

Annapolis Friends Monthly Meeting (AFM)  
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business (MfW wAtB)  
1<sup>st</sup> Month, 2<sup>nd</sup> Day, 2022  
(1/2/2022)  
Meeting Minutes – Approved

Note: The MfW wAtB was conducted using Zoom and some participants were in-person at the meetinghouse.

Present online: Martha B. (clerk), Arielle J. (recording clerk), Barb T., Minette S., Jack H., Jeanne W., Kim F., Lisa H., Margaret C., Mary B., Pat S., Ria H., Sky E., Joan M., Wes J., Mary D., Carl B., Jean C., Larry M., Marcia O., Martha L., Phyllis S., Sheila M., Jack H., Patty R., Terry D., Cairn K.; present in the meetinghouse: Karen C., Jenn D., Bill K., Jo Anna S.

9:00 am Opening: The clerk welcomed all of us, including the new committee slate and invited us to settle into some silent centering worship as we considered the Baltimore Yearly Meeting queries that were displayed on the screen:

- Are meetings for worship held in expectant waiting for Divine guidance? Are Friends encouraged to share spiritual insights? Are special gifts of ministry recognized and encouraged?
- Do you come to meeting with heart and mind prepared? Are you careful not to disturb the spirit of the meeting by late arrival or in other ways?

The agenda was displayed on the screen, followed by the AFM Anti-Racism Queries which the clerk read so that we could use the queries to assist us with our decision-making efforts.

Agenda:

- 1) 12<sup>th</sup> Month 2021 MfW wAtB Meeting Minutes Reviewed & Approved: The revised draft meeting minutes from the previous meeting held on December 5, 2021 were distributed after that meeting and again, with some revisions noted, with the invitation to the January 2<sup>nd</sup> MfW wAtB. The 12<sup>th</sup> month minutes were approved with the requested changes. See the attached.
- 2) Clerk Reflections: The clerk reflected on the past year (2021); a hopeful but difficult year with continued challenges on the path forward, the loss of friends & loved ones while joyfully embracing new friends, sendoffs for friends on journeys, and returning friends. We also reflected on our strengths as a community & opportunities for growth.
- 3) Letter of introduction. Francis Wayne: Ministry & Worship (Peter M.) presented a letter of introduction for Friends United Meeting & Friends across Africa who fellow Friend Francis will be speaking to, introducing him and his value in our community. The full letter was read to all participants. See the attached. Much appreciation was expressed for the Spirit-led development of the Minute.
- 4) Change Group (CG): On behalf of the change group, final updates to the Restorative & Retrospective Justice for Racism Minute were shared. See the attached.

- a. The minute was approved at our 12.5.21 MfB wAtB with the request that the change committee incorporate some changes into other parts of the document. The clerk tested the Meeting's willingness to accept the whole document with the incorporated changes.
  - i. Meeting was in unity to approve the document, expressing gratitude for the work of the committee and all who have stepped forward.
  - ii. A Friend asked about next steps for this work. The document will be recorded as an AFM minute. The Change Group will continue their work, discussing next steps for action and sharing with Meeting as appropriate.

5) Trustee updates: Jack L. shared that trustees have approved a minute to continue logistical support of MAJR (Maryland Alliance of Judicial Reform) once it has its 501(c)4 status. See the attached.

- a. Some general questions arose about funding & tax/charitable status which were addressed and referred to MAJR for any additional information needed.

6) 2021 Holiday Sharing: Terry D. shared an update on holiday sharing:

- a. ~\$1600 was donated which went toward:
  - i. Thanksgiving meals for 3 families; Christmas meals for 3 families; holiday gifts for 2 families; and remaining balance ~\$500 to support Lighthouse Shelter families/clients. Clerk and other Friends expressed appreciation to the planning group (Terry D., Denise F. and Phil C.) and all who supported this effort.

