

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER



February 2015

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

Membership Letter Request *Submitted by Clive Gordon*

I am requesting membership in AFM.

My spiritual search early in life led me to God who was exactly as Jesus described: God is Spirit. God is Love and God is within me.

After I came to this understanding of God, it seemed to me that none of the churches I attended fully shared this concept of God even though they were Christian churches. The message of these churches did not appear to me to embrace Jesus' description of God. Instead they redefined and placed limitations on God. What God could, or could not do, would, or would not do, and what God wanted or did not want.

What I heard was:

God is all powerful, but God can't do that.

God is all knowing, but God does not know that.

God is Love, but God does not love that.

God is in everything and in everyone, but God is not in that.

Some started out from where I was; All powerful, all knowing, all loving, and everywhere God, then they added requirements and qualifications. Sometimes subtle, and sometimes blatant limitations on God, based on books, traditions, religions, rituals, denominations, cultural and personal biases, and for all sorts of other reasons.

When I first came to Meeting for Worship at the Atlanta Friends Meeting about 1992 or 1993, (my name is actually in the 1993 directory), it was my first time in a Quaker meeting since attending Friends Church regularly as a child and as a young adult. What I found caught me off guard.

I had no name for what I believed or how I believed other than to say; because I believe in God as lived and taught by Jesus, I am a Christian. As I sat in Silent worship that Sunday, it seemed the Spiritual journey of my entire life passed before me, and thirty-

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

QUERY

When you worship with others rather than alone, do you join in expectant waiting so that you may discover a deeper sense of God's presence? Do you seek a gathered stillness in our meetings for worship so that all may feel the power of God's love drawing us together and leading us?

- Adapted from *Advices and Queries, Quaker Faith and Practice*, Britain Yearly Meeting

one year after a friend had challenged me to find out for myself whether my religious beliefs were the result of what I had been taught, or something I had reasoned out for myself and accepted consciously, I realized that it was both. I also knew I had found a place where I could worship fully and freely with my whole self without fear or reservation. From that day I knew that Quaker worship was right for me.

My reading of early Quakers and Quaker history, and Spiritual beliefs and practices, and conversations with Friends, confirmed for me that this is the path I want to follow.

Meeting for Worship for me was like coming home. It was easy and natural and a perfect fit. The idea of being in community with others in the Meeting was more challenging. What I see in AFM is a community where people actually care for each other and help each other. I decided that because the Spirituality and theology is so right for me, I should support the community and do what I could to be involved in the life of the community. This felt awkward and forced at first but over the last four and a half years as I have attended Meeting regularly, and volunteered for things, and received a lot of encouragement from Friends, it has gotten easier. However, I am still impressed with all the ways people show love to everyone, children and adults alike, and the care and concern and respect shown to each other. My association and involvement with the Meeting has made a difference in my attitude towards community and taught me a lot about what it means to be in community with others. I am still learning this lesson.

Membership in the Atlanta Friends Meeting is my way of saying publicly that I have found the Spiritual path that is right for me, in a community where there are no limits on what Divine Light and Love can do.

Staying in Touch with Atlanta Friends Meeting

If you want to receive the weekly announcements, plus occasional time-sensitive notifications directly related to the life of the meeting or people within, please subscribe to our meeting's email list. Special notifications include details of hospitalizations and memorial meetings, event cancellations, and changes to office hours and deadlines. Detailed instructions for subscribing to the email lists are on the back page of this newsletter. Contact Nina Gooch at ninagooch AT gmail. com with questions. (If you're already on the discussion listserv, you already receive this information and don't need to join the announcement list.)

White Privilege Conference: Pre-Register by 2/6 for Discounts

The White Privilege Conference (WPC), a 3-day national, multiracial conference examining privilege, racism, and oppression, will be held in Louisville, Kentucky, March 11-14, 2015. Friends General Conference (FGC) is offering discounts of up to 50%, and Louisville Friends Meeting is offering help with housing. But you must pre-register on the FGC site fgcquaker.org/associated-program/ministry-racism by February 6 and then use their discount code to register on the WPC website whiteprivilegeconference.com by February 13 to get this help. The conference organizers encourage young people to attend at lower rates. Atlanta Quakers for Racial Equality is also going to offer some scholarship money. Please contact Susan Firestone at susanfires@gmail.com if you are interested in attending or need more information.

February Welcome Dinner 2/18

Bert & Karen Skellie invite all new to the Meeting and all who would like to meet newcomers to come to our house at 6:30 PM on Wednesday, February 18. (At East Lake Commons, about 3 miles south of Meetinghouse.) Newcomers are invited to be our guests, and others encouraged to bring a potluck dish. For directions: bertskellie@gmail.com or [404-378-5883](tel:404-378-5883).

