming, the Spiritual Deepening Program is updating its free downloadable online resources for religious education. Resources from the Weaving a Wider Welcome eRetreat will be added to the Spiritual Deepening Library. Based on growing interest, Spiritual Deepening is looking to offer newcomer eRetreats throughout the year.

“WHEN I FIRST WALKED INTO HANOVER FRIENDS MEETING THREE YEARS AGO, IT WAS LIKE I WAS JUST PUTTING IN MY TOE TO TEST THE WATERS,” SHARES MELISSA POST. “THE MEETING WAS SO INVITING, SO MUCH WAS HAPPENING BEFORE WORSHIP THAT I JUST FELT LIKE I WALKED INTO THIS REALLY VIBRANT COMMUNITY.”

That welcoming experience led Melissa to join her meeting’s fellowship committee and, along with another meeting Friend, take the Spiritual Deepening eRetreat, “Weaving a Wider Welcome.”

The eRetreat gave Melissa and her meeting an opportunity to connect with other meetings and share resources. It also took them deeper into concerns of Friends of Color. “The stories of Friends of Color from the FGC Institutional Assessment Task Force Report made me more aware of what inclusivity means. It raised questions around how we ‘share’ space. The report helped us look at our history and see specific examples of how we could have done better.”

Looking Ahead

In anticipation of a return to in-person meetings and youth programming, the Spiritual Deepening Program is updating its free downloadable online resources for religious education. Resources from the Weaving a Wider Welcome eRetreat will be added to the Spiritual Deepening Library. Based on growing interest, Spiritual Deepening is looking to offer newcomer eRetreats throughout the year.
Strong community created at 2020 virtual Junior and High School Gathering inspired a framework for year-round youth programming. When travel restrictions cancelled the 2020 Young Clerks Training, a virtual weeklong Quaker Leadership workshop replaced it.

“I attended Young Clerks Training when I was 16 and got even more out of it this time. I learned the importance of having your own ministry, and what I can bring to a leadership and clerking role. I felt my personal ministry validated,” shared Adult Young Friend Maya Dougherty-Harris of New York Yearly Meeting.

As High School Coordinator, Maya observed how the program was “smaller than past years, about 16 participants, but it was beautiful. People wanted to be there. We had two meetings for business and went through the discernment process for next year’s clerks. People were invested in community.”

Youth and Adult Young Friends Clerks Training will be virtual with additional trainers and new content. FGC, in collaboration with affiliated yearly meetings, is exploring options for a new mentorship program to help grow the spiritual gifts of youth and young adults in clerking, decision-making, and community leadership.
Through the Christian Interfaith Relations Committee (CIRC), Friends actively participate in the world community of religions and contribute to faith-based solutions for peace-making and social and equity challenges.

FGC’s membership in the World Council of Churches (WCC) and partnership with the National Council of Churches create formal relationships with many historically Black churches, with a global network of indigenous believers, and with other majority European-descended bodies aspiring to become anti-racist faith communities.

To learn more about fostering vibrant interfaith community and to support CIRC’s presence at the 11th WCC Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany visit FGCquaker.org/Interfaith_Community.

QuakerBooks of FGC recently joined Bookshop.org, a nonprofit platform supporting small booksellers. This partnership serves both readers and QuakerBooks by providing more choices without the associated costs of maintaining a large inventory. Purchases made through Bookshop.org/shop/QuakerBooks-of-FGC earn commissions for QuakerBooks.

QuakerBooks’ supported over 4600 readers in 2020 through its monthly e-newsletter, Book Musings. Each issue focused on concerns of Quaker interest and recommended books to inspire spiritual journeys. To subscribe to the e-newsletter or browse the catalogue: Quakerbooks.org.

With donor and foundation support, QuakerPress plans to expand readership for timely Quaker literature by creating audio versions of Black Fire: African American Quakers on Spirituality and Human Rights, edited by Harold D. Weaver Jr., Paul Kriese, and Steven W. Angell and The Kendal Sparrow by Barbara Luetke. These audiobooks will support Quaker meetings and churches by providing accessible options for spiritual deepening and reading groups and Quakerism 101 classes.

The concerns of over 500 million people from more than 110 countries are represented every 7 years at the WCC. Tom has traveled to Zimbabwe, Brazil, and South Korea helping to represent Friends’ perspectives. In 1998 during the Harare, Zimbabwe Assembly, Tom remembers how “the Historic Peace Churches, including FGC, successfully pressed the WCC to recognize the importance of peace witness leading to the WCC’s Decade to Overcome Violence initiative.”