7) Path Forward (PFC): On behalf of PFC, Karen C. provided a request for Meeting to consider recommendations to further open and maintain a cautious stance with regards to COVID-19.

- a. Our recent discussions around allowing AFM-affiliated groups to use the meetinghouse (masks required, no refreshments) and rentals opening back up were reviewed and comments and questions from Friends were solicited about moving in this direction given the recent Omicron statistics and updates to county mandates.
  - i. Friends expressed concerns about changing the current policy for outside AFM groups using AFM facilities given the recent state of the pandemic.
  - ii. Outreach committee noted that requests have come in for meetinghouse use and wondered about the possibility of a vaccination policy (voluntary). Status screening was discussed.
  - iii. A reminder of current approved policies was given with note that Path Forward will take concerns and revisit possible policy updates as a group.
  - iv. Friends approved that PFC can tighten restrictions related to building use if needed, prior to bringing the recommendation to the next MfB wAtB for consideration.
  - v. Request was made for existing policies to be posted at AFM entrances.

8) Emergent Social Concerns funds: On behalf of Peace and Social Concerns, Jo Anna S reported that \$1300 from the Emergent Social Concern fund were distributed to Afghan Women's Fund to provide immediate assistance to the Afghan families that Fahima Gaheez is working with.

9) Ad hoc committee on assisting Afghan refugees in the U.S.: Jo Anna S. provided updates on the committee's recent meeting with Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCS) where they learned about what is involved, support structure, and other logistics for

proposed resettlement efforts, along with possible opportunities for Friends to be involved and next steps. The ad hoc committee is considering whether to propose partnering with other local faith-based groups to help support this effort and will meet again before bringing any proposals back to MfW wAtB for consideration and final approval. See the attached.

a) Report on Church World Service (CWS)/AFM initiatives

- i) Gift cards: ~\$2000 collected and still accepting gift card donations (recommending WalMart, Target, Visa/MasterCard, etc.) through January 19
- ii) Welcome Kits: Kim F. shared a proposal & background on preparing Welcome Kits for CWS. The project is proposed to span from mid-January to mid-March. The clerk opened request for approval. Coordination with the Path Forward committee on use of the Meetinghouse and Communications Committee related to website components was acknowledged. The Meeting was in unity to approve the project, expressing gratitude for the work of the committee. See the attached.
  - 1) Mary B will bring the proposal to our young friends to help support welcome kit assembly.

Closing:

The MfW wAtB closed with a moment of silence, reflection and gratitude.

The recording clerk will send the draft meeting minutes to the AFM-Announce email list, so that Friends can review the draft minutes and provide feedback. The minutes will be brought forth for approval at the beginning of the next MfW wAtB on February 6, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Arielle J., Recording Clerk  
[amjordan658@gmail.com](mailto:amjordan658@gmail.com)

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- *Meeting Minutes (approved) from the 12<sup>th</sup> Month MfW wAtB*
- *Letter of Introduction for Francis Wayne*
- *Change Group Minute: Minute as to R&R Justice for repair of the harms of racism*
- *Path Forward Recommendations 12.05.2021*
- *Update on Assistance to Afghan Refugees Report*
- *Welcome Kits Proposal*

# *Annapolis Friends Meeting*

*351 Dubois Road, Annapolis, MD 21401*

*www.annapolisfriends.org*

December 20, 2021

To: Our fellow members of Friends United Meeting and Friends across Africa

Re: Our beloved ecumenical partner and spiritual friend Maryknoll Lay Missioner Francis Wayne

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you in the Light of God's love and care.

Francis Wayne is returning to Kenya once again for three years of service as a Maryknoll Lay Missioner, 2022-2024. We introduce him to you as a well-loved visitor among Friends in Annapolis Friends Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

In recent years, living and working in Annapolis, Maryland, Francis often worshipped among us and generously contributed time and skills for many of our activities. We have been blessed by his loving fellowship.

