

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER



June 2014

Membership Request Letter

Submitted to Ministry and Worship by Julie Hliboki

Dear Friends,

On this beautiful, sunny day in Atlanta, with the light dancing across the snow, I am writing to you to request consideration for membership in the Atlanta Friends Meeting. I hope the following will provide you a sense for my desire and intention.

Two years ago, I made my way from Michigan to Atlanta with my beloved, David Addiss, in response to his new position in global health. One of the first people I met here was Lissa Place, a onetime teacher of David's daughter, Laura, who attended Friend's School more than a decade ago. Getting to know Lissa during my chiropractic adjustments, as a friend and Friend, was pure delight. Until Lissa, I had heard of Quakers, but had not met someone who, at least outwardly, professed this calling. Being physically worked on in the AFM library provided an additional joy. The space itself was filled with positive energy, and the bookshelves drew my attention to many of the topics I have pursued during my life. I felt at home.

When David and I decided to marry, we knew we wanted a commitment ceremony that valued our multi-dimensional spiritual paths. We were both raised in the Christian tradition (David, a pk of an American Baptist minister, and me, Catholic church, schools, and formal education). After leaving the Catholic church, I entered into what the Sufi's refer to as "the book of nature," studying and participating in Native American practices, and absorbing my spiritual sustenance from immersion in the natural world. In 1980, as part of my undergraduate work in Eastern Religion studies, I began a practice of Buddhist Zen meditation. I became particularly

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, as the way opens, share Friends' principles with non-Friends? Do you witness to your Quaker faith by letting your life speak? Do you make non-Friends welcome in your meetings for worship? Do you find ways to encourage their continued attendance?

– Baltimore Yearly Meeting

fascinated by compassion-centered practices such as Tonglen and Loving-kindness, and the concept of the Bodhisattva. What would it mean to postpone one's enlightenment until all beings became enlightened, especially when each being comes to enlightenment through their own path? This paradox still intrigues me.

In early 2000, my faith journey took another turn. I attended my first Sufi silent retreat. The four days were lead by Aziza Scott, head of the Esoteric School for the Sufi Order International (SOI), founded by Murshed Hazrat Inyat Khan in the 1800s. During the retreat, I discovered the Beloved as light, and found my entire sense of self slowly being re-wired. Through the chants, prayers, waziffas, and silence, I deepened into the extraordinary experience of becoming one with the light of God, and seeing that light radiate everywhere and through everyone. Six years later, after studying Sufism and giving careful consideration to this path of light, I became initiated into the SOI as a mureed (student) of Sufism. Sufi meditation continues to be my main, daily contemplative practice.

With the desire for a multi-faith wedding, Lissa suggested the AFM meeting room as a venue. It was perfect, both visually and energetically. In December 2012, we were married in the space, and in January 2013, I (sometimes we) began attending meeting for worship. Again, I felt at home. The combination of silence, speaking from the soul, holding others and ourselves in the light, and the warm and embracing friendliness was wonderful. I wanted to learn about Friends, Quakerism, and the light, and plied my new friend David Foster for information – both during regular conversations over tea, and through borrowing and reading lots of Pendle Hill pamphlets. He also graciously shared books with me and pointed me to other Quaker sources for information. A few months later I began attending First Day School, and in August I joined the Monday evening Spiritual Nurture Group.

Over these past 18 months, I have made many Friends. By getting to know Quakers both present and past, I feel that I have found my tribe in thought, word, and deed. I realize I could continue this fulfilling path as an Attender, and that I am unclear as to all that is involved in being a member. The desire to become a member is partially grounded in joining the ancestry, deepening into the life of the meeting, and acknowledging that the first thing I did when traveling to Brighton, UK was to find the Friends meeting house.

I look forward to exploring with you the discernment process around my request.

My best to you,

Julie Hliboki

Epistle from Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns

17 of Second month, 2014

To Friends Everywhere,

We have gathered again in our annual midwinter gathering, this time at Oregon's Menucha Conference Center above the beautiful Columbia River Gorge.

Our theme expanded on our commitment to become a radically inclusive beloved community. We heard from plenary speaker Mariana Ruybalid, a person of color who lives with cerebral palsy. Other Friends too shared about the challenge of being differently abled and we began dialogue about how we can welcome all those whom society excludes as 'queer' for any reason. We challenge the entire Religious Society of Friends to develop their embrace for people whose needs are different; to support ministries that utilize the gifts of all whom God inspires, whatever their health, mental, and physical abilities.

We heard the struggles of two young adult Friends claiming their identities both as Gay and Christian and were inspired by their courage in speaking truth to power and remaining faithful. We are reminded to not turn our backs on these Friends or the communities in which they seek belonging.

We hear of meetings and churches that do not embrace the gifts of Friends' sexuality, gender identity and sexual orientation. Our experience is that the diversity among the members of our body enriches and strengthens our community. In this gathering, we celebrate attendance of Friends of all branches of North American Quakerism, many Friends under the age of 50, Friends of varying family structures, and Friends of diverse ethnic backgrounds. As we express ourselves authentically and we accept the challenge of loving one another unconditionally, we manifest the testimony of integrity and are liberated to live and love in the Light.

