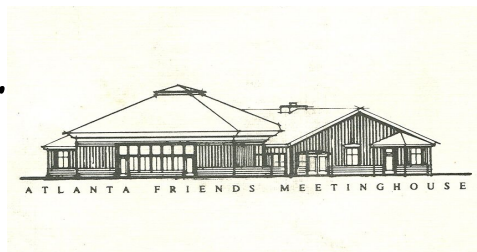


# Atlanta Friends Meeting Newsletter

Atlanta Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). All are welcome.



Meeting for Worship  
Each First Day (Sunday)  
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.  
701 W. Howard Ave.  
Decatur, GA 30030

## January 2013

**Query:** How do we foster a spirit of community among those in the Meeting? How does the Meeting keep in contact with all of our members and attenders? How does the Meeting care for those who live alone, the sick, the aging, and those with families affected by disruption? Do we assist Friends in need as their circumstances require?

### *Draft Letter to President Obama on Climate Change*

[The Friends Committee on National Legislation has been dialoguing with White House staff about the possibility of the President hosting a national summit on climate change. The White House needs to know how much support is coming from non-environmental sectors. Please give any suggestions on the following to me or Kathy Johnson before the January 20 business meeting. -- Sue May]

Dear Mr. President,

We applaud the actions your administration took during your first term in office to increase vehicle mileage standards and in other ways address climate disruption. We also thank you for recently stating that climate change is real, is impacted by human behavior and carbon emissions, and that we've got an obligation to future generations to do something about it. Your commitment to create "a conversation across the country" to educate Americans about this issue is especially important and timely.

We believe the loss of life, physical damage, economic harm, and personal distress caused by the summer's extreme weather events, as well as Hurricane Sandy, have increased the importance of holding a national conversation about climate disruption. The events also underscore the need to redouble our nation's efforts to prepare for and build resilience to the impacts of a changing climate in a just and equitable manner while also reducing our contribution to the problem by cutting greenhouse gas emissions. Households, businesses, communities, and all levels of government must be involved in these efforts. Your leadership is needed to accomplish these goals.

The American public needs to hear directly from you that climate disruption is happening now, that it poses grave danger to our personal health and safety, the economy, and overall wellbeing, and that left uncontrolled, the problem will grow much worse. We also need to learn about the steps your administration has already taken to address the problem and what it intends to do in the future. Most importantly, we need to know that viable solutions are available and that assisting Americans from all walks of life to implement those measures is a top priority of your administration.

We therefore ask you to host a national summit on climate disruption during the first 100 days of your new administration. The goal of the summit would be to rivet national attention on the urgent need and means of preparing for and building resilience to climate impacts in a just manner, while also reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. A bipartisan summit with a positive, uplifting, can-do focus that emphasizes the benefits of rapidly scaling up resilience building and emission reductions will help mobilize Americans to address this challenge. It will also help spur innovation leading to numerous types of new climate-resilient low-carbon goods and services, jobs, health and many other benefits.

The need for an aggressive response to climate disruption is great, and your capacity to marshal the energy, commitment, and greatest hopes of Americans for a positive future is vast. We therefore ask you to host a national summit on climate disruption early in your next administration.

Sincerely, Atlanta Friends Meeting

## **My Sense of the Meeting**

After 30 years of Quaker meeting I ask myself what makes this place so special? We are different from others in some extraordinary ways. We like to ask questions beginning with "what is your experience of God?" Let me say it's not easy for me to say the word god. For the sake of those having this same challenge I choose the word Life. Life sounds to me more inclusive and less offensive. So, what is your experience of Life?

I am not a birthright Friend. What I find here is a special kind of religious freedom. Historically I found this freedom nowhere else except in the privacy of my own thoughts. And it gets lonely up here in my head!

No matter who we are, I think at some level or another we all feel most comfortable in this gathering where no one has been appointed the official keeper of the orthodoxies, doctrines, sacraments, liturgies and rituals about Life. And it is fascinating to note that without a person or institution jealously guarding and vigorously enforcing these bodies of others' opinions, they have essentially disappeared. The absence of these rules makes meeting together more than just comfortable. Sitting in silence becomes truly and deeply liberating! Many of us come here battered by our church and theologically abused. We arrive at the meeting house door spiritually dazed and morally confused. We walk in and soon get it that it's AOK! There's an attitude here that says "come on in! We're no different than you. And what you have to bring may be just what's needed to help here."

