

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER



January 2014

Inclusivity and Thinking about the Healing Light

A message from Fred Stevens

My own hunger for spiritual knowledge and development is constantly being fed by the life of the meeting. This report is something I do for myself. I warmly recommend and invite each of you to write your own report and to respond to mine. How is it with your spirit in Atlanta Friends Meeting?

There are a number of Friends I have to thank for their spiritual guidance. Some have serious concerns about personal health issues which most of us are free of. To them I owe a special gratitude.

A personal query- I try to see that of God (Life) in everyone I meet, but do I see that of God (Life) in me? What is there in me that is not of God? Isn't what I decide between what is-of-God-in-me and what is-not-of-God-in-me a choice I make? Since I'm the one who's making all these choices between God and not-God, what does that make me?

The answer to the God-in-me not God-in-me choices seems illogical. I surrender control to a most unlikely source- something totally invisible yet absolutely essential - something not easily empirically available. In this practice there is that of God in everything.

There is one exception to this practice. What attempts to make me sick, to harm me under my skin and cause suffering inside my body, I have to call not-of-God. I call the names of every medical symptom or diagnosis either a burden or a health challenge, and nothing more. Everything else is that of God in me. Every sensation of pain or pleasure and every moment of empathy is this of God in me. But the conditions of poor health are a destructive force. They're not that of God in me.

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

QUERY

Do you try to set aside times of quiet for openness to the Holy Spirit? Seek to know an inward stillness, even amid the activities of daily life? Do you encourage in yourself and in others a habit of dependence on God's guidance for each day? Hold yourself and others in the Light, knowing that all are cherished by God?

I've struggled a lot with the issue of calling these burdens evil. I've queried myself asking what else could anything that strives to sicken me be but evil? I can't really think of anything else to call it, but evil.

Out of a need for self-preservation I brook this evil no place in my living. This evil is a hungry beast that I will not feed. Consequently, I often find myself very uncomfortable around conversations about how someone has such and such illness or medical condition. I get no kick from showing off my knowledge of Big Pharma or the latest "bug" that's "going around".

To deal with this discomfort, finding ways of overcoming evil has become an avocation of mine. I've learned a little known fact -- something even many birth-right friends are unaware of. George Fox was a healer. When talking to his followers he spoke of a power that we're each capable of experiencing.

Healing is such a power. In the course of his ministry many people experienced healing from illness and incapacitation. He showed them a way to spiritual healing of the physical self. Such healing were catalogued in a volume of his writings but the book strangely disappeared. Only in the last century were scraps of the original document patched together to bear witness to this dimension of Fox's work.

For one reason or another, apparently the idea of spiritual healing was too much for the early Fox devotees and they chose to forget about it. Centuries later, we've unknowingly continued to keep this arrangement in place. We've kept closed a door that was shut on us by the original friends a long time ago. Dear friends, might we reopen it this year?

This of-God in each person is the Supreme Physician. Queries necessarily arise to this revelation. For instance, how within you do you open yourself to the possibilities of spiritual healing? In what ways do you trust and believe in the Healing Light? Do you live and think so as to further the spiritual healing of medical challenges? Do you respond to people's health challenges in ways that's allow them to understand the choices they have for their healing?

One great discovery for me this year has been how the proof of these healing are legion. They are medically validated and well-documented from all over the world. There are very many ways to be healed ranging from medical science to integrated medicines to the purely spiritual. I've personally experienced healing at all these levels. All forms of healing call for examination. I call down the blessing of what is both within and beyond medical treatment. It is an issue begging for conversation that there is as much that of God to be found in all medicine as in Quaker Meeting. There is as much healing to be found in the Society of Friends as in modern medicine.

I think of the testimonies and minutes on inclusivity and diversity. They speak to doing justice for that of God in others. I've wondered if the concerns for peace and justice the minutes address are really about healing the differences between people? With this social justice concern in mind, perhaps there's a way to do justice for that of God within- healing the differences that show up in a body's physical well-being. I wonder if there's room within how we embrace inclusivity to explore how we think about healing?