My Friend MJ: In Loving Memory of Marthajane Robinson, Submitted by Beth Martinson

My friend MJ and I hadn't laid eyes on each other in months. Both of us were spending most of our time at home because of health problems, so we visited with each other by phone. Nearly every week, one of us would call the other, and we would talk for an hour or so. We talked about all kinds of things; there were no subjects that were verboten with MJ.

During the final weeks of her life, when she was too sick to speak on the phone, I wanted so much to talk with her. On the day she died, I said to my husband, "I want to call MJ and ask her how it feels to be dead!"

The next day, I was emailing with Clive Gordon to make sure the word of MJ's death reached people in the Atlanta Friends Meeting. I told Clive about my question, and I said, "Is it too strange to say that?" Clive replied, "Your question about how it feels to be dead is not strange at all and if anyone could give a straight answer it would be MJ."

And that is/was my friend MJ.

Journey

I am coming home.
Carrying the past snail-like on my back,
I slowly approach the old door.

Having spent my wealth
in the riotous living of
worry, pain, and near-death,
Like the dancer on the stage,
I crawl towards the father
Who stands still with outstretched arms,
waiting for me to creep into their love,
to be carried back across my own threshold,
there to find my wealth again.

Marthajane Robinson, 11/3/86

Obituary for Connie Waite, Submitted by Jim Tolmach

About 35 years ago, Connie Waite, a homeless schizophrenic woman from Boston, began hanging around Candler Park and Inman Park. She begged for food and shelter from neighbors, including several Quaker families. For a short period she lived in the basement of the old Quaker House on Fairview Road. Though obviously quite bright and well-read, she could be a challenge to befriend. Her paranoia often made conversation impossible, and she did not take care of herself or her clothing. She was a heavy smoker and could be verbally abusive—it was hard at times for me to find a spark of divinity within her. However, Courtney and Elizabeth Sicheloff built a small apartment for Connie in their back yard, where she lived until Courtney sold the house in 2003. Courtney also handled the allowance her family provided her to buy coffee and cigarettes.

After a couple of years of living on the streets, she found her way to O'Hearn House, a loft just off Edgewood Avenue that provides housing to homeless mentally ill people. In fact, Connie's plight partly inspired the creation of O'Hearn House, as Susan May was the executive director of Project Interconnections, the non-profit which built it. In her years there, Connie became somewhat more cooperative with staff and other residents. She took better care of herself and her apartment, but she balked when they made it a non-smoking facility. She moved back to Boston last year (in pursuit of a long-lost love, I believe) and received social services including housing for a time. This last autumn, she was found dead on the streets of natural causes at age 67.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business – January 18, 2015

Recorded pending approval

Attendance: Mike Aland, Muireann Brennan, Rebecca Burley, Betsy Eggers, Julia Ewen, David Foster, Julie Foster, Merry Gardner, Clive Gordon, Carol Gray, Judith Greenberg, Roland Heath, Bill Holland, Jack Honderd, Chris Lahowitch, Lynn Leuszler, Georgia Lord, Paul Mangelsdorf, Karen ter Horst Morris, Ronald

Nuse, Erica Schoon, Barbara Seal, Rebecca Sullivan, Brittney Thornbury, Myrna Trapp, Perry Treadwell, Sarah Walton, Mark Watson, Ashley Wilcox, Mary Ann Downey (Acting Clerk), Elizabeth Lamb (Recording Clerk) (31 Friends).

Clerk’s Reflections: The Acting Clerk shared her reflections on what it means to clerk and what it means to be a Friend.

Query: Bill Holland presented the query: “Are our Meetings for Worship held in expectant waiting for Divine guidance, with a living silence in which we feel drawn together in the Light by the presence of God?”

Discernment Items

Ministry and Worship Committee: On behalf of the Ministry and Worship Committee Bill Holland reported that the meeting has minuted support for a number of Friends engaged in ministries. To support these Friends, we have formed anchoring committees. We have received annual reports from several Friends on their work in their ministry over the last year and will be submitting these to be published in the newsletter in coming months. For 2015, Ministry and Worship recommends we continue our support for these Friends and have asked a number of Friends to serve on anchoring committees to support faithfulness and discernment.