We hold in the Light all those who suffer from oppression and those who consciously or not contribute to their suffering. We wish to be allies to sexual minority African Friends whose nations have laws against homosexuality.

We accept the invitation and challenge from some Friends of Color to share our gifts, support one another, and make our own space more radically inclusive. We joyfully look forward to our work together in future Gatherings.

We honored the life of weighty Friend, Joe Franko, a member of our community whose passing leaves sorrow but whose life inspires continued joy.

We experienced the Holy Spirit of Truth moving among us in many ways as we worshipped and heard the clear call to let our first motion always be to love, especially in response to fear and hatred.

In the Light, in and for the Gathered Beloved Community of FLGBTQC,

Ted Heck & Kathy Beth, Co-Clerks

Acting In Faith Newsletter/Blog

AFSC has a newsletter/blog for Friends called Acting in Faith. For example, read a guest post by Quaker Clark Reddy on the legacy of racism among Friends, and how we might move forward together, building communities that are grounded in an anti-racist perspective. "Why are our communities mostly white? What steps are we failing to take? To be truly anti-oppressive and inclusive, we must transform our culture." To subscribe to the newsletter, go to <http://www.afsc.org/friends>.

Education Scholarship Applications

The Educational Scholarship Committee announces 3 applications from our young people. We are raising funds to assist them with their undergraduate studies as Quakers in the world. Support from this community extends our Quaker outreach and helps them continue their connection with their Quaker roots. Take a look at the notes on the bulletin board from this year's students to get a sense of their exciting experiences and accomplishments. Please make your checks out to Atlanta Friends Meeting for the Scholarship Fund by the end of June. For more information contact Caroline Morris, Mike Aland or Wendy Phillips

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business – May 17, 2014

Recorded pending approval

Attendance: Juan Allende, Cathy Amanti, Michael Allison, Paul Baker, Mark Bryans, Steve Collins, Mary Ann Downey, Alice Erickson, Julia Ewen, Sally Ferguson, David Foster, Eric Glenn, Judith Greenberg, Roland Heath, Julie Hliboki, Kathy Johnson, Charlotte Klesman, Lynn Leuzler, Georgia Lord, Rich Martinson, Alison Mawle, Karen terHorst Morris, Ron Nuse, Beth Ruddiman, Erica Schoon, Peter Sederberg, Bert Skellie, Myrna Trapp, Perry Treadwell, Sarah Walton, Pat Williams, Blake Williamson, Nan O'Connor (Clerk), Bill Holland (Acting Recording Clerk). (34 Friends).

Clerk: The Clerk shared an excerpt from the writings of John Calvi in which he shares his reflections on our community.

Query: Steve Collins presented the query: "Do we share our deepest beliefs and values with each other and with our children, while leaving them free to develop as the Spirit may lead them? Does the Meeting give the children loving care, and promote their spiritual life through religious education and other activities? Do we encourage our children's participation in the Meeting's work and cultivate their desire for service to others?"

Ministry and Worship Committee. Steve Collins presented the committee's recommendation that the meeting discontinue the practice of holding an annual meeting for worship and potluck in the Adair Park. He shared concerns regarding access to the worship for those with mobility problems, increased awareness of environmental sensitivities, the difficulty of hearing ministry, challenges over logistics and the burden placed on parents to monitor children at the playground during the worship. Questions and discernment followed. The value of worship in nature, the openness of the community to the leadings of groups in meeting, the desire to keep unity in the meeting and appreciation for the ministry of Green Friends were expressed.

Minute 5-18-2014-01: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves suspending the practice of holding Meeting for Worship on the 1st First Day, 6th Month in Adair Park. We ask Ministry and Worship Committee to continue meeting with and exploring options with those Friends wishing to hold worship in other settings or times."

Nominating Committee: Blake Williams presented for discernment, names of Friends nominated in 4th month.

Minute 5-18-2014-02: AFM approves Lynn Leuszler as Treasurer.

Minute 5-18-2014-03: AFM approves Steve Collins as Clerk of Administration Committee.

Minute 5-18-2014-04: AFM approves Ashley Wilcox as member of Ministry and Worship Committee.

Ministry and Worship: Steve Collins presented items for the meeting's discernment in Sixth Month:

1. Minute of Religious Service for Julie Hliboki (proposed minute): Julie Hliboki brings to the meeting a leading to be a Quaker interfaith chaplain. Julie has a particular concern to be a faithful presence providing spiritual support to individuals facing many challenges including those at life's end. The meeting has tested her leading through a discernment process and we find Julie clear.

While new to the meeting, Julie has already shared many of her gifts with our community. Julie draws on a lifetime of spiritual practice and cultivation of spiritual life. She has the gift of being with individuals and groups in ways that encourage a deep listening to Spirit. Her call to Quaker interfaith chaplaincy is both a spiritual path to deepen her own faithfulness and a witness to help others sink down to the seed that God sows in their heart.