Our prayers go with him for fruitful service in eastern Africa. We encourage Francis Wayne to also reach out to Friends in warm fellowship wherever he travels and serves.

Yours in faith and Friendship,



Martha Baer  
Clerk, Annapolis Friends Meeting

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the LORD require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God.*  
NIV, Micah 6:8

*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.*  
NIV, John 15:12

## **Annapolis Friends Meeting (AFM) Minute as to Restorative & Retrospective Justice for Repair of the Harms of Racism, Statement of Ongoing Discernment, and Recommended Actions for Friends**

(Minute approved, MfB 12/5/21, final edits accepted MfB 1/1/22)

### **MINUTE:**

**Annapolis Friends here reach unity that we are led to seek and speak truth as to injustice for the many past and present wrongs committed against African Americans, Indigenous Peoples, and others harmed by racial discrimination wherever we find it, in ourselves, our community, and our nation.**

**We are led to give full meaning to the promise that all are created equal, to repair systems that bring ongoing racial discrimination, and to heal harms of past oppression that persist among our neighbors, their families, ourselves, and our communities.**

**We will network in this cause with other Friends, neighbors -- especially those harmed -- and leaders for whom the way opens. We commit ourselves to revisiting this minute as our understanding evolves.**

*APPROVED by Annapolis Friends Meeting - Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business - 12/5/21*

### **STATEMENT OF ONGOING DISCERNMENT:**

AFM Friends will continue our discernment as to the historic and current context for this minute with revisions and additions as the way opens.

### **BACKGROUND:**

We are a community of faith. We are called to hear and to follow the callings of the Spirit individually and communally, as we are given the grace to understand that calling. In these times, we are called to examine our roles as members of the Religious Society of Friends, as a monthly meeting, within a yearly meeting, and as individuals, with respect to historical and ongoing oppression and exploitation of Indigenous people, enslaved Africans, and their descendants. We are called to examine our roles, at all these levels, in the ongoing, systemic oppression of people of color. As we do so, we may recognize among ourselves, individually and institutionally, patterns of both faithfulness and oppression with respect to the call to be one people, rooted in justice and community.

We recognize that The Religious Society of Friends encompasses persons of many identities in many, many countries. We recognize AFM and BYM are only a small part of that greater whole. We recognize our responsibility to the many different types of greater communities of which we are part. We recognize that AFM, BYM, and other Quaker institutions in our region of the world are at risk of seeing ourselves as and operating as institutions predominately representative of white culture and European heritage. We recognize that by doing so, we have failed the call of Spirit and our non-European brothers and sisters. 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. We recognize that at all levels, our Beloved Communities include both those who have harmed and those who have been harmed. We seek to heal and grow together.

While a work-in-progress, the following historic summary suggests these recognitions:

### ***Early History of Quakers in North America***

When European Quakers arrived in North America in 1655, they found a continent already populated by indigenous people and operating on an economy built on the labor of enslaved people.

#### ***Quakers and Indigenous People.***

Predominantly European colonists displaced indigenous people from the land where they had resided for many centuries, disrupted their lives, and brought deadly diseases.

- <https://americanindian.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/chesapeake.pdf>
- [Click here to read more about myths and truths as to Indigenous Peoples in the Chesapeake region, European settlers, and the Papal “Doctrine of Discovery](#)

*NOTE: In Pennsylvania, William Penn and some other Quakers met with Indigenous People and made agreements to purchase land. But Penn and his family also kept enslaved people for generations.*

In 1795, Quakers in the northern Shenandoah Valley, following the model established by William Penn in Pennsylvania, set up a fund under the care of Baltimore Yearly Meeting to pay local Indigenous Peoples for lands Quakers had settled. Unable to locate survivors of those tribes, the BYM Indian Affairs Committee distributes the interest income from this endowment to organizations which assist and advocate for Indigenous Peoples.