All the Quiet Work

From Mary Ann Downey

This morning, I recall a young man in a Quaker meeting retreat I led. I asked the group to each draw a symbol of one gift they offer the meeting community now. He drew a stage with a curtain drawn and two shoes sticking out beneath the curtain and said, "I work behind the scenes." And one night last week, as I left our meeting house, I met a friend who came after work to replace burned out light bulbs in the meeting room. Now I'm wondering about all the quiet work behind the scenes, all the careful tending, attentive answers to the needs practical, physical, spiritual. How many ways does this invisible work of building our beloved community happen daily?

Gifts seen and unseen come to mind. We see the balance sheet at business meeting. We don't see checks written, deposits made, books balanced. We see the asters, the colors of each season along the sidewalk into meeting. We don't see tilling the bed, planting the seed, and weeding the garden. We hear a request to be held in the healing light, but don't see the hospital visits, the cards sent, or the pot of nourishing soup delivered.

We are held in this tapestry of unique, beautiful threads of grace, a prayer shawl of gifts around us. Every day offers opportunities to give to each other and when we're in need, to receive help. In a recent retreat, I was asked, "What does the place of gratitude in you call you to do, to be in your meeting now?"

Today, I give thanks for the abundance of gifts this meeting community offers me, and for the presence of each of you in my life.

Announcements

Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) Basic Training Workshop

The Prison Reform Group of Atlanta Friends Meeting brings the Alternatives to Violence Project, Basic Training workshop to Atlanta Friends, January 24 – 26, presented by Friends from Nashville Friends Meeting. For anyone who works with youth, prisoners, or people who have experienced violence in their lives, the workshop provides the opportunity to practice creative conflict resolution and communication skills invaluable to creating positive change in self, community and the world. All sessions are required and simple lunch is provided. Cost is suggested at \$25 and registration limited to 20. Contact ckiev@bellsouth.net, or fill out the form at <http://tinyurl.com/afm-avp-2014>

- Friday, January 24, 2014 6 pm - 9:30 pm
- Saturday, January 25, 2014 9am - 6 pm
- Sunday, January 26, 2014 9am - 5 pm

Friday and Saturday will be at the Atlanta Friends Meeting. Sunday will be at the Community Room of Columbia Presbyterian Church, 711 Columbia Dr., Decatur, GA 30030.

For more information about the history and uses of AVP, visit <http://www.avpusa.org>.

Please forward information to whomever you think would be interested. Local contact is Karen Morris, [404-378-0595](tel:404-378-0595).

John Calvi's Visit, January 31-February 2

Our Friend John Calvi will lead a weekend retreat at the meeting house January 31-February 2. Friday from 7-9 pm, he will speak about the work of The Quaker Initiative to End Torture – QUIT!, an organization he created with other Friends. Saturday morning, 10-4, we will focus on deep relaxation for better spiritual seeking and release from the noise of the world to receive spiritual guidance. We'll have an author interview with him about his book, *The Dance of Hope and Fear* in the meeting library for our religious education class Sunday morning before meeting and a discussion with him after meeting and potluck. Everyone is welcome to any event. Books will be available for sale and signing. Ministry and Worship is sponsoring his visit and more information is available from Mary Ann Downey.

Fund for Quaker Students at The Friends School of Atlanta

Many of you know that I am Elementary Head at The Friends School of Atlanta (FSA). Every year I hear of interest from parents at Friends Meeting for their children to attend our school. Some apply, but many do not, citing financial reasons as an obstacle. I can certainly understand the financial impediment as we are all working hard in this economy to make ends meet, and education in an independent school may not be in a family's budget. Did you know, though, that FSA has a special Quaker Education Fund to provide Quaker students additional financial support that is awarded through the school's regular financial aid process? We seek donations at any time, and we also have one fundraiser, the Pancake Brunch that you may have enjoyed in the past, to ensure financial aid for interested Quaker students. I remember so many years ago as we were thinking about starting a Friends school, Atlanta Friends were instrumental in giving us a vision. Spirit-led advice supporting the importance of forming an inclusive diverse community in our new school, spanning the spectrum of socio-economic circumstances, religions, races, ethnicities and family structures, was lifted up as a model for a Friends School. The faculty, staff and Board of Trustees of FSA today continue to hold up that vision. It so enriches FSA to have Quaker students, parents and teachers be a part of the school, as well all grow into goodness together as a diverse community. I want to encourage those of you who would like to consider The Friends School of Atlanta for your children to explore the possibilities. I hope that many of you will attend our Open Houses and become acquainted with the kind of education we provide. I also hope all interested friends will feel led to contribute to the Quaker Education Fund to help make it possible for more children from our Meeting to attend FSA. Checks may be mailed to the school, 862 Columbia Drive, Decatur, GA 30030, with the memo line "Quaker Education Fund." In gratitude, Karen Morris

Attend an Open House

Visit campus, meet faculty, staff and parents and tour the building.