Atlanta Friends Meeting supports Julie's leading to a Quaker interfaith chaplaincy.

2. Appointment of Support/Anchoring Committee (proposed minute): We ask Mary Ann Downey, Jenny Foster and Maggie Hasbrouck to serve on an anchoring committee to support Julie's faithfulness in ministry. We ask that they meet regularly with Julie and bring back a report to meeting on her faithfulness and growth in the ministry no later than January of 2015.
3. Proposed Minute on Guns in the Meetinghouse (proposed minute): In response to recently enacted State of Georgia legislation and in accordance with Friends Peace testimony, Atlanta Friends Meeting continues to be a weapons-free place of worship. If approved we would share this minute with the Mennonite congregation. Friends suggested that the minute be posted and ensure that all users of the building are aware of our position.
4. Marriage Vows of Elaine Ruscetta and Chad Gilmartin: In April, the Meeting approved taking the marriage of Elaine and Chad under our care. Since then, they have worked with their clearness committee in crafting vows. The couple state that in a June 6 meeting for worship of the Religious Society of Friends, to be held in Hopewell Junction, New York, the couple will "declare with divine guidance that they will: Be Life Buddies, each openly sharing in and inviting the other on life's adventures; Continue to strive for clear communication of individual needs and expectations and to hear and respect the other's; Care for each other in times of need and rouse each other in times of complacency; Each nurture the mental, physical, and spiritual health of themselves, each other, their union, and their family; Be joyful companions, take on as ministry the support of one another's leadings, and love each other always with all of their being."

5. SAYMA and FGC Scholarships. Steve reported that Ministry and Worship has approved scholarship requests of \$1,720 to support eight Friends to attend either the SAYMA yearly meeting sessions or the 2014 FGC Annual Gathering of Friends.
6. Memorial Meeting for Worship for Courtney Siceloff. Steve reported that a called Meeting for Worship to Celebrate the life of Courtney Siceloff was held on Saturday, May 18 in the meetinghouse. The worship was rich and the ministry revealed how a life well-lived touched many other lives. A memorial minute will be presented at a later date.

Finance Committee: Peter Sederberg reported that the Garden House campaign raised approximately \$28,000. While this is short of the \$30,000 goal, Finance has determined it is sufficient to begin planning the project.

Nominating Committee. Blake Williamson presented a new nomination for discernment in sixth month:

1. Jennifer Dickey is nominated to serve as clerk of Religious Education.

Social Concerns Committee: Report of Sarah Walton Ministry. Sarah Walton reviewed a written report on her ministry (attached). She expressed thanks to the meeting and her support committee for nurturing her leading to work on issues related to the U.S. mass incarceration system. She reflected her ministry presently takes two forms: Being a vessel of God's Love to Individuals and Being a prayerful Witness, Helping to Build the Beloved Community.

Clerk's Report: The clerk read the text of a letter she has prepared thanking area police agencies for their immediate and professional response to the report that a young Friend had disappeared as preparations were being made for a SAYF retreat. The young Friend safely found her way home without incident.

Minutes of April 2014:

Minute 5-18-2014-05: The minutes of the April 2014 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business were approved with amendments.

Meeting closed with silent worship.

Respectfully submitted by: Bill Holland, Acting Recording Clerk; and Nan O'Connor, Clerk.



Please Hold in The Light:

Julia Ewen

Mary Ann Downey

John Adam's mother;
Panchita Alba

Those who wish to have requests for Holding included in this monthly newsletter may give the names to any member of Care & Counsel.



Atlanta Friends Meeting Contacts

Clerk of the Meeting: Nan O'Connor, afmclerk1@gmail.com
Office Coordinator: Jonah McDonald, atlantaquakers@gmail.com
Treasurer: Peter Sederberg, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com
Ministry & Worship: Bill Holland, 404-892-2358
Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280
Social Concerns: Michael Allison, 770-832-3539
Care & Counsel: Don Bender, afm.care.counsel@gmail.com
Religious Education: Alison Mawle, 404-944-9142
Library Clerk: Cal Gough, calgough@bellsouth.net
Newsletter Editor: Kate Swett, atlquakerltr@gmail.com
Webmaster: Aaron Ruscetta, arxaaron@gmail.com

Calendar for Sixth Month (June) 2014

Area Meetings for Worship

Every First Day (Sunday)	10:00 a.m. – Meetinghouse, with a smaller group in the Library.
Every Third First Day	12:30 p.m. – Carrollton Friends Worship Group. St. Andrew's UMC Youth Center, 1106 Maple St.; contact Jean Hudson, judson30116@yahoo.com or 678-378-3368; carrolltonfriends.org .
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
Every Fifth Day (Thursday)	12:10 p.m. – East Lake Commons, Decatur. 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
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: Nan O'Connor, 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.

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 (Word, not PDF). Pictures should be in .jpg format. Submissions may be edited for length and format.

THE DEADLINE FOR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS IS THE 20TH DAY OF EACH PRECEDING MONTH.

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.