

# The Green Street Messenger



Green Street Monthly Meeting of Friends  
45 West School House Lane  
Philadelphia, PA 19144  
267-285-0553  
[secretary@greenstreetfriendsmeeting.org](mailto:secretary@greenstreetfriendsmeeting.org)

West Philadelphia Preparative Friends Meeting  
4718 Windsor Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19143

First Day Meeting for Worship	10:30 AM
First Day School	10:30–11:15 AM
First Day Meeting for Worship at West Phila. Mtg.	10:30 PM
Wednesday morning Meeting for Worship	8:30–9:00 AM with GSFS
First Sunday evening Meeting for Worship	6:30–7:00 PM at Stapeley Hall

**For updates and more information: [greenstreetfriendsmeeting.org](http://greenstreetfriendsmeeting.org)**

## February 2018

<b>Sunday, 4th</b>	9:30 AM	Breakfast with a Friend - Cheryl McFadden
		Website Working Group Meeting
	Rise of Meeting	Coffee Hour - Sandra Rodriguez
	12:30 PM	Care & Counsel Committee Meeting
<b>Saturday, 10th</b>	5:30 PM	Second Saturday Film & Discussion (see below)
<b>Sunday, 11th</b>	9:00AM	Second Sunday Worship & Ministry (see below)
	Rise of Meeting	Coffee Hour - Sue Wasserkrug & Ashlynn Sylvan
<b>Sunday, 18th</b>	Rise of Meeting	Lunch - The Ehris
	12:30 PM	Monthly Meeting for Business
<b>Sunday, 25th</b>	9:15 AM	Friendly Bible Study
	Rise of Meeting	Coffee Hour - Lucy Duncan

## ***Minutes of Monthly Meeting for Business Held First Month 21, 2018***

At Green Street Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, held at 45 West School House Lane, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on First Month 21, 2018: Business Meeting convened at 12:30 pm in prayerful silence.

**18-01-01** The clerk welcomed Friends, thanking them for coming to the meeting.

**18-01-02** Friends reviewed and assented to the agenda.

### **18-01-03 Nominating Committee**

Walter Hjelt-Sullivan reported. He read names that had been held over from last business meeting.

For a second reading:

West Philly Green Street Joint Care Committee

Kathy Angell for a three-year term through 6/30/2020

Children and Youth Education

Anthony DiGiovanni to serve as clerk

These names were approved.

For a first reading:

Care and Counsel

Margie Felton for a three-year term through 6/30/2021

Susan Christian for a three-year term through 6/30/2021

These names will be held over for approval during next business meeting.

### **18-01-04 Care and Counsel**

Bill Van Stone reported.

Ryan Hood, who has been a child member, has requested to become a full adult member of the meeting. Care and Counsel seeks approval for this request. The meeting is excited about the request, and approval is held over until next business meeting.

Friends briefly discussed the meeting's practice in this type of transition. The meeting should consider the request as an opportunity to engage with the person making the request, in order to see how the meeting can honor the step and work on developing our adult relationships and a strong community.

Care and Counsel is asked to initiate a clearness committee to deepen our engagement with Ryan.

### **18-01-05 Property Committee**

Dan McDevitt reported.

In the fall, the Property Committee decided the renovation project of the kitchen and dining room, as well as an ADA-compliant entrance, would be delayed. The project may be started in summer 2018, and may have to be completed in phases, which would continue through the fall and perhaps into 2019. The timing depends on the timeline of the construction of the school building, which is currently behind schedule. In the meantime, the committee has worked on improving and finalizing the design, and gathering information regarding contractors.

The committee has also made progress on the meeting room renovations, which will be a separate project. The project has also grown from just replacing the carpet to include repainting, window treatments,

refurbishing benches and potentially replacing cushions. Bethann DiGiovanni and Robin Mohr have taken over the management of the project, and are working on selecting materials and contractors.

### **18-01-06 Report on Outreach Project – Kelly School gardens and greening**

Sharon Mullally reported.

Sharon has been volunteering at Kelly school, a K-5 school in Germantown. The school's playground is a paved lot outside of the school; in the past few years, the school has worked on greening some of the space to use as play space and for educational purposes. Sharon has also been helping with their garden project in part of the space where there is soil.

The Kelly Green Project, a neighborhood organization, is now creating a formal Steering Committee to work on planning and fundraising for a large-scale greening project at the school. The organizing group has asked that Green Street Meeting join the Steering Committee. Sharon explained that the current organizing group is predominantly made up of white members, though some efforts have been made to engage the school community, which is predominantly African American. She and others working on the Kelly Green Project have wondered how they can attract parents and/or teachers to be part of the Steering Committee.

The Meeting agrees to join the Steering Committee and has named Sharon Mullally as our representative. We also commit to supporting Sharon and future representatives to be the voice of Green Street, especially to have the deeper conversations around white supremacy and work with other concerned members of the organizing group to develop leadership of the project that better represents the racial make-up of the school.