“The ecumenical worship that occurs during these Assemblies is, in my experience, broadening to anyone who attends,” Tom reflects. “The people who go to the WCC come under the weight of a spiritual imperative to work together to express God’s will.”

Tom sees an important role for interfaith collaboration around concerns of racial and social justice. “My involvement with CIRC has shown me that we should care about the larger religious community. Forming close ties with members of other religious communities at the church or organizational level facilitates speaking with one voice to major social, economic, and global problems.”
INITIATIVES

“THE WEEKS ARE EXHAUSTING NOW AND I REALLY LOOK FORWARD TO SATURDAY NIGHT WORSHIP. IT’S BEEN A MUCH-NEEDED LIFT.”
FGC Saturday Night Worship participant

COMMUNICATIONS
FGC responded to the rising needs of Friends and meetings by providing more online resources. FGC’s first podcast: A Conversation on Grief, Death, and Dying: A Resource for Friends during COVID-19 had over 1000 listeners. Vital Friends, FGC’s monthly e-newsletter, reached over 12,300 readers with program updates, event invitations, and web-based learning opportunities.

FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE FUND (FMHF)
In partnership with Everence financial services, FMHF helps Quaker meetings and churches with grants and loans to build, repair, or expand. In 2020, FMHF provided two meeting grants and responded to 18 project inquiries to help meeting houses become more accessible and sustainable.

QUAKER CLOUD
138 meetings from 22 yearly meetings, fellowships, and independent meetings use Quaker Cloud to support their online presence. They actively share meeting news with the public and use the private features for committee communication and minutes.

GOVERNANCE

“How does this decision support FGC in its goal to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community?”
FGC anti-racism query for decision-making

CENTRAL COMMITTEE
FGC’s guiding body is composed of 114 Friends from 16 affiliated yearly meetings and associations, and 11 directly affiliated monthly meetings. Central Committee approves FGC’s budget, brings Spirit-led insights to governance, provides many of the volunteers who make our programs possible, and deepens connections among yearly meetings.

Executive Committee, a smaller body composed of members of Central Committee, meets between Central Committee’s annual sessions to keep FGC’s work moving forward.

MAKE AN IMPACT. VOLUNTEER.
Central Committee members serve a vital role through service on FGC subcommittees. If you have a calling to make an impact, consider joining a subcommittee. Whatever your availability and interest, you can find your place in a shared journey of faithfulness. Find out more at FGQuaker.org/servefriends.

NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING (NYYM)
Karen Sarna

Northern Yearly Meeting (NYM)
John Greenler

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting (OVYM)
Martha Viehmann (ex officio)

Pacific Yearly Meeting (PacYM)
Don Kewman

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PhlYM)
Keith Barch

Piedmont Friends Fellowship & Yearly Meeting (PFF & PFYM)
Paul Klever

South Central Yearly Meeting (SCYM)
Mary Hampton

Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM)
Susan Wade

Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting & Assoc. (SAYMA)
Kit Potter

at Large

Chad Gilmartin (NYYM)
Anthony Stover (PhlYM)
Robyn Josephs (SAYMA)
J. Lee Cook (NPYM)

Subcommittee Clerks as of 11/1/2020

Advisory Committee
Katrina McQuail (CYM)

Christian & Interfaith Relations (CIRC)
Ann Riggs (BYM)

FGC extends our appreciation to outgoing Presiding Clerk, Frank Barch, and our outgoing committee clerks and executive committee members: Carolyn Lejuste, Constance Lezenby, Frank Perch, Laura Lockledge, David Haines, DeAnne Butterfield, Douglas Mertz, Jill Nanfeldt, Nancy Duncan, and Heather Levien. Thank you for your faithful service to Friends.
BALANCE SHEET

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<tr>
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<th>2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASSETS</td>
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<td>Cash and Equivalents</td>
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<td>Accounts Receivable</td>
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<td>Prepaid expenses and other</td>
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<td>Investments</td>
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<td>Property and equipment, net</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beneficial interest in charitable remainder trusts</td>
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<td>Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total assets</strong></td>
<td>5,728,910</td>
<td>5,469,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIABILITIES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
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<td>PPP loan</td>
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<td>Deferred revenue</td>
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<td><strong>Total liabilities</strong></td>
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<td>80,296</td>
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<tr>
<td>NET ASSETS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Without Donor Restrictions</td>
<td>4,657,413</td>
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<tr>
<td>With Donor Restrictions</td>
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<td>1,305,152</td>
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<td><strong>Total net assets</strong></td>
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<td>5,389,703</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</td>
<td>5,728,910</td>
<td>5,469,999</td>
</tr>
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2020 FUNDING SOURCES