- Saturday, January 11, 10 am -12 pm
- Saturday, February 1, 10 am -12 pm

friendsschoolatlanta.org

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business (recorded pending approval)

Attendance: Anthony Alexander, Mary Bosserman, Katie Braun, Steve Collins, Linnis Cook, Cade Curtis, Mary Ann Downey, Betsy Eggers, Alice Erickson, Julia Ewen, Jenny Foster, Jou-Mague Fouamen, Clive Gordon, Judith Greenberg, Roland Heath, Bill Holland, Kathy Johnson, Chris Kohler, Justin Leverett, Rick Martinson, Paul Mangelsdorf, Alison Mawle, A. J. Mendoza, Ronald Nuse, Nan O'Connor, Beth Ruddiman, Erin Schroder, Peter Sederberg, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Rebecca

Sullivan, Jim Tolmach, Myrna Trapp, Perry Treadwell, Sarah Walton, Austin Wattles, Lara Wik, Ashley Wilcox, Pat Williams, Merrill , David Foster (Clerk), Elizabeth Lamb (Recording Clerk) (42 Friends).

Clerk's Readings and Reflections: The clerk shared his reflections on being called to serve as clerk of the Meeting and then on his service as clerk. He shared how his spiritual life has grown and his sense of being part of the Meeting has deepened through this service.

Query: Ron Nuse presented the query: "Do we seek to transform the world with our loving spirit? What are we doing as individuals and as a Meeting to promote equal opportunities in social and economic life for those who experience discrimination for any reason whatsoever? Are we ready to abandon old prejudices and think anew?"

Nominating Committee: On behalf of the Nominating Committee (members: Carolyn Coburn Allen, Herb Edwards, Carol Gray, Heather Jeziorowski, Beth Ruddiman, Blake Williamson) Beth Ruddiman brought forward the revised description for the Young Friends Program Coordinator, noting that changes had been made in item 11 under "Responsibilities" and that the section entitled "Qualifications" had been added. The description follows the minutes.

- **Minute 12-15-13-01:** On the recommendation of the Nominating Committee Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the new job description for the Young Friends Program Coordinator. On behalf of the Nominating Committee Beth Ruddiman brought forward the following names for final approval for the positions indicated.
- **Minute 12-15-13-02:** On the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the following:
 - Atlanta Friends Meeting Clerk: Nan O'Connor
 - Archivist: Karen Skellie
 - Assistant Treasurer: Judith Greenberg
 - Care and Counsel clerk: Clive Gordon
 - Quakers for Racial Equality clerk: Susan Firestone
 - Ferguson Cabin Committee: Mike Aland, John Carpentier, Sallie Mykel Carpentier, Emmitt Fuller, Melanie Fuller, Kathy Johnson, Caroline Morris, Fred Stevens, Joan Thompson
 - Ministry and Worship Committee: Bill Holland (member and clerk), Steve Collins, Sally Ferguson, Jenny Foster, Myrna Trapp
 - Newsletter editor: Kate Shropshire Swett
 - Webmaster: Aaron Ruscetta

Ad hoc Committee on Child Safety: On behalf of the Religious Education Committee and the Ad hoc Committee on Child Safety Betsy Eggers brought forward the revised Guidelines for Child Safety for Atlanta Friends Meeting.

- **Minute 12-15-13-03:** On the recommendation of the Religious Education Committee and the Ad hoc Committee on Child Safety Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the Guidelines for Child Safety [?] The Guidelines are included following the minutes. Religious Education is considering presenting a forum addressing issues of child safety in the future. Please contact someone in Religious Education with any concerns or questions you have.