### **18-01-07 Spiritual Self-Assessment – Proposal from PYM**

JoAnn Seaver reported. She received a letter from PYM Quaker Life council asking us to consider reviving the custom of having MMs and QMs conduct a spiritual self-assessment. The assessment can help communicate cares, concerns, and works that meetings are engaged in. The deadline is May 31 2018, and meetings are asked to use the queries in Faith and Practice as a guiding framework for the assessment. JoAnn will send PYM's letter to the listserv.

Friends expressed interest in conducting a spiritual self-assessment; however, we would like to do something meaningful and not pro-forma. The deadline for PYM seems unrealistic for a real, valuable assessment. Friends suggested that Worship and Ministry and Care and Counsel take time to jointly consider our participation and what form it might take, and if/how it can be adopted regularly going forward.

**18-01-08** These minutes were approved.

**18-01-09** Friends ended in worship

Meeting adjourned, agreeing to meet again at the appointed time on Second Month 18, 2018.

JoAnn Seaver, Clerk

Blythe Davenport, Recording Clerk

In Attendance: Walter Hjelt Sullivan, Dan McDevitt, Bill Van Stone, Frank Perch, Mary Joy Benson, Margaret J. Walters, Traci Hjelt Sullivan, Margaret Wood, Mychelle James, Sharon Mullally, Bob Dockhorn, Jerry Williams, Marille Thomas, Chris Mohr, JoAnn Seaver, Blythe Davenport

### ***Upcoming Events for F/friends***

#### ***Documentaries and Discussion Series, Saturday, February 10th, 6:00 PM, GSMM***

*"I Am Not Your Negro"*. This documentary film, based on the book James Baldwin never finished, Remember This House, is a radical narration about race in America, using the writer's original words as read by Samuel L. Jackson. Alongside rich archival material, the film draws upon Baldwin's notes on the lives

and assassinations of Malcolm X, Medgar Evers and Martin Luther King Jr. to explore and bring a fresh and radical perspective to the current racial narrative in America.

Our speaker for the event will be Hébert Peck, Jr. Mr. Peck is an independent filmmaker and the Producer of *I Am Not Your Negro*. He has worked in independent media since the 1990s, producing and directing his own work in addition to spending 8 years as the operations manager of Scribe Video Center. He is currently an adjunct faculty member at Rutgers University and Assistant Director of Broadcast Operations for Rutgers University TV (RU-tv). *Refreshments will be served from 5:30 PM. Admission, childcare and parking are free.*

***Second Sunday with Worship and Ministry, February 11th, 9:00AM, GSMM***

We will show the film *The Bail Trap* for our second Sunday program. The film explores the reality that 70% of people in jail are there for one reason: living in poverty. Low-income Americans are sitting in jails for days, months, and even years simply because they can't afford to pay high bail amounts. All the while, private bail bond and insurance companies are profiting in the billions each year.

There is movement in Philadelphia now to end the cash bail system. Oliver Inslee, a lawyer and GSMM attendee and Nina Ahmad, former Philadelphia Deputy Mayor for Civic Involvement and 1st District Congressional candidate, will lead our discussion about what's happening in Philadelphia and how we can be involved. The film will last approximately 20 minutes, and we'll have plenty of time for discussion. Please join us and invite anyone who might be interested. Childcare will be provided during this time.

***Young Friends Winter Gathering, Sunday, February 11th, 12:00 PM, West Chester Meeting***

Join Young Friends for a weekend of community building, games, spiritual exploration, and digging into the theme "Religious Differences." Guests Lucy Duncan and Denise Altvater will join us from the American Friends Service Committee to lead activities that will us develop a deeper understanding of colonization. We'll share free time, different kinds of worship, chores, and games.

***Middle School Friends Winter Gathering, February 16th - 18th, Solebury Monthly Meeting***

Calling all Middle School aged f/Friends to come together and extend the love with a Post-Valentine's Retreat! We will create valentines that celebrate love and appreciation of all kinds - with our family, friends, mentors, people who have been inspirational for us throughout history, etc. There will also be small group worship sharing, lots of laughter, group games, and new friendships to create.



***The Second Query on Meeting for Business***

Is our meeting for business held in the spirit of a meeting for worship in which we seek divine guidance?

Are we careful to keep in the spirit of worship each of the concerns that emerge, whether of nurture, of Spirit, of social concerns, of property, or of finance?

Are Meeting decisions directed by prayerful consideration of all aspects of an issue and are difficult problems considered carefully with patient search for truth, unhurried by the pressures of time?

How do we respond if we notice the meeting has lost an understanding of the presence of God?

Do we recognize that we speak through our inaction as well as our action?

*Do I regularly attend meeting for business and in a spirit of love and unity? If unable to attend, how do I attend to my responsibility?*

*Do I consider prayerfully the many concerns that are lifted up on any issue, acknowledging that the search for truth in unity involves what God requires, being open to personal transformation as the community arrives at the sense of the meeting?*



## **Victoria Greene's presentation on EMIR Healing Center, 1/14/2018**

Notes by Chris Mohr

About a dozen people came to the Green Street Meetinghouse on 1/14/2018 to hear Victoria Greene talk about her work with the EMIR Healing Center.

