

DRAFT Appendix to the 2022 Spiritual State of the Meeting Report
Oct. 29, 2022

Here is a complete account of how meetings responded to our anti-racist query:

What wisdom and tools might your meeting share with other meetings about how the Spirit has guided your discussion on racism? What have been the challenges?

Adelphi said various committees were aimed at helping it become more a more actively anti-racist and inclusive community. This included the Peas and Social Concerns Committee, the Change Group and a Film Club. In addition, there was a Caste book club and Anti-Racism Personal Accountability groups to educate and confront how we may be unintentionally harming or failing to provide welcome to People of Color. The meeting created a group of Friends to use social media to advocate for equality, justice, non-violence and decency and worked with CourtWatch PG to ensure that bail hearings are conducted fairly.

Alexandria says that a dozen Friends participate in a Change Group, led by a member of the BYM Working Group on Racism. “Conversations have been wide-ranging but often difficult but a spirit of listening has been maintained. There is an earnest desire to lower barriers and meet the spiritual needs of people of color.”

Annapolis said it attempted to truly face the challenges of anti-racism. It “is not programmed hatred but a lack of knowledge.” This meeting took a Minute on Restorative and Retrospective Justice, saying “We recognize that sometimes with positive intentions, we have contributed to both historical and contemporary harm. We recognize that we have a responsibility to actively contribute to the repair of both the historical and contemporary harms to which our meeting, and we individually, may be both heir and party.”

Bethesda said it had a threshing session in October on how the community understands and should respond to the BYM ‘Call for Action’ on systemic racism.

Blacksburg organized a book group to read “How to be an anti-racist” by Ibram Kendi. The meeting decided to get involved with a local historic museum called the Christiansburg Institute that was a school set up in 1866 to educate freed slaves.

Carlisle said its Faith into Action initiative has had regular meetings throughout the year. Members said that these conversations have encouraged them to attend community events that focus on racial justice and make connections with members of Carlisle's Black community.

"We remain a White congregation, hopefully not because we are unwelcoming but because Cumberland County is largely White and politically conservative" The meeting is talking about opportunities for work with Black Churches. The meeting reached out to a housing development across the street and as a result one resident now regularly attends Meeting.

Charlottesville reported efforts to address racism and take antiracist actions were multifaceted. The Building Committee was active in their diverse neighborhood. The newsletter includes articles and poetry on race. A Friendly Circle has convened to explore the topic of reparations. The program committee has held several Connections programs and organized an anti-racist book fair.

Dunnings Creek said a small group has come together as a Working Group on Human Relations. They are planning a speaker series presenting topics of local Black history from local historians.

Little Falls is united in its condemnation of racism. They had an open and lengthy conversation about the creation of a statement of anti-racism for its website. This resulted in a large sign at the entrance of the Meetinghouse that reads "Stand against Racism and Bigotry. Honor that of God in Everyone." The Peace and Social Concerns Committee donates to anti-racist organizations. The meeting has established an ongoing relationship with a local Baptist minister who is involved in advocating for change in the criminal justice system.

Gettysburg had a long discussion acknowledging the problem of racism in BYM and BYM camps.

Goose Creek has an antiracism committee that explored ways to act out of an awareness of privilege and "move beyond a superficial understanding of differences towards a deep embrace of diversity." The meeting adopted the anti-racist queries but struggled to incorporate them into the life of our meeting. The meeting invited the Black congregation of Agape United Methodist Church to its Christmas bonfire. The Unity of Nature Committee became more focused on communities of color. The Peace and Social Concerns committee supported national and state initiatives to combat racism.

Herndon recognizes the need to embrace diversity as it strives for a more complete community. “We cannot be content in just our own small rooms.”

Homewood said antiracism has challenged its collective spirit. In 2020, a Change Group held meetings, workshops and book discussions. And the anti-racist queries were read at the beginning of every business meeting.

A statement on anti-racism was approved by the meeting in May 2021. That September, it was decided to continue the work at a committee level. Trustees reported challenges about where the meeting banks. The Grounds Committee has almost exclusively minority contractors. A committee on climate change tried to see their work through the lens of racial and climate equity. Small group discussions and a book group were helpful.

The meeting engaged with the Lillie Carroll Jackson Museum, a Civil Rights Museum at Morgan State University about our shared history with forebear Margaret Thomas Carey.

Langley Hill is grateful for the work of its Anti-Racism Working Group which offered a wide variety of opportunities for reflection, learning and discernment from book discussions and documentary viewing to Second Hours and workshops.

Maury River said members of its Peace and Justice Committee have represented the meeting in local racial justice groups. The meeting read several books on racial justice and white privilege.