No wonder matters of faith have become so private. I think religious persecution is no stranger to any of us. I know my father's family was Jewish and I probably don't need to say more about that. My mother's ancestors were French Huguenots, a Protestant group who were summarily locked up inside churches before everyone inside was burned to the ground. Persecution is an integral part of my family story, my own little holocaust.

This personal history is not so uncommon. It describes the essence of the human struggle and is likely our common heritage. Whether your ancestors were Catholic, Protestant or Jewish we have been mistreating one another for the millennia of time. Dear friends, there is a very dark side to Christianity. It is a long painful history. And what sayeth thou? What is your story?

One reason why meeting is so special to me is that here the fights over what is sacred and divine have ended. On principle we have moved above the fray while the worldwide religious wars continue. Here, we admire those who would die for what they believe in over killing for it.

Gathering together like we do may be new. But even for a 30 year member, it's new. We wonder and relish as possibilities open to us. We have so much to celebrate. Yet much work remains. Maybe it's this common history or maybe it's something even more deeply rooted but there may be no more private or secretive beliefs than those we have about Life. In the silence of Quaker worship, what is so very personal is most effectively honored. We may have been driven and continue to be terrorized to keep these beliefs a secret. But in the empty inner stillness, acceptance reigns. In silence, safety is secured and our unity is restored.

There are many personal things we can share about ourselves with one another. The recent Quaker Quest is an exciting example of these possibilities. They are possibilities that tie right in to reclaiming a forgotten community. Maybe this is a renewed beginning for the beloved community of Dr. King and John Lewis, a place of caring and grace. Free of the religious conflicts from the past, we tenderly and carefully may allow ourselves to wonder again about Life. For instance, who am I? What is Life? What do other friends here say about Life? With so many really big questions about this thing called Life, we each have as much going on inside of us as outside. And it's to these inner worlds we collectively pay our respects in meeting. Inside the stillness the outside comes better into focus.

What makes Quaker meeting so special? The most essential Quaker habit is one continually created and born in the silence. We practice a deep support and non-judging respect for every little bit of vulnerability stirring inside each of us. We hang a "Do Not Disturb" sign on entrances to these inner sanctums because we experience within them what's been missing from out there.

In such a cosmology of respect is a caring and concern that I may in all innocence disturb the rich intimacy of your most insightful moments. So I sit still and tune in to my body and that of the body of meeting. There is no greater love to express than to honor the space for this exploration and to be available for its sharing. And perhaps no greater affection to show than to share our mutual curiosity about it. And what sayeth thou?

-- contributed by Fred Stevens

## **CELEBRATE QUAKER QUEST**

We invite everyone to a special celebration of the success of our Quaker Quest sessions at 1 pm on January 13, following committee meetings. This will be a chance to celebrate Quaker Quest and to find out more ways to learn more about Quakers or connect with each other in Atlanta Friends Meeting. We will be making a special invitation to all of the visitors to Quaker Quest. Bring a potluck dish to share.

### **New Additions to Our Library**

*The Comforting Whirlwind: God, Job and the Scale of Creation*

Acclaimed environmentalist Bill McKibben turns to the biblical book of Job. Just as Job struggled with the common notion that God dispenses punishment only to the wicked, 21st-century Westerners are beginning to struggle with the central idea that more is better, that growth is necessary. The author combines modern science and timeless biblical wisdom to make "the case that growth and economic progress are not only undesirable but deadly."

*It's the Economy, Friends: Understanding the Growth Dilemma.* Ed. Ed Dreby.

The economies of virtually all nations require growth to function. Yet more growth makes the wealthiest even wealthier, while unemployment, hunger, and violence are widespread, and human economies, in aggregate, are already larger than Earth's ecosystems can continue to support. *It's the Economy, Friends* is aimed at understanding the dilemma that the unremitting drive for growth creates within the limited ecosystems of Earth.

*Beyond the Growth Dilemma: Toward an Ecologically Integrated Economy.* Ed. Dreby and Lumb.

A companion to *It's the Economy, Friends, The Growth Dilemma* builds a framework for the changes that are needed to lead us to an ecologically integrated economy. This kind of economy leads to prosperous and thriving lives for humans and other creatures within the limits of planet Earth. Our society's basic goal must change from "more" to "enough." Changes in the way we earn our livelihoods, goods are produced, money is created, and the commons are governed are all considered.