She founded the organization in memory of her son, Emir, who was murdered on March 26, 1997. EMIR stands for "Every Murder Is Real." They provide support and counseling to families of murder victims in Philadelphia and even beyond.

### **The Problem**

There were 317 homicides in Philadelphia in 2017, the first time since 2012 that the number has been over 300. Many of the murder victims are young black men. Police Commissioner Richard Ross said the increase is because of opioids, and the fact that the Police Department is down by 400 officers. There should be another 300 new officers by fall 2018 when the next class graduates from the academy. There are also gangs in many areas of Philadelphia.

### **Support Groups**

EMIR Healing Center runs support groups for families of murder victims. Friends from Green Street Meeting provide meals so that the families can eat together from 6 to 6:30 pm. The meals enable people to get there without having to worry about eating first. Having a meal together helps people socialize and bond, which is a very important step in the healing process. There are about 25 people per group. Over the course of a year, Green Street Friends are providing something like 700 meals a year!

Friends from Green Street who want to help can sign up to cook a meal, bring takeout food, or just donate money toward buying food for the evening. If you do cook, please don't use pork or nuts.

The process starts when, each week, EMIR gets a fax from the Police Department with the list of homicides from the past week and contact information for the next of kin. EMIR follows up with a letter and later a phone call to invite them to participate in the support groups. Some people are referred by other individuals or organizations in the community.

In the groups, EMIR teaches families about trauma: how to recognize it; and how to cope with it in healthy ways. Frequently people who do not recognize trauma end up coping in unhealthy ways. People can come back again, too. Often the second year is hardest for people – the second Christmas or birthday – when they realize it's real, the person is never coming back.

The first two meetings of the groups are open to drop-ins, but after that, no drop-ins are allowed. The group needs a chance to bond together, and that rule helps them do that. Each time there are separate groups for women, men, and teens and kids.

### **Intervening to Prevent More Violence**

EMIR has sometimes gone to individuals to prevent them from retaliating with violence after a murder. Recently a family asked them to intervene in a gang dispute in South Philly. They are looking at being mediators.

At one point EMIR was part of a collaborative that applied for grant funding. It would have included money to pay "interruptors" who are already on street corners doing this work, for no pay. It did not work out for EMIR in the end. There is still a serious need for interruptors.

### **Public Policy**

EMIR also has growing interest in public policy. To begin with they are looking at the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victims Compensation Fund. The source of money for this fund is fines paid by convicted criminals, not taxes. However, the VOCA law excludes families of people accused of "causing their own demise." If a police report says the victim was committing a crime when killed, then the family cannot get money from the fund. There is no process for judging whether or not the police report is correct; and even if it were, why should the families of the victim suffer?

EMIR has worked with attorney Angus Love on some cases. In one of them, a father was upset that his son was accused of dealing drugs, when he didn't, and there was no evidence he did. They were able to get the office in Harrisburg to overturn the initial decision. There may be a lawsuit in the courts or a change in the law in the legislature.

In September, EMIR held a forum on gun violence. Families of victims had the chance to be heard by public officials, including Congressperson Dwight Evans, Commissioner Ross, several City Council members, and some state legislators. EMIR has formed committees around illegal guns, education, and housing.

Families who get involved with activism often find some healing. It's therapeutic because they may find some help for other people and also work for the common good. This can especially be helpful when the perpetrator of the murder isn't caught. Less than half of murder cases in Philadelphia are getting solved now, so there is a lack of closure for many families.

### **Victoria's Spiritual Journey**

Finally, Victoria spoke about her spiritual journey through this work. Soon after she started EMIR, she organized conferences two years apart. She had no experience doing this. Yet when she asked, people said yes. And both were successful. She felt God was guiding her.

People ask Victoria how she can cope with the stories, so similar to what she went through with her son, Emir. She said, "When I hear a family's story, I am with them. I'm holding their hands, listening to them. That's God."

She sees how fragile life is. When she felt suicidal after Emir's death, she heard his voice saying to her, "What? It's bad enough I got killed, now you're going to go?" And she held on. Now she won't hold grudges. If someone is good, she'll tell them. She added, "Because you never know if you'll see them again. Be authentic. Don't take people for granted."

That's why Quakerism attracted her. She heard about Spirit-led activism. She had never heard that anywhere before finding Quakers. Her experience is definitely of Spirit-led activism.

### **WAYS TO GET INVOLVED WITH EMIR HEALING CENTER:**

- Join Green Street's brand-new **Quaker Social Change Ministry group!** We have our first meeting to get organized on Feb. 19 (TENTATIVE).
- Work with EMIR on **amending VOCA**
- **Join one of the committees** formed after the September forum (education [ON THE ISSUE OF HOMICIDE? OR, to SUPPORT EDUCATION SO THERE IS LESS VIOLENCE?]; stopping illegal guns; or housing)
- Volunteer to help with the **annual fundraising concert**, usually late in the year
- Donate! If you do, you'll multiply the impact of our meeting's annual gift to EMIR
- Watch Victoria's QuakerSpeak video and share it with people you know: <http://quakerspeak.com/every-murder-real/>