

CONNECTIONS

in Friends United Meeting



May 2020

2020 Triennial Postponed

Friends in Africa and North America, leading officers of the United Society of Friends Women International and Quaker Men International, and the Executive Board of Friends United Meeting have jointly discerned the 2020 Triennial Sessions will be rescheduled.

The coronavirus pandemic that is now spreading through our nations is restricting travel and preventing international conferences.

Collapsing markets, rising unemployment, and threatening financial hardships are causing the

global community of Friends to reassess their current capacity to participate in the Triennial Sessions. We are mindful of the critical impact this virus is already having among our Yearly Meetings, and our local Meetings and Churches.

During this crisis, Friends United Meeting is directing attention and resources to keeping the global community of Friends connected and providing support for the most vulnerable people we serve. Given these changing priorities during these uncertain times we will be rescheduling the 2020 Triennial Sessions.



Rescheduling

We are committed to working together to host a joint Triennial in the future. When? As of today, we do not know when it will be safe to do so. However, we are tentatively hoping to reschedule the conference in Kenya next year during the months of June or July. We are requesting the local host committee to continue for another year. FUM's staff will provide oversight for communications, publicity, and registration. Rescheduling the Triennial will require us to confirm new dates, venue, programs, conference fees, and travel options. We will provide regular updates regarding the new schedule.

Registrations and Refunds

We are committed to honoring the Triennial cancellation policy by offering a full refund for registrants who paid conference and/or excursion fees. FUM's office will contact registrants independently to learn how they wish to direct

continued on page 2

continued from page 1, 2020 Triennial Postponed:

their refund. Because of this cancellation, FUM will incur deficits and Friends may consider directing all or part of their refund as a donation to FUM.

Triennial Theme

We are committed to carrying forward the inspired theme selected for the 2020 Triennial. We affirm the gospel message that Christ Jesus is inviting the community of Friends to Come. Abide. Go. To continue our spiritual readiness, we are inviting the global community of Friends to participate in the 30 Days of Prayer, beginning on Sunday, 12 July 2020 (the day the Triennial was scheduled to begin). The prayer guides prepared for the Triennial will be released by June. The unitive grace and power of prayer is needed during these critical days. We pray in hopeful anticipation of

what Christ will do among us as we Come. Abide. Go. Please direct your questions to 2020triennial@FUM.org.

Grace and Peace,

Ronald K. Bryan
Presiding Clerk, Friends United Meeting

Kelly Kellum
General Secretary, Friends United Meeting

Patricia Shrock
President, United Society of Friends Women International

Lloyd Stangeland
President, Quaker Men International

FUM Launches COVID-19 Solidarity Fund

In every context, Friends are especially attentive to the needs of the most vulnerable people in our communities. Among FUM's ministries around the world, immediate needs are becoming clearer as the COVID-19 coronavirus impacts lives and livelihoods.

Friends are gathering in solidarity within their local communities, and also as a global fellowship. In order to allow Friends to support this solidarity work, FUM has created a special new fund, the COVID-19 Solidarity Fund. This new short-term fund will allow us to stand together with Friends in serving the most vulnerable in their communities. Whatever is not needed for these purposes will be rolled over to the Global Impact Fund after the coronavirus crisis has passed.

In Belize, we are using these funds to provide a box of basic food stuffs every week to forty families who are part of the Friends community. We also used it to purchase personal protective equipment for staff at Lugulu Friends Mission Hospital, and to provide food for families on Mt. Elgon.

If you would like to contribute toward the emergent human needs that this crisis is revealing, you may do any of the following:

- Visit <https://donorbox.org/covid-19-solidarity-fund> to make a secure online donation with a credit card.
- Send a check in US dollars to FUM, 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond IN 47374 USA. Indicate "COVID-19 Solidarity Fund" in the memo.



Belize Friends School secretary Maggie Tench at the wholesale market in Belize City where staff for Belize Friends Ministries buy supplies for distribution throughout the city to members of Belize Friends Church, students at Belize Friends School, and other members of the extended Belize Friends community.

Saving Lives on Mt. Elgon

Mt. Elgon, a beautifully massive shield volcano that can be seen from throughout western Kenya, has been the site of a localized guerilla war for about fifteen years. Although the core grievance of the Sabaot Land Defense Force (SDLF) is related to government corruption in land use, it is the local Sabaot community who have suffered most acutely from the atrocities of the SDLF. From forced taxation to child soldiers to forced brides to rape as a weapon of war, the local community is deeply traumatized.

About six years ago, the militia leadership reached out to Friends Church Peace Team (FCPT) with a request to help them demilitarize and reconcile with their community. This remarkable request has resulted in deep healing and transformation for many people, including militia leaders who are now Alternatives to Violence (AVP) facilitators.

Yet the devastation of the war lingers in the extreme economic poverty and psychological trauma of the people. In this time of COVID-19, Getry Agizah, FCPT Coordinator, made contact with the community to discern their most acute needs. She has identified twenty-five households who are in immediate danger of starvation, and, through the COVID-19 Solidarity Fund, Friends United Meeting is partnering with her to distribute a one-month supply of basic food and soap to each household.