### **Upcoming Events at the Friends School of Atlanta**

*Alum Night: Wednesday, January 9, 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm.* One of our favorite events of the year is welcoming our alums back to hear all about their post-FSA lives. The entire FSA community is invited to join us for pizza and a chance to visit with these impressive young men and women. If you plan to attend, please email Nancy Bent, Director of Advancement, at [nancy.bent@friendsschoolatlanta.org](mailto:nancy.bent@friendsschoolatlanta.org), so we know how much pizza to order.

*Beloved Community Dialogue: Saturday, January 26, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm*

FSA will welcome Ambassador Andrew Young, Senator Jason Carter and others to participate in an intergenerational dialogue on civil and human rights today. General admission is \$10 per ticket. Premium tickets are \$100 each and include invitation to a reception with the esteemed panelists. The invitation-only reception begins at 5:00 pm, and the panel discussion will take place from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm. Be watching for info on how you can buy tickets in advance.

## **Friends School Events Continued**

*Grandparents and Special Friends Day: Friday, February 1, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm*

Please be sure your child's grandparents or special friends are planning to come spend the day at FSA for a wonderful opportunity to learn about the school, participate in activities with the students and enjoy the camaraderie of other grandparents and special friends.

*Benefit Auction: Saturday, March 23, 6:30 pm*

Mark your calendar and look for more information about our annual FSPATA Benefit Auction, which is always a wonderful evening of delicious food and drink and fabulous items to bid on.

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### **Atlanta Friends Meeting Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business December 16, 2012 Recorded Pending Approval**

Attendance: Folami Adams, Mike Aland, Micheal Allison, Don Bender, Steve Collins, Julia Ewen, Clive Gordon, Judith Greenberg, Roland Heath, Kathy Johnson, Chris Kohler, Paul Mangelsdorf, Caroline Morris, Karen terHorst Morris, Ronald Nuse, Erica Schoon, Peter Sederberg, Rebecca Sullivan, Joan Thompson, Myrna Trapp, Perry Treadwell, Pat Williams, David Foster (Clerk), Caroline Noyes (Recording Clerk) (26 Friends).

**Query:** David Foster presented the query: "Are you growing in the joy of experiencing the oneness of all humankind? Do you seek to take your part in the ministry of reconciliation between individuals, groups, and nations? Do you encourage and support the Meeting in these ministries?"

**Naming Committee:** On behalf of the Naming Committee, Ron Nuse brought forth for final approval: Blake Williamson and Carol Gray as new members of Nominating Committee, and Beth Ruddiman as the clerk of Nominating. The Naming Committee continues to seek a liaison from the Nominating Committee to the Religious Education Committee. The Nominating Committee acknowledged Steve Collins's service as clerk for the past three years.

**Minute 12-12-01:** Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Blake Williamson and Carol Gray as members of the Nominating Committee and Beth Ruddiman as clerk of the Committee (all for 2013-2015).

**Nominating Committee:** on behalf of the Nominating Committee, Steve Collins presented for final approval Caroline Noyes as assistant clerk, Maggie Hasbrouk as a member of Ministry and Worship, Micheal Allison as clerk of Social Concerns, Paul Mangelsdorf to continue as clerk of the Finance Committee, and Nina Gooch to continue as database manager, directory editor, and membership recorder.

**Minute 12-12-02:** Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Caroline Noyes as assistant clerk (2013-2014), Maggie Hasbrouk as a member of Ministry and Worship (2013-2015), Micheal Allison as clerk of Social Concerns (2013-2015), Paul Mangelsdorf as clerk of the Finance Committee (2013-2015), and Nina Gooch as database manager, directory editor, and membership recorder (2013).

**Finance Committee:** on behalf of the Finance Committee, Paul Mangelsdorf presented the 2013 Atlanta Friends Meeting budget. The Committee is projecting a slight deficit for year 2012, and

cautions that rental income will cease to be a growth item as the meetinghouse increasingly reaches rental capacity. The Gifts and Affiliations Fund will see a slight increase in the budget from 2012 to 2013 reflecting the addition of funds to Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS). In addition to the financial contribution to QVS, Atlanta Friends Meeting supports QVS through the service work of Erica Schoon, our Friend in Residence. Recent expenditures from the Permanent Improvement Fund included: the heating/air conditioning system, insulation, new ceiling tiles, lighting, and the grounds improvement project. Our contribution to the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) is directed towards their education fund.

