



North East Region Newsletter- April 2021

Message from your Presiding Clerk

Spring has come to the land as the Covid Pandemic starts to decrease in the US- a time to be more hopeful and be full of gratitude to be alive. On the 29th of May, 2021 we look forward to having our Spring Gathering of the Northeast Region of USFWI. Marian Baker



Jane with her namesake in Samburu in 2012

Jane after she moved from Lugulu to Nairobi.

Speaker coming to our Spring Gathering of Northeast Region

Come to our Spring Gathering of USFW Northeast Region. The main speaker will be Jane Muturo. Jane is the pastor of Dunholm Friends Church in Nairobi- one that, at least before they had to go online due to Covid, usually had 1500 Friends attending each Sunday. She is a graduate of Friends Theological College in Kaimosi, Kenya. She did her practicum in Samburu. When she travelled with Marian Baker and Dorothy Selebwa ten years ago to Samburu, she discovered a young girl had been named after her for her ministry in Samburu. She took Eden Grace's place as a youth delegate to the World Council of Churches. The photo on the right is more recent once she transferred from Lugulu to Nairobi. She also is a recipient of a John Sarrin Scholarship, a program run by USFWI, as she is trying to finish up a doctorate in Theology.

What have women been doing since the pandemic hit us all?

Durham Friends Meeting and our Woman's Society have been meeting on zoom. While I am glad that can happen, we all really look forward to meeting in person. I try to send cards or call people regularly, to let them know they are loved. I have been mostly home, working in my art studio on prints and watercolors and special projects for friends. One blessing of the pandemic is that I have reconnected with some Friends/friends. Nancy Marstaller, Durham, ME, New England YM

Meeting a lot via Zoom has some blessings. As an older person, it enables me to hear and see people more clearly than in our large meetinghouse. A number of people who had not been attending before and also those who moved away out of the area are able to return to join us. Our meeting has meetings

almost every day, small groups for poetry, for prayer, for dealing with end-of-life issues, and ones on issues like white supremacy/racism and climate change. Dinah Starr, Cambridge MM, New England YM

Open Heart Worship via Zoom

What a different year this has been. Separations and connections in different ways. The zoom platform has become indispensable. We are able to go to meetings, class, lectures, concerts, near and far and not have as large a carbon footprint though zoom and the cloud certainly use energy. The West Falmouth Prep Meeting embraced zoom early on and has grown strong with rich Meetings. Their women's group which had met monthly started to meet weekly. It has been a blessing for many to 'see' one another from distant places and for those unable to travel.

One particularly rewarding experience has been nearly weekly, since last March, of 'Open Heart Worship' initiated and guided by Mey Hasbrook, now from Durham, ME. Most Saturdays some folks gathered at 12:30 eastern time for a message and to reflect on that for about half an hour. This was followed with about 45 minutes of expectant, unprogrammed, waiting worship and then introductions. Individuals come from places as varied as England, Ireland, Oklahoma, Mexico, Indiana, Ohio, Kenya, Canada, Maryland, Michigan and New England with their varying experiences of worship, sharing in the spirit rooted in love. Often these messages, a song, poem, bible verse or reflections focused my energy for the worship immediately following but also to worship the next day and even into the week. It has been a spirit filled worship time. Contact Gervais Frykeman at gervais153@talktalk.ne if you want to join.

Hopefully we will be able to incorporate new and old techniques into our worship as time goes forward. 'In person' worship is wonderful but being able to involve others regardless of health or distance is also wonderful.

Ruth Zwirner, West Falmouth MM, New England YM

Women's World Day of Prayer

During these pandemic days, one event that encouraged us was the World Day of Prayer. World Day of Prayer is a worldwide, ecumenical movement of Christian women of many traditions, races, and cultures in more than 170 countries and 40 languages who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year usually on the first weekend in March. (<https://wdp-usa.org/>). Each year a specific country is chosen. The goal is for each world day of prayer service is to have participants from as many types of Christians, languages, nationalities as possible. Friends participate as led. For example, in 2009, the New Bedford Friends Meeting hosted a citywide observance written by the women in Papua New Guinea and the speaker was Salvation Army Captain Beth Ellen Parkhurst. This year, the service was written by the women of the South Pacific island nation of Vanuatu, one which is being affected by monsoons and sea level rise, and close to 70% of the women have had to deal with domestic violence or rape in addition to poverty.

This year, many of the services were on Zoom and this actually increased the number of participants from previous years. In New Hampshire, two services were held. One in Henniker was a hybrid service broadcasting from St. Theresa's Roman Catholic Church, led by Marian Baker and the other was in Laconia, led by United of Church of Christ live streamed on Youtube. Two services were also held in Massachusetts. Cape Cod, that normally has 8 services all around the Cape, had one large worship led by a participant from each town. Zoom software allowed us in New Bedford to be blessed with 6 Kenyan Friends who led the intercessory prayer. Other leaders were online from Slovenia, the Bahamas, Jamaica, India, the Philippines, and those who are French-, Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking. From this will spread abroad the love of God in our hearts.

