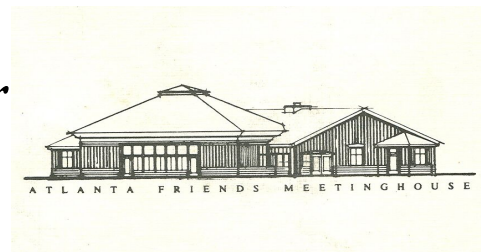


# Atlanta Friends Meeting Newsletter

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

## April 2013

**Query:** Do we live in harmony with nature? Do we live in keeping with the spirit of the unity, sacredness and integrity of all creation? Do we seek to minimize our consumption of the Earth's resources? Do we walk gently over the earth, seeing that of God in all of Nature?

## Atlanta Friends Meeting State of the Meeting Report 2012

### Spirituality/Faith/Worship

The quality and nature of our worship and our vocal ministry continue to be evidence of Atlanta Friends Meeting's spiritual state. The Meeting's spiritual growth is nurtured by our religious education programs and through our community involvement, as well as by the presence of weighty friends who anchor our worship. The Meeting is a place of solace and worship and our striving to become a more welcoming multicultural community remains an important spiritual objective. As one Friend noted, "In a world where believers are sometimes roundly condemned...it is a relief to be in the presence of people who quietly accept God without feeling they must be all-knowing experts on all aspects of God in order to accept that God exists."

### Religious Education

First Day School was enriched by visits from Green Friends and members of the Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting (CURAFM). Green Friends worked with the students to further develop their appreciation for the earth and its inhabitants by providing lessons about the natural world. These lessons spoke to the children's innate sense of wonder, and allowed the children to see, touch, and learn about things from places they may not have visited. Members of CURAFM and Social Concerns spoke with the young Friends about issues related to equality.

Once a month, Friends continued to share their spiritual journey with the Meeting during Adult First Day school. Their journeys are recorded and serve as a record of our collective and individual spiritual paths. Members of CURAFM coordinated with Adult First Day School to increase awareness of African-American Friends/friends of Quakers by selecting readings from *Black Fire: African American Quakers and Spirituality and Human Rights*. Members of Ministry and Worship, the Adult First Day School, and CURAFM worked together to organize a forum on the writings of Howard Thurman with a noted Thurman scholar as a guest speaker.

### Social Concerns

Members from AFM joined with others from the Atlanta community in a prison concerns group that meets quarterly. In addition, Meeting members worked on voter registration projects which were of particular concern during this election year.

Green Friends continue their work with respect to informing Friends about issues related to and possible solutions for current climate change challenges. For example, Judy Lumb reported on the progress of sustainability efforts in Africa and other nations, while Green Friends active support of the Citizen's Climate Lobby is seen as a way to join with other area groups to effectively work toward legislative changes related to climate change.

Longstanding members of Green Friends report that the challenges to sustainability and climate change efforts over the years can result in frustration, sometimes depression, especially for those who

have worked over many years to address the impact of over development on the global climate. Green Friends, as a group of supportive, like-minded people who continue to try to address global warming and its effects, has lifted spirits and renewed faith.

### **Building Community**

*Welcoming New Young Friends:* We were inspired by the tradition of Friends in our community from Burundi when they asked for a special meeting to welcome newborns and infants. Care and Counsel and Ministry and Worship collaborated to hold a special meeting for welcoming all AFM children for this year, with the intention in future years of welcoming new babies/children. We hope that the certificates signed for the children by those present at this welcoming will be meaningful to families and children for years to come.

*A Greater Sense of Meeting:* Community grew around individuals facing various medical and personal challenges. This sense of community was exemplified by our supporting the long-term hospitalization of a meeting preschooler and her family through a coordinated effort of other children and adults and the committees of Care and Counsel and Social Concerns.

*Quaker Quest:* Based on extensive groundwork done in 2011, AFM approved in February 2012 the holding of a series of eight Quaker Quest public sessions during autumn 2012. In all, at least 25 Quakers planned, participated or offered presentations during the public sessions. Many hands and minds contributed to the development of the outreach and awareness campaign, with a special concern for reaching as diverse an audience as possible. Quaker Quest brought in 41 relative newcomers to the afternoon sessions, at least four of whom now attend meeting regularly. The impact of Quaker Quest has been much larger than recruiting new members. The presentations were transformative. Each set of speakers prompted individuals in attendance to think and feel more deeply about faith as both an individual and as a corporate experience. There seems to be general agreement that continuing the momentum from Quaker Quest would contribute to the further spiritual growth of the Meeting.