**Minute 12-12-03:** Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the 2013 budget.

**FCNL Representative's report:** Sue May reported on the 2012 FCNL annual meeting, held November 15-18, 2012. Every day began with an hour and a half worship sharing which enabled attenders to center before they began their lobbying efforts. Joining Sue in Washington this year were Judy Lumb and QVS volunteers Lisa Scarpelli and Becca Bass. Friends lobbied for Pentagon budget cuts. Among the legislative priorities for the 2013-2014 session of Congress are the elimination of drone attacks and reforming drug policies that lead to mass incarceration and institutionalized racism. The \$15 million capital campaign is in the quiet phase.

**Adair Street Grounds Workgroup report:** Peter Sederberg reported that the workgroup is continuing to develop the planning, and the engineering survey has concluded that we have done all the necessary work regarding water runoff. Given the opportunities to move the garden house, a new plan has been developed. The plans are in the front office, and are available for review. It is hoped that a presentation can be made regarding the new plans (including, weather permitting, a tour of the site) on the first Sunday in January. Friends with young children are encouraged to attend this presentation following potluck. Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the following minute:

**Minute 12-12-04:** If there is broad affirmation of the new direction, it will be taken as affirmation to the committee to proceed and not come back to the body for further discernment. Either further discernment or a report will be brought to Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business in January.

**Clerk's Items:** The Clerk encourages Friends to take to heart the invitation to make this state of the meeting report a reflection of this meeting, and to submit committee responses and individual responses to the queries.

The Clerk proposes that a document be produced in January listing the positions and terms for people whose service is ending and an appreciation for on-going volunteers. The document would be minuted at the January Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

**Approval of Minutes of Eleventh Month Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business:** Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the Minutes of Eleventh Month Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business without any corrections.

Meeting closed with silent worship.

Respectfully submitted,  
Caroline Noyes, Recording Clerk  
David Foster, Clerk

## **Considerations of the Light and Silence in Friends' Meetings**

Friends spend so much time talking about the light that they appear to overlook that the light illuminates the darkness in each of us and causes us to cast a shadow. Carl Jung called the dark side in each of us our shadow. We are told to get in touch with the shadow. The expression "He's afraid of his own shadow" may be more profound than it first appears.

Admitting a dark side is scary. Quakers don't have confessionals so we can't share the depths of our foibles and follies with others. We struggle in isolation with the dark daemons. The LIGHT metaphor might be seen as the Spirit enlightening us in Meeting for Worship by directing our attention to the shadow. In earlier times I have impulsively given in to these daemons. Centered worship has helped me to mitigate these impulses (except when driving). Every moment and every day is equally holy, as early Friends were wont to say.

But there is another twist to this story of light and dark. Many years ago at the Annual Gathering, the planning committee for the next year met to discern a theme. Suggestions involved variations on a light metaphor until a young person of color rose to point out that the opposite of light was darkness, which made him uncomfortable. Even after a prolonged discussion, no unity could be reached. The theme eventually chosen later was "Gathering the Light." But the young man's concern has stayed with me. Are there racial implications subliminally expressed in white people and people of color with respect to the light metaphor of the presence of the Spirit? As "Children of the Light," do we consider ourselves above the "darkness"?

There is a symbol in Buddhism that gives graphic notice of the light and dark within and about us: the yin and yang; the light and dark within the circle; the dark within the light; and the light within the dark. There are some people who appear to have no shadow -- Sister Teresa, for example. And those who overcame their dark side such as St. Augustine. Then there are many unmentionables who have given in to their dark side and perpetrate individual and collective harm on others. Be that as it may, as Friends we hold in the Light those for whom we have concern. We ask that the Spirit among us shine on them regardless of the shadow within them. It is our act of compassion and hope.

One of the most profound lyrics from Simon and Garfunkel begins: "Hello darkness, my old friend." The dreaming narrator is startled by a flash of neon light which illuminates people "talking without speaking; people hearing without listening." The neon sign reads, "The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls / And tenement halls, / Whispered in the sounds of silence."

In Meeting for Worship, what are the sounds of silence we listen for? While the earth screams in silent agony over its desecration and the fate of life on the planet, we search in silence for succor. We ask the Light for guidance in collective silence. But is Meeting for Worship the only time during the week that we can silently reflect in this too-fast-world? One can find many variations on this theme. One from Elisabeth Kubler-Ross strikes me as appropriate: "There is no need to go to India or anywhere else to find peace. You will find that deep place of silence right in your room, your garden or even your bathtub." Or at Meeting for Worship.