- [https://www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/committees/indian/home.html](https://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/committees/indian/home.html)

In the 1860s, indigenous children were subjected to cultural assimilation in federal government schools, at least 25 of which were operated by Quakers.

- [https://swarthmorevoices.com/content-1/2019/11/20/the-quaker-indian-boarding-schools-facing-our-history-and-ourselves\\_](https://swarthmorevoices.com/content-1/2019/11/20/the-quaker-indian-boarding-schools-facing-our-history-and-ourselves_)

Annapolis Friends in recent years have taken no actions in relation to indigenous peoples of North America.

#### ***Quakers and Enslaved People***

European Quakers arrived in North America more than 30 years after the first enslaved Africans were imported to the Virginia colony. Colonists found that enslaved laborers made their plantations of tobacco, cotton and

other business very profitable. Colonies and, later, the new U.S. and state governments passed a series of laws to reduce enslaved African-American individuals' legal status from that of indentured servants to that of chattel -- the equivalent of property or livestock.

Between the mid-1600s and the early 1800s, Quaker families, including Penn, Hopkins, and many others, participated in and benefited from the system of enslaving people. Importantly, Germantown, Pennsylvania Friends in 1688 began North American Quakers' long process of discernment with their minute urging that our testimony to "doe to all men like as we will be done ourselves" and calling for enslaved people to be "set free."

See <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.14000200/?st=text>

### ***Local Quaker History in Relation to Abolition and the Civil War***

Individual Quakers emancipated some enslaved people in the 1700s. Baltimore Yearly Meeting (then known as "West River Yearly Meeting" and holding Annual Sessions in southern Anne Arundel County) concluded in 1777 that any members holding slaves should be disowned. By 1790, nearly all Quaker slave-holders emancipated their slaves, although some Meetings made exceptions. For example, Johns Hopkins' father did not free his enslaved people until 1807. Many left Quakerism rather than free their enslaved people.

Life in slave states became more difficult for those who had freed their slaves. For this and other reasons, many Quakers from Maryland migrated north and west. West River Yearly Meeting, once centered on tobacco-rich Anne Arundel County, moved north to Baltimore and changed its name. With declining membership, by 1812 as journaled by traveling Friend Joseph Hoag, one abandoned Meeting House was converted to use as a tobacco barn, and the original Meeting House where the Yearly Meeting had gathered became

*a desolate spot, the Meeting House almost rotted down—the graveyard lying common and briars and bushes growing over the bones of the dead and many of the graves rooted down with swine - so that mournful were my feelings and heavy was my heart.*

### ***Annapolis and Anne Arundel County History in Relation to African Americans from the End of the Civil War to the Present***

In Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, over the years after the Civil War, separation and segregation of African American and white communities became entrenched. For example, there are five (5) documented cases of lynching of Black men in Anne Arundel County between 1877 and 1950. There are additional records of the legalized execution of several Black men charged with crimes they may well not have committed. At least one of these men has been posthumously pardoned.

- <https://eji.org/news/eji-dedicates-historical-marker-anne-arundel-county-maryland/>
- <https://www.capitalgazette.com/opinion/ac-ce-column-snowden-20180227-story.html>

Inferior public services were common in African American neighborhoods. In Galesville, sewers were installed on the white side of the street, but not on the African American side. African American schools' teachers and staff were paid less and used second-hand books and equipment. Eventually, the prosperous, predominantly African American Fourth Ward in the City of Annapolis was condemned for "urban renewal" with demolition of churches, hotels, a theatre, doctors' and lawyers' offices, a grocery store and more to make way for a parking garage, a new County jail, and low-income public housing.

- <https://oltannapolis.com/our-legacy-home-school/f/leading-ladies---sarah-v-jones-school-superintendent>
- <https://upstart-annapolis.com/ago-4th-ward-bound-brotherhood/>

## ***Modern History of Annapolis Friends Meeting in Relation to African American Members, Attenders, and the Broader Community***

No Quaker monthly meetings were gathered in Anne Arundel County for more than 100 years until the establishment of Annapolis Friends Meeting (AFM) in about 1963. While AFM makes the practice of welcoming people of color who attend, it continues to have a large majority of white members and attenders.