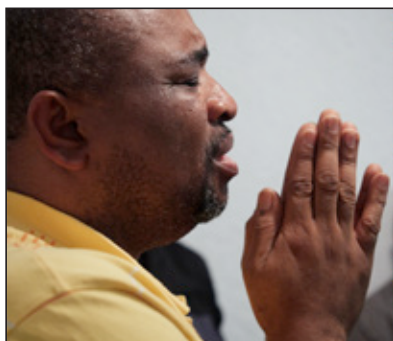
Getry shared the story of one of these twenty-five families with FUM's Global Ministries office. Rose was married with five children when the SDLF militia kidnapped her and gave her as a "wife" to one of their officers. She had three subsequent children with this man, before being rescued and returning to her home. Unfortunately, her husband rejected her and the children. After chasing her away, he sold his land and died in a drinking spree. Rose's children have never gone to school. She lives as a squatter (meaning she doesn't have any legal rights in the place where she stays) and works as an agricultural day laborer. With the closures imposed in order to slow the spread of COVID-19, Rose and her children have no source of food. When Getry visited them, the whole family was full of questions, fear, and anxiety. One of the daughters looked at her and asked, "Is it true we will die?"

FCPT trauma counselors will distribute the food assistance in a way that complies with government protocols for social distancing. They will be accompanied by a health officer from the local administration, who will discuss with the family what steps they are taking to stay safe from the virus. Please pray for these twenty-five families, and those who are assisting them, that they would remain healthy and would have enough to eat during this difficult time.



Families on Kenya's Mt. Elgon observe social distancing while waiting for food distribution from Friends Church Peace Team, funded by FUM's COVID-19 Solidarity Fund.

FUM Initiates New Prayer Responses



At all times, but especially during a global crisis, there is no more important work than the work of prayer. Friends throughout our beloved community

are finding new ways to gather together in spirit and in truth, and to hold one another in the Light.

International Prayer Gatherings

One way that FUM has been leading this work is through international prayer gatherings on Zoom. In these gatherings, led by General Secretary Kelly Kellum, Friends share concerns from many parts of the FUM community, including Belize, Jamaica, North America, Palestine, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

After the first Zoom prayer meeting, Kelly reflected that “it was such a blessing to be gathered with Friends from across the globe to learn how the

COVID-19 outbreak is impacting our communities and the people we serve. I sensed a profound connection with Friends everywhere as we were gathered together in prayer.”

Pray Without Ceasing

Ron Bryan, FUM’s Presiding Clerk, and Richard Sitati, Assistant Presiding Clerk—Africa, invite the FUM family to participate in a global initiative of unceasing prayer. On the [Unceasing Prayer Timetable](#), all of our member groups and associations have been assigned an hour each day to pray (see chart below).

If you would like to participate in this prayer project, contact your Yearly Meeting or Association leadership to sign up for a time slot. If you have specific prayer joys or concerns, email them to us at pray@fum.org. FUM will assemble and distribute a weekly prayer list—though we will not provide medical updates unless requested to do so by an ailing individual or their family.

Friends United Meeting Global Partners Praying Without Ceasing								
Yearly Meetings / Associations / Groups	East Africa	Palestine	Cuba	Eastern US / CA	Jamaica	Central US / CA	Belize	Pacific US / CA
Bware, Western Association	6:00 AM	6:00 AM	11:00 PM	11:00 PM	10:00 PM	10:00 PM	9:00 PM	8:00 PM
Central, Pacific NW Friends	7:00 AM	7:00 AM	12:00 AM	12:00 AM	11:00 PM	11:00 PM	10:00 PM	9:00 PM
Chavakali, Samburu	8:00 AM	8:00 AM	1:00 AM	1:00 AM	12:00 AM	12:00 AM	11:00 PM	10:00 PM
Chebuyusi	9:00 AM	9:00 AM	2:00 AM	2:00 AM	1:00 AM	1:00 AM	12:00 AM	11:00 PM
Chwele, Tongaren	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	3:00 AM	3:00 AM	2:00 AM	2:00 AM	1:00 AM	12:00 AM
EA-Kaimosi, Tuloi	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	4:00 AM	4:00 AM	3:00 AM	3:00 AM	2:00 AM	1:00 AM
EA-North, Turkana	12:00 PM	12:00 PM	5:00 AM	5:00 AM	4:00 AM	4:00 AM	3:00 AM	2:00 AM
Elgon East, Uganda	1:00 PM	1:00 PM	6:00 AM	6:00 AM	5:00 AM	5:00 AM	4:00 AM	3:00 AM
Elgon-Lugulu, Vihiga	2:00 PM	2:00 PM	7:00 AM	7:00 AM	6:00 AM	6:00 AM	5:00 AM	4:00 AM
Highland, Vokoli	3:00 PM	3:00 PM	8:00 AM	8:00 AM	7:00 AM	7:00 AM	6:00 AM	5:00 AM
Kakamega, Lugari	4:00 PM	4:00 PM	9:00 AM	9:00 AM	8:00 AM	8:00 AM	7:00 AM	6:00 AM
Malava	5:00 PM	5:00 PM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	9:00 AM	9:00 AM	8:00 AM	7:00 AM
Indiana, Tanzania	6:00 PM	6:00 PM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	9:00 AM	8:00 AM
Musingu	7:00 PM	7:00 PM	12:00 PM	12:00 PM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	10:00 AM	9:00 AM
Nairobi, Ramallah	8:00 PM	8:00 PM	1:00 PM	1:00 PM	12:00 PM	12:00 PM	11:00 AM	10:00 AM
Soy, Baltimore	9:00 PM	9:00 PM	2:00 PM	2:00 PM	1:00 PM	1:00 PM	12:00 PM	11:00 AM
New York, Ciudad Victoria	10:00 PM	10:00 PM	3:00 PM	3:00 PM	2:00 PM	2:00 PM	1:00 PM	12:00 PM
Jamaica, Friends Church-NC	11:00 PM	11:00 PM	4:00 PM	4:00 PM	3:00 PM	3:00 PM	2:00 PM	1:00 PM
Wilmington, New Association	12:00 AM	12:00 AM	5:00 PM	5:00 PM	4:00 PM	4:00 PM	3:00 PM	2:00 PM
Western	1:00 AM	1:00 AM	6:00 PM	6:00 PM	5:00 PM	5:00 PM	4:00 PM	3:00 PM
New England, Cuba	2:00 AM	2:00 AM	7:00 PM	7:00 PM	6:00 PM	6:00 PM	5:00 PM	4:00 PM
NC-Fellowship, Belize	3:00 AM	3:00 AM	8:00 PM	8:00 PM	7:00 PM	7:00 PM	6:00 PM	5:00 PM
Great Plains, Canadian	4:00 AM	4:00 AM	9:00 PM	9:00 PM	8:00 PM	8:00 PM	7:00 PM	6:00 PM
Iowa	5:00 AM	5:00 AM	10:00 PM	10:00 PM	9:00 PM	9:00 PM	8:00 PM	7:00 PM