-- contributed by Perry Treadwell

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### ***Adult Education Continues***

Adult Education begins at 9 am every First Day in the Meetinghouse Library.

On January 6, David Payne will be speaking on his journey to the Meeting.

Watch for other speakers and readings in the announcement sheet and upcoming newsletters.

## Calendar for First Month (January) 2013

### Area Meetings for Worship

- Every First Day (Sunday), 10:00 a.m. – Meetinghouse, with a smaller group in the Library.  
Every First Day, 12:30 p.m. – Carrollton Friends Worship Group.  
St. Andrew's UMC Youth Center, 1106 Maple St.; Margaret Bray, 770-830-8705.  
Every 2d and 4th First Day, 10:00 a.m. – Canton Friends Worship Group.  
360 E. Marietta St.; 779-720-4669 or wrldpeas@mindspring.com.  
Every 2d First Day, 10:30 a.m. -- Macon Friends Worship Group.  
Contact Diana Day, 478-227-8892; maconquakers.org.  
Every 4<sup>th</sup> Morning (Wednesday) Worship, 8:30 a.m. – Library.  
Contact Jonah McDonald, 404-377-2474; afmquakers@hotmail.com.  
Every 4<sup>th</sup> Evening (Wednesday), 7:00 p.m. – Meeting Room.  
Contact Christina Repoley, 404-840-3005; christinarepoley@gmail.com.  
First 5<sup>th</sup> Morning (Thursday) – AFSC office, 60 Walton St. NW, Atlanta.  
5<sup>th</sup> Day (Thursday) (except 1st of the month), 12:10 p.m. – East Lake Commons, Decatur.  
Contact Bert Skellie, 404-378-5883, bertskellie@gmail.com.  
6<sup>th</sup> Day (Friday) (2<sup>nd</sup> week of August through May), 8:45 a.m. – Friends School of Atlanta.  
Community Meeting Room, 862 Columbia Dr., Decatur, 404-373-8746.

### Weekly Events at the Meetinghouse

- Every First Day (Sunday)  
9:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education  
9:15 a.m. Singing, Classroom A/B  
10:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship  
Every Second-Fifth Day (Monday-Thursday)  
8:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m. Smart Toddlers, Nursery playground  
Every Fourth Day (Wednesday)  
8:30 - 9:00 a.m. Morning Silent Worship, Library  
Every Third Day (Tuesday)  
7:30 p.m. Silent Meditation, Meeting Room  
7:30 p.m. Bible Study, Library

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Clerk of the Meeting: David Foster, 404-941-7337

Recording Clerk: Caroline Noyes

Office Coordinator: Jonah McDonald, 404-377-2474

Treasurer: Peter Sederberg, 404-968-9309      Ministry & Worship: Bill Holland, 404-692-2358

Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280      Religious Ed.: Alison Mawle, 404-944-9142

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**Newsletter Editor: David Payne, atlquakerltr@gmail.com**

If you would like to have a permanent nametag made, leave a request in one of the baskets on the front table. Indicate whether you prefer one that hangs around the neck or that pins. When Carol Gray has made one for you, it will be placed in the black file box on the greeting table.

If you would like to be included in the AFM database and receive the Newsletter by mail and/or appear in future AFM Directories, please send your name and contact information to Nina Gooch at ninagooch@gmail.com or 404-371-9873. Please indicate if you want to be in the directory, receive the newsletter by mail, or both.

Contributions to the Atlanta Friends Meeting may be placed in the slot marked "Contributions" in the greeting area of the Meetinghouse or mailed to the Treasurer at the above address. Thank you!

*This newsletter is a publication of the Atlanta Friends Meeting. Views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Meeting.*

To receive the Newsletter via e-mail, send a blank e-mail to afmnewsletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com from the address where you want to receive the newsletter. You will receive a note back from Yahoo asking you to confirm your subscription; hit reply and you will be added to the list at no charge. To receive general announcements and to participate in discussion, follow the same instructions, but address the note to afmdiscussion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To receive announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting, send the same note to afmannouncements-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

**DEADLINE FOR 2<sup>ND</sup> MONTH NEWSLETTER:  
JANUARY 21**

Readers are encouraged to submit letters, articles, notices and anything else of interest to Friends. Items should be sent directly to atlquakerltr@gmail.com **in plain text in the body of the email. Texts may be edited for length and format. Pictures should be in .jpg format.**