The little-known Indian Marthoma Churches in the USA (in New England, Carmel Marthoma, Hudson, MA) produced a beautiful comprehensive two-hour program that tells the World Day of Prayer story. <https://youtu.be/-tYec9Vutug> . I hope you have the opportunity to view it.

As you prepare for next year, consider hosting a world day of prayer at your meeting or joining with other groups to lead one in person or on Zoom. The program outline is available on the WDP webpage. The 2022 writing country is “England, Wales, and Northern Ireland” a country to which we are akin because we find the roots of Quakerism there. For more information, contact Pam Cole, pamcole@mindspring.com or Gale Schultz, hgaleschultz@earthlink.net.

The Joy of Learning from a new culture - Abenaki

For several years, I have been helping lead a History Alive event in our town, an event that occurs the third weekend of August each year. It usually has us all in costumes of centuries ago and enables visitors to get a glimpse of what it was like to live in our rural town many years ago.

As a precursor to our 250th celebration of the town in 2022, we decided to focus instead on who was already living in this area when the first European settlers arrived.

For the last several months of this pandemic, I read all I could find about our local tribes. I especially enjoyed reading Robin Wall Kimmerer’s book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

Robin is a botanist/scientist who combines her scientific love of plants with her native upbringing in learning from the native flora in upper New York State. I was glad to connect with two women who grew up in my town who are Abenaki. I found out that Robin belonged to a branch of the same tribe, that migrated to the Finger Lakes area from New England.



“I close my eyes and listen to the voices of the rain with gratitude.”

– Robin Wall Kimmerer, Author of *Braiding Sweetgrass*

I had been taught that there were no Indians left in our state, that they either died of smallpox from the settlers, were killed by our European ancestors who took away their land, were sent on the trail of tears to Oklahoma, or had their children forcefully taken away and sent to boarding schools to de-Indianize them. These women taught me that many were killed, but their ancestors continued to stay here, their homeland since the glaciers melted thousands of years ago. They instead intermarried with whites, built houses to blend in to the dominant culture and lived hush hush about their culture, (much like the Irish, the Jews and others). Some maintained their culture by serving as guides for fishing and hunting, and some made canoes, snowshoes, baskets, and other crafts that the white culture wanted to buy. Now they are relearning their language, and renewing their traditional culture, and planting their traditional seeds of corn. They are relearning to live a sustainable life, that treats all plants and animals of the earth as a gift from Mother Earth, living a life of gratitude, respect for all creatures. As they harvest plants or animals for food, they offer thanks and only harvest what they really needed, never greedily harvesting or clear cutting all of it. It reminded me of the Bible passage in Thessalonians- that in everything give thanks, and to pray with gratitude without ceasing.

We have just received a Community Grant that is enabling us to gather the best Abenaki songwriter, story teller, archeologist, and other Abenaki leaders who will come help explain the real meanings of our mountains, rivers and lakes (most of which have Abenaki names), help our boy and girl scouts make mats and build a wigwam, explain the importance of music, and reenact the original history

of our area. I give thanks for the quiet winter and am filled with extra joy as the wildflowers in our woods burst into bloom. Soon I can start digging my garden.

Marian Baker, Weare/Henniker MM, New England YM

USFW International Quinquennial 16-17 July via Zoom

Due to Covid pandemic, USFWI will hold a brief Conference via zoom, instead of waiting for several more years. Everyone is welcome to attend. The cost is free. The theme is "Resting in Gods Shadow"

Speakers: Dorcas Otieno, Tanzania USFW Pastor on Friday
Nikki Holland, Missionary in Belize on Saturday
Karla Jay Moran, new FUM Staff-on Saturday

Friday: Welcome and Introductions

Nominating Committee report for new officers

By-laws/handbook revisions

Introduction of New USFWI groups (Northeast, Tanzania, others?)

Gifts given to USFWI and how they are used

(Hortonville, Clara Millet, Mary Glenn Hadley)

Saturday:

Overview of projects that USFWI supports.

Memorial meeting

Induction and installation of new USFWI Executive Committee

Registration details will be available soon. FUM will host the zoom.

Learning more of Gratitude

When Marian called to ask if I could write a brief update of what's happening in my life, I thought immediately of my excitement about publication of the book *The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous - Settler Relations* by Shirley Hager and Mawopiyane

This book is the story of a group of native and non-native people who spent several years meeting, worshipping and learning from each other. Being a part of that witness was one of the most significant and most deeply spirit-led parts of my life. Ironically, I do not by name appear in the book, nor did I help write it. But I was there and intimately involved in most of the stories/ events with most of the people. It was important that many of the voices in the book be those of First Nations people and I understood that meant limiting non-native perspectives for there to be balance. Still, there's something almost ghostly or dream-like about standing in that sacred place almost invisible. It is humbling and offers more room to learn important truths.