- 28% Individuals & Bequests
- 11% Monthly & Yearly Meetings
- 9% Funds & Foundations
- 9% Gathering
- 8% Bookstore
- 6% Other Program Income
- 5% Admin, Office, Governance
- 3% Program Reserves
- 3% General Reserves

TOTAL SOURCES 1,540,605

2020 FUNDING USES

- 19% Development
- 18% FGC Gathering
- 16% Ministry on Racism & Implementation Cte
- 15% Program Reserves
- 11% Admin, Office, Governance
- 7% Spiritual Deepening & Religious Ed
- 6% Other Program Income
- 5% Other Ministries & Communications
- 5% Other Ministries & Communications

TOTAL USES 1,540,605

* Due to the Gathering being virtual, program costs were lower in FY20 making Administration, Development, and other costs proportionately higher.
IN MEMORY

Chip Adair
William & Eleanor Bradley
Lynne Butorac
Wilma Campbell
SFC Alwyn C. Cashe
Nancy Combes
Jeffrey Lee Cox
Caroline Cunningham
Jan De Hartog
Trish Duvall
Frank & Josephine Duveneck
Edith Engle
Dennis Federer
SSG Justin Gallegos
Barbara Greenler
Irving Hollingshead
Patty Levering
George & Theodora Mathues
Gayle Michener
C. Bayerd Pachov
Garner M. Petrie, Jr.
Billy Pierce
Sgt. Michael Robertson
James Satterwhite
Deborah Theado
Patricia V. Thomas
Laura Townes
Perry Treadwell
Jarrell Williams
Edith Wilson

Legacy Giving

FGC was blessed by an unexpected bequest in 2020. This gift arrived at a crucial time as the pandemic was impacting our programs, and meetings and Friends needed resources and connection.

From late 2019 to early 2020, FGC conducted a feasibility study on a potential comprehensive fundraising campaign for current and future programs and ministries.

In early 2021, FGC’s Executive Committee approved moving forward with a $2.4 million campaign that includes a Planned and Deferred Gift component. This will not include a specific dollar goal, but rather an effort to build a circle of Friends who are committed to seeing Friends thrive long into the future.

To date, approximately 100 Friends have shared that they have remembered FGC in their wills and estate plans. These future gifts are a critical part of FGC’s long-term sustainability.

Beginning with this Impact Report, we want to recognize, and more importantly thank, all those who have made such a commitment. We received permission from the following individuals to share their names as part of FGC’s Legacy Circle.

Frank Barch & Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch
Ken Miller
Nancy Moore & Bob Goren
Bob & Carolyn Nechal
Mary Coelho
Sue & Rich Regen
Eleanor Cox
Ken Stockbridge
Janice Domanik
The George & Patricia Thomas
Bob Fetter
Family Trust
Bruce & Ruth Hawkins
Richard & Marian Van Dellen
Sgt. Michael Robertson
Jon & Sally Weaver Sommer
Sgt. Al Young
Jean Wilson

WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO THESE FRIENDS AND THE MANY MORE NOT LISTED, WHO ARE REMEMBERING FGC IN THEIR WILL OR ESTATE PLAN. We look forward to adding more names to this list. If you hold FGC close to your heart, we invite you to consider being part of our Legacy Circle. To learn more, contact Faith Josephs, Associate Secretary of Development at fjosephs@FGCquaker.org or 215-561-1700 x3004.
FGC VISION STATEMENT

We envision a vital and growing Religious Society of Friends—a faith that deepens spiritually, welcomes newcomers, builds supportive and inclusive community, and provides loving service and witness in the world.

Through Friends General Conference, we see Quakers led by the Spirit joining together in ministry to offer services that help Friends, meetings, and seekers explore, deepen, connect, serve and witness within the context of our living faith.

Photo and Art Credits

Special thanks to the Friends who provided their personal photos for this Impact Report. The beautiful Zentangle® influenced art by Friend Lynne Piersol appears throughout this report and also inspired its overall design.