AFM Friends, over the years, have sought to recognize and repair the racial divides in our communities:

- AFM founder Caroline Martin joined protests in the early 1960s to integrate Annapolis restaurants being sprayed with hoses (and arrested.) Others later would join Rev. Martin Luther King's "March on Washington" and protests against local actions of the Ku Klux Klan.
- Other Friends played active roles in the founding of the Lighthouse shelter and job-training program to remedy and prevent local problems of homelessness and unemployment among both African American and white community members, as well as the Anne Arundel Conflict Resolution Center to provide mediation and other services in Anne Arundel County which encourage peaceful communication and conflict resolution.
- AFM Friends set the goal of establishing a "Peace and Justice Center (PJC)" to advocate for Quaker causes in the Maryland General Assembly.
- Property for a new Meeting House was acquired on Dubois Road in Annapolis. AFM Friends do not now know the specific history of how the land upon which the Meeting House is built was taken from indigenous people here; we do know that it was part of a tract occupied by European colonists who held enslaved people.
- A Deconstructing Racism working group was formed to assist AFM Friends in self-examination in the late 1990s. Throughout the early 2000s, Friends also increased their understanding of racism by viewing occasional videos shown after worship.
- A joint book club was formed in 2013 between AFM and St.Philips Episcopal (with a primarily African-American congregation) to read [The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in an Age of colorblindness](#), by Michele Alexander. In 2014, this group agreed to propose legislation to shrink Md. prisons and use savings for treatment programs, etc. That proposal, although initially unsuccessful, led to formation of Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR - [www.ma4jr.org](http://www.ma4jr.org)) in 2015 with assistance from AFM's PJC. MAJR has grown into an all-volunteer, bipartisan, diverse statewide advocacy group which has initiated Maryland's milestone "Justice Reinvestment Act" and many other pieces of legislation that have begun reductions in the state's incarcerated population and have focused on reducing systemic racism in the criminal justice system.
- In 2019, AFM formed a "Change Group" with the purpose of welcoming and supporting people of color and youth in our meeting and in our community.
- In 2020, AFM adopted its [Anti-Racist Declaration](#) "on an ongoing basis to hold ourselves accountable, individually and collectively, in our decisions and practices, our actions and inaction" as to defacto systems of racism.
- In 2021 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide protests related to our growing awareness of racist and violent police practices, AFM began a series of monthly Zoom workshops for discernment as to possible actions that Friends might pursue as reparations. This minute, in part, is a product of our discernment.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Annapolis Friends will continue our discernment by faithfully considering the following—and other— possible steps, individually & collectively, as way opens for support of restorative and retrospective justice among ourselves and with our African American, Indigenous, and other neighbors harmed by racial discrimination. We also will review and update these considerations as needed:



## ***AFM Next Steps***

Annapolis Friends may create and maintain a reparations webpage including resources for Friends, attenders, and website visitors. These resources will include this Restorative and Retrospective Justice Minute; a link to the Anne Arundel County NAACP's Green Book of Black-owned Businesses, service providers, and organizations; and other educational resources such as links to books, webpages, and videos. Personal queries also might be included.

Annapolis Friends should seek to further understand the needs and perspectives of persons who have been harmed, both within our fellowship and in the broader community. We commit to listening to and to productively engaging with persons of color within AFM and BYM, and we may seek to participate with listening (or "truth and reconciliation") sessions hosted by other local organizations.

Part of this seeking may include support for elevating, promoting, and, as appropriate, helping document non-Eurocentric histories of Anne Arundel County.

Annapolis Friends also will seek possibilities for new and continuing efforts for reform of systemic racism in our laws, customs, and other institutions.

