Virginia Beach Friends Meeting
Report of Peace & Social Justice Committee
to the Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
12:00 pm, October 14, 2018

1. **Meeting of the Peace & Social Justice Committee on Sunday, September 23.**
   Faye Bailey, Tom and Beth Bertrand, Gayle Cameron, Mark Connolly, Nancy Craft, April Megginson, Kate Rodgers, Elizabeth Waitekus, Mary Pelham and Lewis White met to continue the discussion of our Meeting's proposed participation in the Poor People's Campaign. This hour-long discussion was rich and passionate, noting how the Poor People's Campaign incorporates a broad spectrum of issues to touch on people's lives, from economic and racial injustice to environmental degradation to access to education. We are concerned with how to engage the Millennials with these issues and how to avoid further political polarization. At our next meeting, Faye Bailey will lead us through a discussion of concrete steps we can take as a Committee and a Meeting.

   We strongly agreed to recommend the following action that has been before our Meeting for the past six months and will bear directly on issues to be discussed at the NCYMC Interim Body Meeting that we will host on Saturday, October 27:

   PROPOSED ACTION: We recommend to the Meeting for Business that Virginia Beach Friends Meeting endorse the Poor People's Campaign: A Call for Moral Revival and that we recommend that our Yearly Meeting endorse the Poor People's Campaign as well. The Committee on Peace & Social Justice will set up an information program in the near future so that our Meeting may hear from PPC supporters in the Community and determine how individual members of our Meeting can participate effectively in the PPC.

2. **Participation in Upcoming Election:**
   - **General Election is November 6, 2018. Last day to register to vote or update your address is October 15. To check your personal voter registration status, go to: https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation**
   - Several members of our Meeting (Dave French, Barbara Kelly, Nancy Nixon, Mary Pelham White, and Tom Bertrand) were certified as third-party voter registrars and have participated in voter registration sessions sponsored by the League of Women Voters and the Poor People's Campaign.

3. **Report on South Hampton Roads Social Justice University, afternoon of September 30**
   Tom Kennedy and Tom Bertrand attended this bi-annual interfaith, interracial gathering of activists from across South Hampton Roads, meeting at the Coastal Virginia Unitarian

Universalists Church on South Military Highway in Virginia Beach. The meeting, organized around the six intersecting issues that have been targeted as 2018-2019 legislative priorities by the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy (VICPP) and the South Hampton Roads Collaborative Legislative Roundtable, featured excellent presentations by:

- Keynote Speaker: Dora Muhammad, Health Care Coordinator of VICPP, addressing the upcoming challenges of Implementing Virginia's new commitment to Medicaid Expansion
- Brian Cannon, Executive Director of One Virginia 2021, spoke on Redistricting & Voter Access
- Edgar Aranda-Yanoc, Executive Director of The Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations, spoke on immigration challenges, and particularly the need to support a bill to provide driver privilege cards for the 300,000 unlicensed, uninsured Virginians who are driving on our roads
- Mike Tidwell, Director of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, spoke on the challenges for our region posed by global warming and sea level rise
- Corina Ladd and Carolyn Caywood of the League of Women Voters of South Hampton Roads spoke on LGBTQ and the opportunities to achieve ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment
- Stephanie Harrell, representing the Virginia Beach Department of Human Services, spoke about efforts to reform the criminalization of Mental Health.
- Joe Dillard, representing Hampton Roads Transit, spoke about the need for improved funding of Public Transportation
- Teresa Stanley of the Interspiritual Empowerment Project wrapped up the meeting and called us to action.

4. Upcoming Events

- **Sunday, October 14, 4 pm – Town Hall Meeting to learn about the dangers to the community posed by the planned Virginia Natural Gas Southside Connector [Transmission} Line** -- Steve Baggarly and Kim Williams urge us to attend this community meeting at the First Baptist Church Berkley, 703 Berkley Avenue Extension, in Norfolk

- **Saturday, October 27, 1 pm to 7 pm, the 13th annual ONE LOVE FESTIVAL at Virginia Wesleyan University.** Members of the Virginia Beach Friends Meeting, including Whit Peace, Bob Young Gwynne Wells, were among the primary dreamers/instigators/sustainers of this annual festival, founded in 2005. *The Festival was conceived as a snapshot of what a state of world peace would look like, even if it existed only for one day. The festival brings a kaleidoscope of people together to celebrate a peace that transcends our differences.* **See https://www.vwu.edu/center-for-the-study-of-religious-freedom/one-love-**

festival.php**.** There will be three major events during the afternoon-long Festival this year:

Catholic Nuns Beating Nuclear Swords into Plowshares
Sponsored by the Bishop Walter F. Sullivan Pax Christi Community of Hampton Roads. T**ime:** 1:00 – 2:20 p.m. in the Monumental Chapel. **Speakers: Dominican Sisters** Ardeth Platte and Carol Gilbert. For over forty years, they have fought for nuclear disarmament. As peacemakers following the nonviolent teachings of Jesus, they have traveled the U.S., teaching about the humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear and conventional war. As a result of their nonviolent resistance, they have also spent years in jails and prisons. Hear firsthand the incredible stories of two women who have dedicated their lives to ridding the world of nuclear weapons and stopping war forever.

Race: Let's Talk About It: Are U.S. Immigration Policies Racist? Town Hall Discussion Sponsored by the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom, WHRO Public Media, and the City of Virginia Beach Human Rights Commission. **Time:** 2:30 – 4:00 p.m. in Boyd Dining Hall. Moderated by **Barbara Hamm Lee**, Host of *Another View* Radio Program on WHRV 89.5 FM, the "Race: Let's Talk About It" town hall discussions offer safe space for open and honest conversations about race.

Largest Drum Circle in the World, Music, Spoken Word, and Poetry
Time: 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. in the Batten Student Center, Marlin Grille. Drum Your Dream (drumyourdream.com) organizer **Arthur Lopez** leads a rhythm-based shared experience for peace. Everyone is invited to join this worldwide drumming experience, regardless of musical ability or experience. Hand percussion instruments are available, or bring your own. Also enjoy the music, spoken word, and poetry of local artists.

- **FCNL Annual Meeting and Quaker Public Policy Institute, November 28 – December 2** in Washington DC**.** If you are interested in attending, see or call Tom Bertrand (757-633-3783) or Laley Lippard (415-676-8412). For registration, go to https://www.fcnl.org/updates/annual-meeting-and-quaker-public-policy-institute-2018-27

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee,

Tom Bertrand