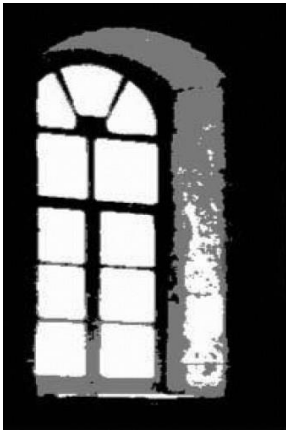


Friends of Ramallah Friends Meeting (Quakers)

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH RAMALLAH FRIENDS MEETING

May 2017



Steering Committee

Jean Zaru

Middle East Yearly Meeting
Clerk, Ramallah Friends Meeting

Arlene Kelly

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Clerk, Steering Committee

Leila Barclay

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Treasurer, Steering Committee

Sa'ed Atshan

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

Derek Brett

Switzerland Yearly Meeting

Jan Caspers

German Yearly Meeting

Patricia Cockrell

Britain Yearly Meeting

Deborah First

New York Yearly Meeting

Saleem Zaru

Middle East Yearly Meeting

Dear Friends,

When we last wrote at the end of 2016, the vitality of the worshipping community at Ramallah Friends Meeting was lifted up. As the year turned and with your spirited support, I am glad to report that all the ministries of the Meeting have remained steadfast including First Day and Mid-Week Meetings for Worship, in addition to welcoming a steady stream of sojourners, peace workers, scholars and students from across six continents! You are invited to take a moment to read the Meeting's annual epistle at www.rfmq.org.

In this letter, we share with you a major transition in the life of Ramallah Friends Meeting. After thirty years of faithful, committed unwavering service, Jean Zaru is stepping down as the Presiding Clerk. I know countless numbers, far and wide, join me in offering a prayer of thanksgiving for Jean—our beloved and faithful Friend—who tirelessly walks hand in hand with us as fellow travelers on the road of humanity toward truth and liberation.



International scholars from the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem visit the Meeting.

Paradoxically this is, at one and the same time, an event of major significance and an event of minor significance. Jean's contribution as clerk has been of unquestionable importance. As a Friend who has been involved with Jean and the Meeting for fifteen of those thirty years, I would venture to say that, were it not for Jean's leadership and sacrifice, there would not today be a meeting. Or if it were there, it would be very different and far less an oasis at the cross roads of a troubled land, one that offers spiritual refreshment for people from the four corners of our globe who come to drink of its waters.



Jean shares her experience of interfaith dialogue with a student of theology.

But it is also of minor significance because Jean will continue to make her home in Ramallah, be fully involved in the life of the Meeting and committed to her teaching ministry, receiving groups of theologians, academics, young people and many others who seek conversation about her prophetic, faith based teaching on nonviolence in the face of violence. In many ways, nothing is changing except that Jean will more fully be available to channel her gifts and energy, living into the ministries to which she continues to feel a call.

The Clerk's mantle did not define Jean, nor empower her; Jean, in living her witness as a child of God, has defined the mantle. Jean spoke to this in a talk given several years ago:

"My outward identity is at all times coupled with the inward knowledge that I am a child of God. This self-understanding has provided me with the necessary sustenance and steadfastness for all of my life's struggles."



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"What a fundamental realization it is –a major re-alignment of sorts– to finally honor that of God inside me, while simultaneously honoring the Light that shines in every other person in the world. I have been sustained by a deeply embedded sense of equality and empowered with that equality in spite of the oppression and structures of domination I face daily which scream at me otherwise."

With joy, I share with you that the rising Clerk, around whose nomination Friends united, is Saleem Zaru. A 3rd generation Quaker, Saleem is a Ramallah Friends School (RFS) graduate who grew up in the Meeting and then later married under its care. He has served the Ramallah community in several capacities, including as Clerk of the RFS Board of Trustees. Currently, Saleem is Executive Director of the United Palestinian Appeal (UPA). Based in the Washington, DC area, Saleem's work brings him to Ramallah and the wider region multiple times a year, which may even allow him to revive a direct connection with Brummana Monthly Meeting in Lebanon. Given Saleem's lifelong commitment to the meeting, his strong faith instilled by his parents, Jean and Fuad, and experience in community led development, we are confident that the Meeting and its ministries will continue to be grounded in the soil of the community and led by the Spirit. Saleem will transition fully into the Clerk's role by mid-2017.



Saleem Zaru and Jean Zaru with longtime friend, Landrum Bolling.

Your past support has been essential in laying the foundation for this exciting transition. Jean could not be released from the clerkship until structures were put in place that lifted a multitude of responsibilities. This has now happened, including an arrangement for the care and maintenance of the property, and employing an able part time assistant to manage finances and provide logistical support in preparation for visiting delegations.

The Friends of Ramallah Friends Meeting, Quakers, recently approved an ambitious 2017 budget. Our boldness is guided by our faith that you --who care about the witness being made every day by the Meeting-- will be generous not only with your material support, but also with your prayers and your efforts to share news of the Meeting's continued, vibrant witness.



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If our confidence in your first time or continuing contribution is well founded it will, in addition to sustaining current ministries, make possible the Meeting's developing vision for the future.

It is hoped that new ways of service will open. The Meeting is looking forward to a day in the near future in which the ministries of the Meeting include **a vital contribution to the youth of the community** –not only with a First Day (Sunday) School, but also with activities during the week that offer program to be developed as the youth themselves help identify needs and foci. Likewise, it is anticipated that attention will be given to the possibility of **renewing the Meeting's past service commitment to early childhood education** in neighboring refugee camps.

Will you join us in realizing this vision to expand outreach in the Ramallah community? And at the same time continue to be a spiritual home and beacon of hope.

At this juncture in the life of the Meeting, **will you join us in celebrating Jean's faithful service and welcoming Saleem**? As they emerge, we will keep you posted on plans to honor Jean's long service as Clerk.

"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."

Micah 6:8

Walking humbly together,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Arlene Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Arlene" and the last name "Kelly" clearly distinguishable.

Arlene Kelly, Clerk FRFMQ