*Community Nurture:* Wedding celebrations, long and short-term health concerns, and memorials have also brought us together. We find that concerns about our abilities to address these concerns have been met in each instance with the meeting community coming together. The members of the Care and Counsel Committee have worked hard over this year in coordinating these connections. However, concern continues to be felt that members and a continual recruitment effort are important to the ability of Care and Counsel to address the many needs of the Meeting. Friends also joyfully came together to furnish the Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS) house in anticipation of the first volunteers. Community is also continually built through the smaller gatherings of Friends through informal gatherings, clearness committees, committee meetings, potlucks, and welcoming dinners with their opportunities for one-on-one conversations.

### **Landmarks**

*Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS):* 2012 brought to Atlanta Friends Meeting the inaugural group of QVS volunteers. This group of seven volunteers added depth to the meeting as they engaged with and got to know people in the Meeting. Our new Friend in Residence Erica Schoon came in 2012 and has as her primary ministry the promotion of the spiritual and “Quakerly” development of these (and future) QVS volunteers.

*Infrastructure:* The Meeting’s recognition that the building and grounds were in need of renovation led to the development of an ambitious plan to improve the building site, which was initiated in conjunction with a long-term maintenance plan and forecast. These plans will lead to better usage and a re-design of the outdoor spaces. The master plan carries its own lessons of waiting with expectation for the future. Lessons of cooperation with the City of Decatur as well as our local neighborhood were seen as opportunities for growth.

*Births:* The Meeting was enriched by one birth this year: Nahayo Eddy Dieudonne (1/6).

*Marriages:* The Meeting was enriched by three marriages taken under its care this year, together with three joyous Meetings for Worship with attention to Marriage held under the care of AFM.

Sally McEwen and Aaron Ruscetta (3/11)

Lissa Place and Glen Satell (5/12)

Christina Repoley and Dean Leeper (10/6)

*Transitions:* We were also deeply touched by the deaths of four people – two very active members and three others connected in a variety of ways to the AFM community. The Meeting hosted or participated in memorial meetings for each of them, celebrating their lives and marking their passing.

Deaths and Memorial Services: Sally McEwen (March 15th); John Morris (March 24th);

Nancy Smith (January 27th); Don Bayliss (August 5th); Janet Ferguson (October 1st)

Membership transfers out:

Mark Wutka (3rd Month)

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

*Strengthening Worship:* We continue to be challenged on how to best support and nurture deep, centered worship notwithstanding the many possible disruptions to worship (e.g., greeting room noise, late arrivals, the presence of disruptive visitors).

*Inclusive Worship:* Members of both Ministry and Worship and Care and Counsel continue to work to find ways to incorporate Young Friends in the life of the meeting, and to help them feel part of the Meeting's decision-making. Our K-12 religious education program continues to struggle with a need for volunteers and finding ways to involve Friends who are not parents with our youth continues to be both a short- and long-term goal. Such involvement offers the opportunity for Friends to better understand youth program structures and to better identify the skills and gifts that young Friends have to offer.

*Work of the Meeting:* Friends have expressed the feeling that they are stretched very thin, and as a result, there are insufficient members to fill many vacant committee positions. Additionally there are insufficient numbers of volunteers to help with weekly tasks, religious education, and hospitality. While we are interested in sustaining and expanding our community's benefits from Quaker Quest, we are left with questions about what form that should take and in what time frame. The Meeting may need to thoughtfully consider the long term sustainability of the many obligations that have been undertaken. There is a sense that because there is so much going on simultaneously that our busyness reduces our spiritual center and reduces our genuine connections, particularly with newcomers.

### **Conclusion**

This year 2012 was marked by broader cooperation within AFM on both internal and external goals related to becoming a more welcoming spiritual home for all and there is a deep desire to faithfully discern a spirit-led path toward making this an ever increasing reality.

Approved by Atlanta Friends Meeting on March 17, 2013.