“FCNL gave me my voice when I was finding my faith, finding my role in the Religious Society of Friends, and finding my role in activism. I hope that the money that I will one day contribute to FCNL from my 401(k) can help give someone else a voice.”

– Katie Breslin, Richmond, IN

Join Katie in making FCNL a beneficiary of your IRA or 401(k). For more info or to let us know you’ve made this decision, please contact Mary Comfort Ferrell at (202) 903-2539 or marycomfort@fctl.org.



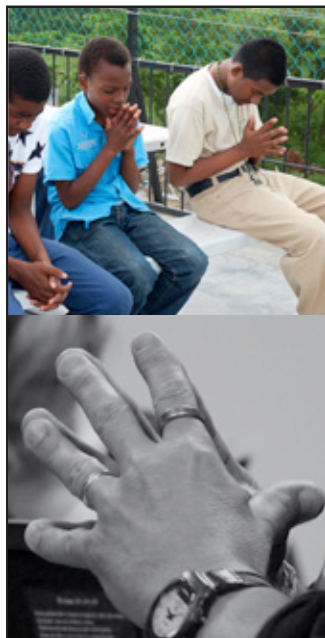
Everence Offers Assistance and Relief Options to Friends Congregations

For the remainder of 2020, Everence is doubling the amount of eligible Sharing Fund grant money available to congregations that have an Everence stewardship advocate. This change is designed to help Churches assist members or community individuals facing serious financial needs due to COVID-19 disease—including pastors who may be losing income due to reduced giving in the midst of the epidemic.

Now in its forty-first year, the Everence Sharing Fund helps thousands of families meet basic needs each year through matching grants. In 2019, Everence awarded some \$875,000 in Sharing Fund grants—which was in addition to \$1.2 million given by congregations, employer groups, and Everence chapters.

As in past years, Sharing Funds are accessible as long as the funds are available or until December 10, whichever comes first. Congregations with greater capacity to meet the coronavirus-related financial difficulties within their faith community are encouraged to support other Churches, by applying for a grant to share their extra funds with another congregation or waiting until later in the year to apply for their additional amount.

Individuals and congregations may also support the Everence Sharing Fund with a fully tax-deductible donation. For more information—and updated eligibility guidelines and applications—visit everence.com/sharing-fund or contact Colin Saxton, Everence Friends liaison and stewardship consultant, at (503) 550-1599 or colin.saxton@everence.com.



One of the most vital ways people of faith remain grounded and connected—to Christ and to each other—is by prayer.

As the world continues to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, Friends remain grounded in faith, connected to each other, and in continued solidarity with the most vulnerable members among us. To facilitate these connections, FUM has hosted International Prayer Gatherings on the Zoom teleconferencing platform to enable us to hear the voices of our global community and to pray for the members of our beloved fellowship. Our next such gathering is **Friday, June 12**.

Our previous International Prayer Gatherings have been attended by Friends from around the world, including Belize, Jamaica, Palestine, Africa, and North America. Many joys and concerns were shared, but Friends have found that amid the challenges, the experience of gathering together is an affirmation of the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love. Ron Bryan, Presiding Clerk of FUM, says, *"It is powerful praying as global community, to listen to the cares and concerns of people from around the world, and pray together with one voice."*