## ***AFM Material Resources for Restorative Justice***

Annapolis Friends, recognizing that material resources may be needed for retrospective and restorative justice, will pursue worshipful discernment of the path forward for such actions:

- In the near term, we might create an AFM fund to support the needs of impacted people in the community -- perhaps with seed money from an existing fund ("Founders Fund") and/or designated contributions from individual Friends. We will seek to work with those who have been harmed in discerning where and how such material resources should be allocated.
- Our meeting house is one of our greatest material resources. We will consider the possibility of new ways to share of our Meeting House and our other material assets more actively for reparative and restorative purposes.

## ***Commitment to Continuous Re-evaluation***

Annapolis Friends recognize that further discernment may be needed to pursue this testimony, so we intend to revisit and re-evaluate this Minute at least annually, anticipating that both we and the situation will change as a result of our commitment to restorative and retrospective justice to address racism.

## Approved Path Forward policies

### Overview

The **AFM meetinghouse and grounds** are open for AFM use. They are not open to AFM-affiliated groups, BYM committees, or renters.

At “**open**” **indoor meetings**, masks are required, chairs are spaced six feet apart, and the room is well ventilated. Open (public) meetings include Meeting for Worship, Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, and other AFM events open to everyone in the AFM community.

At “**closed**” **indoor meetings**, masks are recommended. However, people attending may agree among themselves in advance that masks are optional. Closed (not public) meetings include committee meetings, support groups, and other meetings with restricted attendance.

At **outdoors events**, masks are optional and chairs may be spaced three feet apart.

AFM has not implemented a **vaccination** policy.

### Details

**11 am Meeting for Worship** meets by Zoom and in person each week. When an Owl Operator is available to provide technology support, the in-person Meeting joins the Zoom Meeting for a blended Meeting.

- At in-person meetings, chairs are six feet apart, masks are required, and the room is well ventilated (HVAC fan on, interior doors open, outside airflow). Refreshments are not served. People may choose to sit outdoors.

**8 am Meeting for Worship** meets in person either outdoors or indoors on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays.

- When meeting outdoors, chairs are three feet apart and masks are optional. When meeting **indoors**, chairs are six feet apart, masks are required, and the room is well ventilated (HVAC fan on, interior doors open, outside airflow).

**Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business** is a blended Zoom and in-person meeting.

- At the in-person meetings, chairs are six feet apart, masks are required, and the room is well ventilated (HVAC fan on, interior doors open, outside airflow).

**Committees and other internal AFM groups** may meet indoors or outdoors at the meetinghouse.

- In-person meetings must be on the AFM calendar. Only one group at a time may meet in the meetinghouse except during committee meeting time on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays, when more than one committee may meet in the meetinghouse.
- Masks are recommended when meeting indoors. However, “closed” groups may agree among themselves in advance that masks are optional. They also may agree in advance that members may bring and consume refreshments.

**Meetings for Learning and other AFM events** meet by Zoom or outdoors at the meetinghouse.

- At outdoor events, masks are optional and refreshments may be served. Any shared food should be served by a few designated people. Refreshments may not be consumed in the meetinghouse.

**Individuals** may visit the meetinghouse when an in-person meeting is not scheduled.

- Masks are optional when people are alone in the meetinghouse.

**Memorial meetings** may be held for AFM community members. Path Forward will work with Pastoral Care to ensure that the family’s needs are met and COVID precautions are observed.

AFM meetinghouse and grounds are not open to **AFM-affiliated groups, BYM committees, or renters**

# Update on Assistance to Afghan Refugees Report for January 2022 Meeting for Business

Jo Anne Schneider, 1 January 2022

Our efforts to assist Afghan airlift refugees is focusing on a combination of material aid and potentially providing resettlement support both here and for those still in Afghanistan. Today, we have reports on several initiatives and a request to the Meeting regarding putting together welcome kits for refugees for CWS. Our ad-hoc committee had a productive meeting on December 29<sup>th</sup> that included discussion of the initiatives outlined below and a presentation by the Community Engagement Coordinator for Lutheran Social Services, which led to several next steps outlined here.

