

Homewood Friends Annual Report of the Peace & Social Justice Committee 2023-2024

March – April 2023

From the end of March into April the Peace & Social Justice Committee worked with other Maryland peace organizations to support the Golden Rule project of Veterans For Peace. In our meetinghouse we hosted a cultural event with several local musical groups including the Orch Kids.

P&SJ Committee gave initial approval to support a nonviolence vigil. The proposal for the nonviolence vigil went before the June 2023 Meeting for Business and was approved. The vigil has continued to the present as a self-directed action of Homewood Friends Meeting.

May 2023

May 1, 2023: Dr Vincent Intondi, author of **African Americans Against the Bomb** and **Saving the World from Nuclear War** spoke in the meetinghouse at a public event hosted and co-organized by Homewood Friends. The event also marked the 65th anniversary of the first arrest of the Golden Rule crew in Hawaii for their anti-nuclear weapons witness in the Pacific Ocean.

June – August 2023

The committee worked with other local peace/anti-nuclear groups for the annual commemoration of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings on the Japanese people at the end of World War II. On August 6th Homewood Friends hosted a vigil commemorating the dropping of the atomic bombs which was followed by a public forum on the long history of anti-nuclear work and activism by Baltimore area residents. Several elected officials holding city, state, and federal offices were invited. Friends were pleased to see city council person Odette Ramos attend. Odette Ramos also gave brief remarks to those in attendance.

October 2023

Following the October 7th Hamas incursion from Gaza and the resulting violence, killing, kidnapping and the violent response by the Israeli Defense Force, the Peace & Social Concerns Committee shared statements from Quaker organizations. Statements were shared with the Homewood Meeting community from the AFSC, the Quaker Palestine Israel Network, and the historic Quaker Peace Testimony. Subsequently, the committee shared a collective international statement from Quaker organizations such as Britain Yearly Meeting, Canadian Quakers, American Friends Service Committee, Quaker United Nations Office, Friends Committee on National Legislation.

January 2024

Jeremiah Burns presented an idea for a book discussion/reflection group on the life of Nelson Mandela using the Mandela autobiography, **Long Walk to Freedom**, one of the intentions of this discussion/reflection group is to read Mandela's story from a Quaker perspective. This is an open-ended group reflection and is a self-directed project under the care of Peace & Social Concerns.

February – March 2024

On February 11 the P&SJ Committee, with the support of Meeting for Business, held an online event with Steve Chase of Friends Meeting of Washington regarding his journey as a Quaker and his position now calling for justice and peace in the Middle East.

A peace pilgrimage from Philadelphia to Washington, DC, organized by groups of people of faith concerning the ongoing crisis in Gaza, passed through Baltimore. Friends from Homewood participated in the pilgrimage from Baltimore towards Washington, DC. There was an interfaith service/rally supporting the peace pilgrimage at Payne Memorial AME Church in Bolton Hill on February 19th, and I was invited as clerk of P&SJ to share a few words at the event. I led those assembled in a moment of silent worship.

At our February 2024 committee meeting we decided to organize a meeting with US Senator Chris Van Hollen of Maryland concerning the ongoing crisis in Gaza. We did outreach to Quakers in Maryland seeking their participation in the online meeting. Maryland Quakers met with a staff person from Senator Van Hollen's office on March 13th at 11:30am via Zoom. The meeting was attended by about 15 Friends from various meetings in Maryland. The meeting was productive and cordial. The staffer urged us to also contact Senator Ben Cardin's office too. We have attempted to set up a meeting with Cardin's office, so far with little success.

April 2024

At a previous committee meeting we decided to hold a Tax Day Vigil holding up the issue of income tax payment and war. We held the vigil at McKeldin Square on Monday April 15, 2024 starting at 5pm. The vigil was well attended by 16 people from Homewood Friends and others from local peace and social justice organizations.

The P&SJ Committee decided to support the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Minute on Gaza which was approved at the BYM Interim Session. P&SJ forwarded this to the Meeting for Business to be adopted by Homewood Friends. Approval to be in unity with the BYM minute on Gaza was approved at the May 2024 Meeting for Business.