Finance Committee: On behalf of the Finance Committee Paul Mangelsdorf presented the proposed budget for 2014 for final approval.

- **Minute 12-15-13-04:** On the recommendation of the Finance Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the proposed budget for 2014. The proposed budget was printed in the

December newsletter. The 2013 projected figures have been updated, but the proposed 2014 budget numbers remain the same. Treasurer Peter Sederberg pointed out that the trend in contributions is down year to year. Recently this has been offset by upward trending rental income, but rental income is likely to be reaching a plateau. Peter suggested that members and attenders consider increasing their contributions by 10 percent over their current levels of giving for 2014.

Administration Committee: On behalf of the Administration Committee Rick Martinson reported that Jonah McDonald has been hired as the bookkeeper for Atlanta Friends Meeting. This will be in addition to his job as Office Coordinator. With the combination of positions his employment will remain less than full time. The Meeting was reminded that the position is to be evaluated at the end of 2014 and anyone with input to offer is asked to speak with a member of the Administration Committee.

Playground/landscaping: On behalf of the Playground/Landscaping Committee Peter Sederberg reported that:

- 1) All necessary permits are in our possession.
- 2) We are next on the contractor's schedule.
- 3) He cannot work in the rain, so work will begin, weather permitting, after the holidays. He plans to work straight through until completion before beginning another project.
- 4) We have authorized all necessary preparation for phase 1 & 2: the vacant lot will be cleared of trash trees and shrubs, the old fencing removed, the grounds graded and appropriate drainage added, new fencing built, new walkways poured.
- 5) We are working on the final agreement concerning equipment for Smart Toddlers with the hope that it will be ready for installation once the foundation work is completed.
- 6) We do not yet have sufficient information for a firm price estimate at this point, but we think it will be in the \$30,000 to \$40,000 range, including Smart Toddlers playground equipment.
- 7) We have approximately \$17000 remaining of the original allocation of \$30,000. Once the costs become clear we may need to seek approval for an additional \$15,000 to \$30,000 from the Permanent Improvement Fund. The above does not include future phases: equipment or other amenities for older children and teens, proposed garden house / overlook, possible amphitheater. These have been discussed as possible future phases but have not yet been approved by the Meeting.

Clerk's items: The clerk read a letter from West Hills Friends in Portland, Oregon introducing A. J. Mendosa and asking our meeting to welcome him during his time serving with Quaker Voluntary Service. The SAYMA treasurer has forwarded a copy of their 2014 budget. Please see the clerk if you wish details. All reports from committees and representatives are due to the Clerk by the end of 12th month for inclusion in the State of the Meeting report. If anyone feels led to help the Clerk compile the report, please contact him.

Minutes of November 2013:

- **Minute 12-15-13-05:** The Minutes of the November 2013 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business were approved as submitted.

Meeting closed with Silent Worship.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Lamb, Recording Clerk; David Foster, Clerk

Calendar for First Month (January) 2014

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 wrlldpeas@mindspring.com .
Every Second First Day	10:30 a.m. -- Macon Friends Worship Group. Contact Diana Day, 478-227-8892; maconquakers.org .
First Fifth Day (Thursday)	12:10 p.m. -- AFSC office, 60 Walton St. NW, Atlanta.
Every Fifth Day (Thursday)	12:10 p.m. – East Lake Commons, Decatur. For directions, contact Bert Skellie at bertskellie@gmail.com or 404-680-4799.
Sixth Day (Friday)	(Mid-August through May), 9:00 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

Atlanta Friends Meeting Contacts

Clerk of the Meeting: David Foster, afmclerk1@gmail.com
Office Coordinator: Jonah McDonald, atlantaquakers@gmail.com
Treasurer: Peter Sederberg, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com
Ministry & Worship: Bill Holland, 404-692-2358
Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280
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ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING
701 W. Howard Ave.
Decatur, GA 30030-2902

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

Office: MWF 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; 404-377-2474

Web: atlanta.quaker.org atlantaquakers@gmail.com

Clerk: David Foster, afmclerk1@gmail.com

Treasurer: Peter Sederberg, afmtreasurer1@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.

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DEADLINE FOR 2nd MONTH NEWSLETTER:

JANUARY 20

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.