1. **Peace and Social Concerns donation to Afghan Women's Fund and other news re Famiha's humanitarian parole efforts for AWF staff:**
  - a. Last month, Peace and Social Concerns approved a disbursement of \$1300 from 2021 Emergent Social Concerns fund to assist Afghan Women's Fund with evacuation of the 54 endangered volunteers/family members.
  - b. At our meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup>, Fahima told us that they are still awaiting visas for the families she has petitioned the State department to bring to the U.S. under humanitarian parole. She requested letters to U.S. officials to help speed up this effort. ***Please look for a request for those who are led to write letters in support of visas for these families in the near future.***
2. **Presentation by LSSNCA staff re sponsoring refugees and next steps.** As Friends may recall, volunteer forms were submitted in August to Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA) – the resettlement agency in our area, expressing interest in providing a variety of material supports, mentoring and ESL assistance, and possibly sponsoring a refugee family in partnership with other faith communities. Given the overwhelming response to LSSNCA and rapid influx of refugees, I heard back from the LSSNCA coordinator last month and had several conversations about ways we could help. Their biggest need right now is for congregations to commit to either 6 months or a year to support a refugee family as co-sponsors with the agency.
  - a. **At our meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup>, the coordinator gave a detailed outline of the resettlement process and what congregations would be asked to do to support a family** (see attached minutes from the meeting and sponsorship form for details) and answered questions. The meeting included representatives from Annapolis Unitarian Universalists, St. Philips Episcopal, Colington retirement community, in addition to AFM members and attenders. A representative from Channing Unitarian Universalist in Columbia also attended to gather information for a possible initiative in Howard county. If we decide to sponsor a family, we would do so as part of a coalition that would include either these groups or others.
    - i. The LIRS resettlement system (LIRS is the national organization focused on immigrants/refugees and LSSNCA is it's local affiliate) is very professional with the agency caseworkers and other staff taking the lead in resettlement and employment development systems available to refugees, as well as referrals to ESL training and public assistance for food, Medicaid, etc. All volunteers are trained and required to complete background checks. Congregation coalitions would be asked to provide:
      1. **Setting up housing:** Housing could be found either through the congregations or through LSSNCA networks, but it needs to be affordable for the family. If families arrive before housing can be set up, they are temporarily housed in hotels or AirBNBs. The congregation is asked to furnish the apartment, fill the pantry with 2 weeks worth of food, and if they want, provide an initial meal. In the 12 month sponsorship option, the congregation is asked to cover full rent for 3 months and partial rent for another 6 months.

2. **Adjustment support:** Co-sponsoring congregations are asked to pick 3 items from a long list of material, mentoring and other supports that they can provide for the family. These include such things as helping with transportation, employment, learning English, getting children enrolled in school, health issues, financial literacy, and a variety of social supports, helping them navigate the U.S., etc. Different congregation members could do different tasks or offer material supports as they are led, but only 1 person from each congregation would be the liaison to the resettlement agency.
  - b. **Next Steps:** Each of the congregations/groups that participated in the meeting was asked to review materials and discuss if they are interested in participating in resettlement for a family before we all convene again. *Please look for an ad-hoc committee meeting in January to discuss this.*
3. **Material Supports for Afghan Refugees through CWS:** Given that LSSNCA has received sufficient material supports for refugees, we are working with the CWS office in Lancaster, which is a much smaller agency in an area with fewer resources, to offer material assistance to Afghan refugees. We currently have a gift card initiative underway and have a proposal at this Meeting for Business to develop Welcome Kits:
  - a. **Minette update on Gift Cards**
  - b. **Kim Finch proposal on welcome kits.** Please see their [website on suggestions for welcome kits](#) for initial details.