Menallen said it needed to be reminded to consider racism in its discussions.

Midlothian was thankful for its Racial Justice Study Group. In addition to book groups, the study group sponsored a visit to the Richmond Slave Trail. The meeting is also participating in the Powhatan Coalition of Churches that keeps the meeting in touch with a diverse group of congregations, taking us out of its “Quaker bubble.”

Patapsco broached the ‘tender subject’ of racism and created a Change Group to address racism.

Patuxent benefitted from the energy of individual friends are putting into anti-racist work in the community. The Peace and Social Action Committee works with The Big Conversation Partners in Dismantling Racism and Privilege in Southern Maryland - a group of 21 organizations in southern Maryland. Members were present when historical markers connected with enslaved people were unveiled

Sandy Spring focused on creating safe spaces where truth can be spoken. There was a sense that the Change Group's spiritual lessons have had a ripple effect that can heal fear and division.

State College has a Racial Justice Working Group that ran educational workshops.

Williamsburg continued anti-racism discussions during Second Hour meetings.

Testimony on anti-racism in the Spiritual State of Meeting reports

Goose Creek

Remains painfully aware that we have much work to do to overcome the historical and cultural barriers to inclusion and become more engaged allies with people of color seeking restorative justice.

Langley Hill

Many who participate find the discussion rich, providing an important opportunity for internal reflection. Others feel the call to be more directly involved with individuals and communities of color. Still others are concerned that in our eagerness to engage with communities of color that we may unintentionally intrude where we are not welcome or create a burden on those with whom we are trying to connect, by for example expecting members of those communities to explain racism to us. A path forward may be to work with another community on a project of shared interest that goes beyond self-reflection and learning, one that delivers tangible results in the world.

Anti-racist query responses

Homewood Friends:

Many challenges remain. It is difficult to integrate people of color if they are not there. Our Nominating Committee regrets that “we have no people of color to consider for committees right now.” Particularly saddening are the divisions that emotions around racism can sow. One “relatively younger Friend” acknowledges that “at times [I] find it frustrating to discuss and work through these issues with older white Friends, who are often coming to the work with a greater load of unexamined implicit biases.” Tensions regarding how to address racism and how to integrate anti-racism continue to simmer. How do we coalesce as a community on this issue? We are lost in the wilderness. As one Friend notes, “We miss important members of the beloved community with spiritual strengths to share and seek the same Spirit we seek.” We sometimes fall short of embracing each other with love as we address the complexities of racism. One individual notes “the ease with which any/all of us slip into shaming others if they don’t agree with our approach to anti-racism activities.” We need to be tender with each other as we work to create new understandings and opportunities around racism.

Midlothian

We want to visit people of color where they are, rather than wait for them to come to us. Our challenge is to find ways to put our leanings into action. We wonder if we are doing enough and not sure how to address this completely. But talk is not enough.

Patapsco

We found it imperative to address where people are, not where we think they should be.

Sandy Spring

We know peace among us is complicated. With regard to racism, we have fears about saying the wrong thing and fears of being criticized. There is tension among us about the term anti-racism as some feel it denotes what we are not rather than what we aspire to be. We seek to overcome that fear and acknowledge all of our history. Without radical honesty, acceptance, and forgiveness, it is hard to transform fear and become the “beloved community.” Throughout this courageous self-examination the Change Group is helping us to look deeply at ourselves with love and compassion.

This year, our Meeting has discerned an urgent call to reach out to the wider community for several reasons. We are acutely aware of the increasing economic disparity in our neighborhoods that has caused more hunger, more mental health challenges, and more fractured families. As part of becoming an inclusive community, we have taken small steps and continue to reflect on what practices and structures could be more welcoming to everyone, especially to those who look, feel or act differently. Mostly, we want to share the experience of mystical unity, the core of Friends’ worship, with everyone.

State College

The Racial Justice Working group identified a need to make connections with people of color when possible.

Suggestions for meetings

Perhaps something like Adephi:

Interspersing anti-racist queries at various points during Meeting for Business. This helps ensure our intention and our practices align. Queries written by the Change Group were also read aloud during Meeting for Business.

Mini-reparations: Small awards relative to overwhelming harm. This was led by the meeting’s Peace and Social Concerns Committee and approved grants to the Prince George community college graduates unable to practice their profession for lack of licensure fees, the National Black Farmers Association, the Prince George’s County Lynching Memorial Project and the Cornstalk Project.

Perhaps something like Patuxent The Big Conversation on Dismantling Racism and Privilege in southern Maryland. Dismantleracism.org