

**Midlothian Friends Meeting**  
**Meeting for Discernment**  
**January 14, 2024**

17 Friends were present at the Meeting House and 7 Friends were present on Zoom.

The clerk read two queries on the discernment process for reflection to begin the meeting.

- Following and update from the clerk on the October 2023 discernment decision to form an ad hoc committee to determine the process to follow regarding a MFM and/or a TQ logo, it was made clear that those currently on the committee would meet to decide the process of choosing a time to meet and a clerk for this ad hoc group.
- Following discernment of the final 2023 budget numbers and a presentation of the 2024 budget by our treasurer, the 2024 budget was approved as presented.

**Midlothian Friends Meeting**  
**Meeting for Discernment**  
**February 11, 2024**

20 Friends including three children were present at the Meeting House and 7 Friends were present on Zoom.

The clerk had the following reflection read to begin the meeting: "Participation in the Meeting for Discernment is the responsibility of all. Come with open minds, seeking the Spirit, listening carefully, discerning the truth in what others have to offer. Proceed with forbearance and warm affection for each other."

*BYM Resource for Faith and Practice*

- After a presentation on a request from Crystal Ashram, a non-profit group of spiritual seekers to use our meeting house to create a space of stillness on the fourth Saturday of the month, meeting approved the clerk of meeting to proceed with approval as answers to questions such as affiliations or charges vs donations by participants are resolved.
  
- An ad hoc logo committee's request for approval to begin the design of a logo to be brought to Meeting for discernment for further consideration at a later time was approved.

**Midlothian Friends Meeting**  
**Meeting for Discernment**  
**March 10, 2024**

16 Friends including 3 children were present at the Meeting House and 3 Friends were present on Zoom.

The clerk had the following reflection read to begin the meeting: “[Meeting for Discernment] is about looking for Truth as a body, rather than about our individual senses of truth. We need to enter worshipfully into our meetings for business. We need to wrestle with the issues, to share our glimpses of the Truth as we see it, and then we need to let go and listen deeply until all those glimpses give us a sense of the Truth as a whole. This takes time, patience and surrender.”

*Michael Wajda, 2007*  
*BYM 2013 Resource for Faith and Practice*

- The clerk reopened a topic from last month that needed further discernment regarding a request from Crystal Ashram, a non-profit group seeking to use our meeting house on the fourth Saturday of the month. The meeting approved a visit by an ad-hoc committee to experience a Crystal Ashram group gathering. The clerk will continue to proceed to get answers on ethical questions, any affiliations, financial issues and other concerns. The ad hoc committee and the clerk will return to meeting for discernment at a later date for a resolution.

**Midlothian Friends Meeting**  
**Meeting for Discernment**  
**May 12, 2024**

16 Friends were present at the Meeting House and 5 Friends were present on Zoom.

- After thorough discussion, Meeting agreed to adopt the 2023 Spiritual State of the Meeting Report as presented with some revisions that will be finalized by Brian McCutcheon. The Report will be submitted to Baltimore Yearly Meeting and posted on the Meeting website.
- Meeting agreed to adopt the logo developed for MFM by the ad hoc logo committee as the logo is currently displayed on the Meeting website, with no revisions.

**Midlothian Friends Meeting**  
**Meeting for Discernment**  
**June 9, 2024**

22 Friends (including 8 children) were present at the Meeting House and 4 Friends were present on Zoom.

- After discussion Midlothian Friends united with a Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) Minute calling for a ceasefire between Israel and Palestine. It was agreed that the Peace and Social Action Committee would handle distribution to the wider community.

**BYM Minute Adopted 4/21/24**  
**Ceasefire Between Israel and Palestine**

**As Quakers we believe** in the sacred worth of each person and our historic Peace Testimony prompts us to stand against violence in all its forms. We grieve for the loss of each life, and with those in Israel and Palestine who are losing loved ones. We pray with those waiting for the return of loved ones and those living under siege and bombardment.

**We join** with many millions across the world to call for an immediate ceasefire and humanitarian access, an end to the catastrophic bombing of civilian Gaza, and action to create the conditions for a lasting peace.

Military action will not bring peace. History shows us that retaliatory violence is a failure (witness the wars of retribution in Iraq and Afghanistan). Violence only begets more violence. There are no winners and people are dying as a preventable humanitarian crisis deepens.

The many faith traditions represented in the region share a religious obligation to feed the hungry, care for the sick and wounded, and protect the most vulnerable from violence. **We urge the combatants, our government, and the entire international community to respect the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention for the Protection of Civilians in War.**

**We also call on all of us** – from national and international leaders to religious bodies, media and people in their communities whether impacted or removed from this war -- to firmly disavow dehumanizing anti-Palestinian and anti-Semitic rhetoric and approaches that deepen painful divisions and politicize the current crisis. Our conviction that peace will prevail on earth, as the scriptures of the great religions of the world have promised, requires this of each of us, for humanity to regain its footing amid such incredible violence and suffering. This is a time for strong moral resolve, spiritual fortitude, and immediate action.

**Midlothian Friends Meeting**  
**Meeting for Discernment**  
**October 13, 2024**

12 Friends were present at the Meeting House and 5 Friends were present on Zoom.

- **Application of our Peace Testimony to the current Mid-East crisis**

MFM's Peace and Social Action Committee (PSAC) asked whether there is interest in exploring, as a group, our Peace Testimony in the context of the Mid-East conflict. Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Minute of August 4, 2024, which calls on the United States' government to reevaluate and immediately halt military support for Israel is the impetus for Meeting to consider more discernment on this issue. This discussion and exploration of our peace testimony will continue at our 11<sup>th</sup> Month Meeting for Discernment.

- **Richmond Chapter of the Soka Gakkai Buddhist organization**

This organization, in which Peter Farago participates, has had three meetings at MFM so far. Peter introduced local leaders of the Richmond Chapter, and requested permission for the Chapter to hold scheduled meetings at MFM when he is out of town. Meeting approved use of the Meeting House with coordination with our Building and Grounds Coordinator.

**Midlothian Friends Meeting  
Meeting for Discernment  
December 8, 2024**

10 Friends were present at the Meeting House and 7 Friends were present on Zoom.

- Peter Farago, MFM's Internet presence coordinator, presented a proposal for the formation of an ad hoc committee to develop content for MFM's website and social media communications and to explore website design additions and changes. Meeting approved.