MINISTRY AND COUNSEL DECIDED IN EARLY 2018 TO ESTABLISH AN OUTREACH TEAM, UNDER ITS CARE, TO ADDRESS MULTIPLE TASKS THAT IT DID NOT HAVE THE TIME OR PERSON-POWER TO ADDRESS. THE OUTREACH TEAM MET FOR THE FIRST TIME IN LATE MARCH 2018 AND MET MONTHLY DURING THE REST OF THE YEAR. INITIAL TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDED: JO BROWN, CATHLEEN HANSON, MICHAEL FELL, KATHLEEN WILSON, JANET ABRAMS, AND KD OLIVE (CLERK). LATER IN THE YEAR DAVE SYDLIK JOINED THE TEAM, AND JANET ABRAMS STEPPED IN AS ACTING CLERK.

OUR INITIAL PROCESS

AS A NEW GROUP, THE OUTREACH TEAM SPENT TIME CONSIDERING WHAT OUR PURPOSE IS, AND HOW WE HOPE TO CARRY OUT THAT PURPOSE. THE TEAM INITIALLY READ AND REVIEWED SOME WRITTEN MATERIALS FROM FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE ON OUTREACH, AND SPENT TIME BRAINSTORMING ABOUT THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF OUR WORK. WE IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING BROAD GROUPS OF PEOPLE AS TARGETS FOR OUTREACH: PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT YET ATTENDED A MEETING FOR WORSHIP BUT MAY ENCOUNTER US THROUGH THE INTERNET OR PASSING BY OUR DOOR, PEOPLE WHO ARE ATTENDING A MEETING FOR WORSHIP FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN ATTENDING MEETING FOR WORSHIP WHO ARE CURIOUS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT US.

WE AGREED THAT OUR FIRST TASK WAS TO TAKE ON THE POINT OF VIEW OF A TOTAL STRANGER WHO IS ENCOUNTERING OUR MEETING FOR THE FIRST TIME. WE BEGAN TO LOOK AT EVERYTHING ABOUT THE MEETING WITH THE QUESTION: “IS THIS WELCOMING TO A STRANGER?” WE LOOKED AT OUR PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, AT OUR SOCIAL MEDIA ENVIRONMENT, AT OUR PROCEDURAL ENVIRONMENT (BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL), AND AT THE WRITTEN MATERIALS THAT WE HAVE AVAILABLE TO HAND OUT TO NEWCOMERS AND SEEKERS.

WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED

THE TEAM’S FIRST MAJOR ACTIVITY WAS PLANNING AND COORDINATING ACTIVITIES FOR THE BALTIMORE GAY PRIDE PARADE IN JUNE. HOMEWOOD FRIENDS SUPPORTED A GROUP WHO MARCHED IN THE PARADE, CARRYING BANNER THAT WAS DESIGNED BY THE TEAM. THE MEETING PARTICIPATED IN THIS EVENT IN A SIGNIFICANT WAY, WITH ABOUT 30 PEOPLE INVOLVED IN MARCHING OR CHEERING FROM THE FRONT STEPS. WE JOINED THE FAITH COMMUNITIES OF BALTIMORE WITH PRIDE FOR THE MARCH. WE HUNG RAINBOW FLAGS FROM THE UPPER WINDOWS OF THE FRONT OF THE MEETINGHOUSE.

IN OCTOBER WE SPONSORED A SERIES OF EVENING GATHERINGS USING QUAKERSPEAK VIDEOS AS STARTING POINTS TO CONSIDER SOME BASIC TOPICS ABOUT QUAKER WORSHIP, QUAKER BELIEFS, AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL ACTION. WHILE THE ATTENDANCE WAS MODEST, THE PEOPLE WHO DID ATTEND ENJOYED SOME VERY RICH OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE.
We sponsored a potluck in October for LGBTQ Friends and invited people from other local meetings.

We organized Friendly 8s in the fall. There were 7 groups of Friends who met in each other’s homes for potluck suppers. The success of this encouraged us to organize a second round that started this year.

Team members have taken on the personal responsibility to reach out to any newcomer who introduces himself or herself at the rise of Meeting with a personal greeting. Our newest team member, Dave Sydlik, has an ongoing, deep personal commitment to greet young adults who are attending for the first time. He is often joined by Michael Fell and others on the committee. We try to walk the walk.

**SPIRITUAL STATE OF THE COMMITTEE**

Outreach team members attend Meeting for Worship on a regular basis. Outreach team members show up for the events that we plan, including the Pride parade and our Quakerspeak series. During this year two team members decided to apply for membership in the Meeting, and another team member transferred membership to Homewood.

Our members are involved in the life of the Meeting in other ways and serve on other committees, including Peace and Social Justice, Greeters, GOAT, and Library. Team members are also involved with the larger world of Friends and the Baltimore community, including Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting, Johns Hopkins University Chaplain’s Office, and Baltimore Ceasefire. This enriches our time together and encourages us to consider ways to coordinate our planned activities with other committees.

We lost some momentum when our Clerk stepped away for personal reasons, but the committee has been able to stay focused. We have worked to maintain good communication with our parent committee, Ministry and Counsel.

Our meetings begin and end with worship, and the group is congenial. We listen to each other’s concerns and ideas with respect and appreciate each other’s strengths. We laugh. We have more good ideas than we have time and energy to put into motion, and we continue to work to discern what we can accomplish with the personal resources that we have.

**OUR GOALS FOR 2019**

Our highest priority for 2019 is to work towards making the Homewood Friends website more welcoming to people who are encountering Friends for the first time. We believe that our website is the single most important outreach tool that we have. We recognize that the current website works best as an internal tool for information sharing. We want to make the front page interesting and appealing by adding photographs of Friends. We want to make sure that the website displays well on a small cellphone screen, which is most important in reaching younger adults.
We will continue to look at the Meeting through the eyes of a stranger and ask, “Is this welcoming?”

We deeply hope that the Meeting can find a way to rehang the rainbow flag and the transgender flag in a permanent, attractive way. We have raised the question about how we want the exterior of the Meetinghouse to look and making sure that all our signs display in a way that says to everyone who sees them “You are welcome here.”

We hope to gently persuade our Friend Rosetta Graham to participate in an interview about her history as a Homewood Friend and to record it on video for future Friends to watch.

We will continue initiatives that were started in 2018. We will keep the Friendly 8s going so long as Friends continue to be interested. We will join the Pride parade again with Faith Communities of Baltimore with Pride. We will offer another Quakerspeak series at some point in the year. We will continue to work on providing the Meeting with written materials to offer to newcomers.

We will continue to look for ways to reach out to individuals and groups in the Baltimore community who we hope will feel welcome here: people of color, LGBTQ individuals, students from all the local universities and colleges, families with children, young adults, and all members of the Johns Hopkins family of institutions. We will look for opportunities to plan overlapping and intersecting events with groups who share our space, the Hinenu Justice Steibel, and (hopefully) Baltimore Ceasefire.

We will continue to greet newcomers at the rise of Meeting. We encourage everyone in the Meeting community to join in this effort.

In the Light.

Janet Abrams
Acting Clerk