

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (ARE) COMMITTEE
FINAL REPORT FOR 2022-23 YEAR
As of June 4, 2023

Programs during the 2022-23 school year

Adult Religious Education (ARE) presented 24 programs.

- 2 spiritual journeys
 - Twain Gonzalez
 - Greg Hubbard
- 7 programs were inward-focused (NFM committee programs)
 - Children’s Religious Ed (2) – Christmas and end of year picnic
 - Care & Counsel – Christmas Eve program
 - Worship & Ministry (3) – Easter Sunday and 2 sessions about Experiment With Light meditations practice
 - Peace & Social Justice (1) - Discernment of NFM’s support for Right Sharing of World Resources
- 1 program on the climate crisis
 - Peace & Social Justice – Urgent Call to Friends on Behalf of Democracy
- 7 programs on other Quaker organizations
 - Friends House Moscow (Julie Harlow)
 - Friends School in Lebanon (David Grey, educator, PYM Middle East Collaborative)
 - Friends in Bolivia (Emma Condori) (\$\$)
 - George School (Sam Houser)
 - Newtown Friends School (Dana Harrison)
 - Right Sharing of World Resources (ED Maggie Ellis and Will Reid)
 - NFM hosted Bucks Quarterly Meeting in May (theme: Advocacy and Activism)
- 4 programs on social justice
 - How to Counter Disinformation (Richmond Shreve)
 - These Walls Between Us (PYM book selection) authors Wendy Sanford & Mary Norton
 - NOVA (Network of Victim Assistance) – ED Penny Ettinger
 - PA prison system (returned citizen Earl Rice) (\$\$)
- 1 program on Quaker values/history
 - Lucretia Mott - Kim Hanley, reenactor from American Historical Theatre (\$\$)
- 2 programs by young adults
 - Love Thy Neighbor (Tucker & Sameer Manchanda)
 - Gnostic gospels (John Ratliff) and Enslaved African American Death Rituals (Kamy Loustau) – Princeton U. students

Notes

1. The 2022-23 ARE budget was \$500 (increased to \$750 for 2023-24). Normally we do not offer a speaker stipend, however, we offer \$250 under special circumstances. During 2022-23, speakers/programs receiving a stipend have (\$\$) listed next to them (above).
2. This year there were no programs on arts & culture.
3. Traditionally no programs are scheduled on holiday weekends – Labor Day, Thanksgiving Weekend, Christmas Day, New Year’s Day, Mother’s Day, Memorial Day
4. Meetings for business are the first Sunday of each month (unless it falls on a holiday weekend, then it’s scheduled for the 2nd Sunday)
5. Bucks Quarter programs are held 4 times a year (the 3rd Sunday in November, February, May and August)
6. Two programs were recorded at the request of the speakers (Wendy Sanford & Mary Norton (book-These Walls Between Us), and Dr. David Grey, Friends School in Lebanon). No spiritual journeys were recorded.

Outreach

Special thanks to Norval Reece whose weekly press releases keep NMM in the news, show the face of current Quaker interests and actions to the wider community—and bring in new attenders who often become members! All Adult Religious Education programs were available both in person and on line.

Recommendations

1. Website description. There is currently no description of the work of the ARE Committee on the NFM website. A possible description would be:

The purpose of Adult Religious Education (ARE) is to enrich the spiritual life of the Meeting with topics relevant to Quaker values.

The work of the ARE Committee is to

- ***create a calendar of speakers/programs during the school year (Sept.-May)***
- ***find space on the calendar for NFM committee (upon request)***
- ***invite individuals to tell their spiritual journeys (2-3 each year)***
- ***identify speakers based on the interests of the Meeting***
- ***coordinate speaker logistics***
- ***confirm details of needed AV support***
- ***do publicity in local papers***

There are no ARE programs during the months of June, July, and August when Meeting for Worship gathers at 10:00am instead of 11:00am.

2. Calendar changes. Since last minute requests for space in the ARE calendar require “bumping” someone who has already been scheduled
 - a) we recommend that NMM committees anticipate their need for space on the calendar and report that to the ARE Clerk no later than Sept. 1 (for the Fall) and no later than Jan. 1 (for the Winter/Spring months)
 - b) we recommend that ARE hold one space open on the calendar in the Fall and one space during the Winter /Spring months) by scheduling a program/speaker who is willing to step aside if an urgent need arises by one of the NMM committees.
3. Speakers who released their scheduled ARE dates. Since last-minute requests and other exigencies required last-minute ARE scheduling changes, we recommend that those speakers have precedence in being scheduled in the 2023-24 ARE calendar. These 7 speakers are: **Tony Wolf** (Eastern State Penitentiary) – scheduled for Oct. 8; **Peter Martin** (spiritual journey)—scheduled for Oct. 22; **Mark Haber** and **Jennifer Hubbard** (2 spiritual journeys); **Sharon Hulihan & Wendy Kane** (200th anniversary of the NMM graveyard); **Joe Hohenstein** (How my Quaker faith shows up in the PA legislature); and **Benjamin Lloyd** (professional actor speaking about vocal ministry).
4. Flexibility needed. Two NMM members who live and work abroad might require switching dates with a previously scheduled speaker since they cannot be certain when they will be home in Newtown. They are **Sarah Wolf** (Update on Haiti) and **Shumin Li** (Quaker financial manager in Beijing). Sean O’Connell (Historic Arch Street Meeting in Philadelphia) has requested to speak with us this year (preferably this Fall).
5. Thematic focus or key topics. It would be beneficial to the Meeting for the ARE committee to ask the Meeting members for their recommendations for topics of interest for the 2023-24 school year, e.g., Quaker history, contemporary Quaker lived-experience, correcting our misperceptions of other religions (for example, the Sikhs are the 5th most popular religion in the world, are a persecuted minority religion in India, are not Muslim or Hindu, and have values and beliefs quite similar to Quakers)
6. Number of members on the ARE committee. Four members who are active are enough, and if each member takes responsibility for the speakers/programs they recommend, the work of the committee can be done with 2-3 meetings a year. In addition, a volunteer is needed to input ARE information on the ARE calendar pages.

Special thanks

Many thanks to Sharon Hulihan who input all the information about ARE speakers/program onto the NMM website ARE calendar pages. Many thanks also to those who were gracious and flexible about shifting dates on the ARE 2022-23 Calendar (some speakers did this twice!).

(Submitted by Marguerite Chandler, ARE Committee Clerk)

Committee members – Ari Betof, Sarah Buxton, Marguerite Chandler (Clerk), Wayne Heacock, Norval Reece (Press relations), Richmond Shreve (AV support), Jennifer Wolf, Twain Gonzalez, Carolyn Evans

Cc: Sharon Houlihan (Mail Chimp), Tim Mammel (web master), Angie Ratliff (Announcements), , Katherine Borish (Clerk), Janet Braker (Asst. Clerk), Wendy Kane (Quarterly Meeting Clerk)

APPENDIX

- A. ARE Calendar (Final – rev. 6-1-23)
- B. ARE Calendar template for Sept., 2023- May, 2024
- C. Possible speakers list (as of 6/1/23)
- D. Check list of logistics to coordinate with a speaker/program
- E. Template script for beginning and ending ARE program and introducing and thanking the speaker
- F. NMM Committee Clerking responsibilities
- G. Spiritual Self-Assessment of a NMM Committee
- H. NMM Budget 2023-24