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**Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns** will be having one of our infrequent potlucks on **April 14** at the meetinghouse **after meeting for worship**. Everyone is welcome, whatever your identity. This will be a chance for us not only to reconnect and get to know new people, but also talk about what we might like to do in the future. For information, contact Nina Gooch at [ninagooch@gmail.com](mailto:ninagooch@gmail.com) or 404-451-5974.

## **Friendly Eights starting up again in April**

Friendly Eights are groups of about eight people who meet around once a month on a common topic of interest or an activity. Some previous Friendly Eights have organized around ethnic dining, photography, book groups, charades, refugee support, and hiking to name just a few.

Care and Counsel is asking members or attenders with an interest in convening a group around a topic of their choice to contact Muireann Brennan, mbrennan@cdc.gov, or Georgia Lord georgia\_lord@mindspring.com. Convening just means organizing the first meeting; it does not necessarily mean you will have to organize subsequent meetings.

### **April 7: Next Steps for AFM Discernment on Work Promoting Racial Equality**

What is the Spirit calling you to do at this time? How can we create the conditions for a more welcoming spiritual home for those of all races? How can we join with others to work for a society where everyone is accepted and treated with justice and dignity, regardless of race? Join us on Sunday, April 7 after potluck at noon in the library to continue our conversations.

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### **Atlanta Friends Meeting Meeting for Worship with Attention for Business March 17, 2013 Recorded Pending Approval**

**Attendance:** Mike Aland, Mark Bryans, Steve Collins, Linnis Cook, Julia Ewen, Nina Gooch, Judith Greenberg, Roland Heath, Elizabeth Lamb, Georgia Lord, Lynn Leuszler, Rick Martinson, Caroline Morris, Karen terHorst Morris, Coryn Murphy, Wesley Morris, Maya Morris, Caroline Noyes, Ronald Nuse, Beth Ruddiman, Erica Schoon, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Myrna Trapp, Perry Treadwell, Sarah Walton, David Foster, Clerk, David Bundrick, Acting Recording Clerk. (28 Friends present)

**Clerk's Readings and Reflections:** The Clerk reflected on how the meeting, individually and collectively, occasionally loses sight of the Quaker practices for seeking unity in a spirit-led way forward and reflected on the wisdom of traditional eldering as an means for Friends to assist Friends in keeping with right order and conflict resolution.

Several expressed opinions on ways to approach others in a positive and loving manner when conflicts and differences arise.

**Query:** Steve Collins presented the query: "What does 'eldering' mean in our Meeting? Does the Meeting understand and value the gifts of elders? How are the holders of these gifts discerned, nurtured, and held accountable? Are we each open to eldering and recognizing its importance in our religious community?"

**Nominating Committee:** On the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, Beth Ruddiman brought forward for approval two people nominated for positions in February. One nomination from February was withdrawn.

**Minute 3-13-01:** On the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the appointment of the following members/attenders for positions within the Meeting:

Elizabeth Lamb	Recording Clerk (2013-2014)
Heather Jeziorowski	Religious Education Liaison on the Nominating Committee

There was consideration of how to support the Nominating Committee in their work to find those people with the gifts and leading to fill a number of open positions, including AFM representative to SAYMA. This needs to be an ongoing conversation among all in the Meeting, including within our committees.

The Nominating Committee also brought forward for the first time Paul Baker to serve on Ministry and Worship. As is our practice, this name will lay over for one month before Nominating Committee brings it back to Meeting for Business to seek approval.

**Clerk's Item:** The State of the Meeting Report. Caroline Noyes read the revised draft of the 2012 State of the Meeting Report. Several edits were suggested and accepted.

**Minute 3-13-02:** The 2012 State of the Meeting Report, as edited, was approved.

**GLBTQ Concerns Gathering report:** Nina Gooch read an Epistle from Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns, Midwinter Gathering 2013.

**Ferguson Cabin Committee report:** On behalf of the Ferguson Cabin Committee, Mark Bryans reported that there are sufficient funds on hand to complete the cabin, and an opening will be held the first weekend in May. Approximately 110 people, including 40 new visitors, visited the cabin in 2012.

Minutes of February 17, 2013:

**Minute 3-13-03:** The minutes of the February 17, 2013 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business are approved as submitted.

Meeting closed with silent worship.