What the book has done for me is to bring that time and my other relationships with indigenous people back into my immediate awareness. It's hard to put it all into words but I have begun to write about it again. There are times, day and night, when, quite unexpected, I get an image or a feeling of the presence of one or more of the people, sometimes of the whole community.

What I realize, as much as anything, is that each of us has our own story of the ways in which Spirit has touched and moved us. Sharing those stories helps us all. My stories help me to know myself as a person of faith. Many of my stories are those with indigenous women, so intimate and private they would need to be shared face-to-face, with hushed tones in a dark place at night. Or, as happened at one gathering, in a sweat lodge that we were invited into by the woman who hosted us, insisting that as our host she was led to invite us non-native women into the lodge as a sacred duty



As always, I come back to my gratitude for all the teachings I have received about gratitude. At the gatherings we began each day before dawn, circling the fire that had been kept burning all night. Prayers were offered and as the first light began to appear, we gave thanks for the day that was coming. The practice has stayed with me over the years. Though I'm not always awake to see the first light, I know the holiness of beginning each day and am grateful.

Sheila Garrett, Putney, VT

Here is a draft budget for the year, from Nancy for us to look at during our business meeting.

2021 USFW-NE Draft BUDGET

Projected Income	Amount	Disbursements	Amount
Dues	\$110.00	Dues- NE	\$70.00
		Dues- Cuba	80.00
Undesignated donations	100.00		
Pooled Funds	726.16	USFWI Projects	
		Children and Youth	100.00
Amy Hayden	610.00	Four Funds	100.00
		United Thank Offering	100.00
		Keys to the Kingdom	100.00
		Christian Service	100.00
		Peace and Christian Social Concerns	100.00
		Special Appeal	500.00
		General Expenses (newsletter, checks, etc.)	25.00
Total income	\$1546.16	Total disbursements	\$1275.00

We have pledged \$500 for Cuban women and \$500 for New England women for Triennial expenses. No more has been added to this budget, awaiting members' wisdom.

Special Appeal- For Getry Agizah- Leader of Friends Church Peace Teams in East Africa

Some of you heard Getry speak to us at our Fall Gathering of USFW Northeast Region.

Getry is a younger woman with a real gift in helping others learn how to deal with conflicts in a nonviolent manner. She helped a lot of younger men a few years ago, to prevent the kind of violence that resulted after the 2009 elections. When she spoke with us, she shared about her work with teenagers in the Mount Elgon area. Due to Covid and all high schools being closed during the Covid pandemic, a good number of girls had gotten pregnant and were likely to drop out of schooling. She spoke not only with



the girls to encourage them to return to school and get their high school Certificate first, but she also spoke to young men who had impregnated them, as well as to parents and elders, to work together as a community to help these girls and the children to which they give birth.

During this past month, Kenya was hit with a fourth surge of the pandemic- an especially violent strain. Both David Zarembke and his wife Gladys Kamono died suddenly from Covid. David and Gladys were two major fundraisers for the peace work done by Getry as well as that done by women in Rwanda and Burundi.

Thus, the need to give support for the important ministry done by Getry is even more urgent than usual.

Return this form to our treasurer with your contribution. Enclosed please find a total of \$_____ Please use as specified:

\$_____ Contribution to general fund of USFW NE to cover newsletter and budget expense.

\$_____ 2021 Annual dues to USFW NE for at large members (\$10 per year).

\$_____ Special Appeal to Getry Agizah, Friends Church Peace Teams

\$_____ Annual subscription to The Advocate (USFW International News). (\$15 per year)

\$_____ Copy of the 2022 Blueprints (12 devotionals from USFWI (\$5 per year).

Postal address for where to send newsletter, Blueprints, or Advocate:

Make checks payable to USFW NE and send with this form to: Nancy Marstaller, Treasurer, 32 Catlin Shore Rd, Harpswell, ME 04079

Spread the word and invite other women to our Spring Gathering of USFW.

All are invited to USFW Northeast Region - Saturday, May 29 via zoom

12:30-12:40 PM- Informal gathering and greeting one another and a time to help anyone needing assistance on using zoom.

12:40-1:00PM- Introductions of all present and Song from Nashua Friends Church in Swahili

1:00PM- Jane Muturo will speak on **“What is God leading us women, to do, once the Covid restrictions are lessened?”**

2:00PM-Divide into small groups (some in English, some in Swahili)

2:15PM- 3:00PM- Business Meeting-

- Explain membership and what USFWI has to offer women
- Appoint additional officers/ committees
- Appoint representatives to USFWI Quinquennial -July 16-17
- Brief report from Maureen Binns or Lydia Grapine about a USFWI project supporting Jamaican Friends pastors.
- Decide about where to hold the next Gathering or if some of us visit in western NY or in Quebec



Bloodroot blooming this week.

Please register for the Gathering, using the following link so we know how many are coming.

<https://forms.gle/13eAqCnVUCNnW2raA>

If you have any problem with the link, call Marian Baker at

603-478-5650 or quakerbonnet@gmail.com

Gloria Thompson and Beth Collea are working out the details of the zoom gathering. Once you register, we will send you the password.