Respectfully submitted,  
David Bundrick, Acting Recording Clerk  
David Foster, Clerk

& & & &

### ***The Last Runaway by Tracy Chevalier***

Why review a novel when it is not now present in the Atlanta Friends Library? Because there are few novels about Friends, particularly by non Quakers. See how the author of six previous novels including the popular *Girl with a Pearl Earring* does with *1850 Friends around Oberlin, Ohio*.

Imagine an unmarried English, female Friend transported to the Ohio frontier. You get to see the pioneer lifestyle of small villages and self sufficient farms. As a bonus you can learn more than you might want to about the variations of quilting. Embedded in the narrative is a description of the Underground Railroad although those involved do not wish to call it that. There is a mean slave catcher and several "conductors" as well as those Quakers who fear becoming involved because they will lose their property when condemned by the Fugitive Slave Law.

Having lived close to the same era, I recognized the family farm, the small towns with the muddy streets and the community where everyone knew everyone's business. There are also good descriptions of Quaker Meeting, a spiritual experience, and speaking from the silence.

I think Chevalier did well to capture the era and the Religious Society of Friends. There were a few contrived situations used to add extra information about the era, but such side paths do not detract from the novel's purpose to describe the effects of slavery on a micro scale.

-- Review submitted by Perry Treadwell

## Fire

What makes a fire burn  
is space between the logs,  
a breathing space.  
Too much of a good thing,  
too many logs  
packed in too tight  
can douse the flames  
almost as surely  
as a pail of water would.

So building fires  
requires attention  
to the spaces in between,  
as much as to the wood.

When we are able to build  
open spaces  
in the same way  
we have learned  
to pile on the logs,  
then we can come to see how  
it is fuel, and absence of the fuel  
together, that makes fire possible.

We only need to lay a log  
lightly from time to time.  
A fire  
grows  
simply because the space is there,  
with openings  
in which the flame  
that know just how it wants to burn  
can find its way.

-- Judy Brown

used with permission from *The Sea Accepts All Rivers and Other Poems*  
[www.judysorumbrown.com](http://www.judysorumbrown.com)

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**Friendly River Trip:** Spring is a perfect time to spend a leisurely day paddling on a beautiful river. No matter what your skill level is, please join other friendly folks on the gentle Chestatee River, just outside of Dahlonega. We'll meet to carpool at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 27th, and rent canoes or kayaks there (about \$28/solo kayak and \$43/tandem canoe). Contact Chris Lahowitch for more info and/or if interested (678/613-2533 or [chrislahowitch@aol.com](mailto:chrislahowitch@aol.com)). For more info about the river, check out [www.canoegeorgia.com](http://www.canoegeorgia.com). Will need to have a head count by Wednesday the 24th. Beginners welcomed!

## Calendar for Fourth Month (April) 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 Second and Fourth First Day, 10:00 a.m. – Canton Friends Worship Group.  
360 E. Marietta St.; 779-720-4669 or wrldpeas@mindspring.com.  
Every Second First Day, 10:30 a.m. -- Macon Friends Worship Group.  
Contact Diana Day, 478-227-8892; maconquakers.org.  
First Fifth Morning (Thursday) – AFSC office, 60 Walton St. NW, Atlanta.  
Every Fifth Day (Thursday) (except 1st of the month), 12:10 p.m. – East Lake Commons,  
Decatur. Contact Bert Skellie, 404-378-5883, bertskellie@gmail.com.  
Sixth 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, Library  
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 Third Day (Tuesday)  
7:00 p.m. Silent Meditation, Library  
Every Fourth Day (Wednesday)  
7:00 p.m. Mid-Week Worship, Library  
Every Fifth Day (Thursday)  
7:30 p.m. Bible Study, Library

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Clerk of the Meeting: David Foster, afmclerk1@gmail.com  
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  
Social Concerns: Michael Allison, 770-832-3539  
Care & Counsel: Don Bender, afm.care.counsel@gmail.com  
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**ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING**  
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**Clerk: David Foster, afmclerk1@gmail.com**  
**Treasurer: Peter Sederberg, 404-968-9309; afmtreasurer@yahoo.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.*

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**DEADLINE FOR 5<sup>TH</sup> MONTH NEWSLETTER:  
APRIL 22**

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.**