Anchoring Committee	
Mary Ann Downey	David Thurman, Nan O’Connor, Lewis Fuller, Bill Holland
Elizabeth Valera	Laura Bowman, Mary Jahntz, Dwight Harriman
Julie Hliboki	Mary Ann Downey, Jenny Foster, Laura Bowman
David Foster	Ashley Wilcox, Jim Tolmach, Clive Gordon
Richard Allen	Karen Morris, Bert Skellie, Susan Firestone, Ron Nuse
Ashley Wilcox	Paul Baker, Alex Zinnes, Rebecca Sullivan
Sarah Walton	Susan Firestone, Eric Glenn, Bert Skellie, Don Bender
Christina Repoley	In formation

- **Minute 01-18-2015-01:** *On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting supports the ministries of Mary Ann Downey, Elizabeth Valera, Julie Hliboki, David Foster, Richard Allen, Ashley Wilcox, Sarah Walton, Christina Repoley and their support committees. We ask the anchoring committees to meet regularly and report to the Ministry and Worship Committee by January of 2016 on progress in faithfulness.*

Bill Holland further reported that Meeting member Marthajane Robinson died on December 25, 2014 in Austell, Georgia. A memorial committee was formed and worked closely with the family to plan a well-attended Memorial Meeting for Worship at the Atlanta Meeting on January 3, 2015. Beth Martinson clerked the Memorial Meeting. A memorial minute will be brought at a later date.

- **Minute 01-18-2015-02:** *On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting recognizes that a Memorial Service was held for Marthajane Robinson who died on December 25, 2014.*

Care and Counsel Committee: On behalf of the Care and Counsel Committee Clive Gordon shared the following brief description of the Assistance Fund, which was presented at the previous meeting and which will be published in the newsletter: The purpose of the Assistance Fund for Members and Attenders is to provide members and attenders who have an acute need for financial assistance with short-term, emergency help. Assistance from the Meeting may take the form of a loan, grant, or help with finding other resources for meeting financial needs. Applicants should be members or regular attenders with the

Meeting for a minimum of 6 months and participate in the life of the Meeting through worship and other activities such as First Day School and volunteering, as they are able. To apply for assistance, the applicant should contact the clerk of Care and Counsel Committee or a designated Care and Counsel point person, read the fund guidelines, and fill out a request form. Then the clerk of Care and Counsel and/or a group assigned by Care and Counsel will meet with the applicant to consider the request. If an individual makes a request for more than \$600 or requests totaling more than \$600 within one year, the matter would be brought to Business Meeting for approval, with the name of the applicant kept confidential within Care and Counsel Committee. These guidelines do not apply to the Refugee Fund, which will be a separate subcategory of the Assistance Fund for Members and Attenders. Money from the Refugee Fund will be disbursed according to prior commitments. When the Refugee Fund is depleted, that category will be eliminated and all requests will be handled according to these guidelines.

- **Minute 01-18-2015-03:** *On the recommendation of Care and Counsel Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the guidelines presented for the AFM Assistance Fund for Members and Attenders.*

Nominating Committee: On behalf of the Nominating Committee Carol Gray brought forward the following names for approval.

- **Minute 01-18-2015-04:** *Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Karen Morris as a member of the Finance Committee.*
- **Minute 01-18-2015-05:** *Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Mike Aland as Personnel Liaison with the Staff of Atlanta Friends Meeting.*

Reports

Ministry and Worship Committee: On behalf of the Ministry and Worship Committee Bill Holland reported that the meeting has received an application for membership from Clive Gordon. A clearness committee has met with Clive and found him clear. Ministry and Worship Committee recommends we approve his membership. Approval will be asked in February. Bill then read Clive's letter to the Meeting.

Care and Counsel Committee: On behalf of the Care and Counsel Committee Georgia Lord reported that in September 2012 the Meeting held a special "Meeting for Worship with Special Attention to Children." At this special Meeting attenders recognized the arrival of new children into our community and made certain promises to them. On November 9, 2014, the Meeting held a second "Meeting for Worship with Special Attention to Children" to welcome the children who had come into our community since September, 2012. The same, semi-programmed format was used as had been previously - and once again it somehow managed to feel centered, excited, reverent, and full of a wriggling and energetic kind of joy. Several promises were made to the children as a group by those attending. In addition, some parents made individual promises to their children. At the rise of worship the children and their families were introduced. Those present signed certificates for each of these children and enjoyed special cake. There were seventeen new children who had come into this Meeting community since the 2012 service:

- Gavin Davis-Hutto and Finja Boverman-Hutto (parents Tina Boverman and Anna Hutto)
- Zander Combs and Kendall Combs (grandmother Cathy Amanti)
- Mila Lane Shropshire Swett (parents Kate Shropshire Swett and Eric Swett)
- Kai Simone Callaway and Tali Coltrane Callaway (parents Nylgia and Kelly Callaway)
- Fleming Elizabeth Hallward (parents Stoph and Maia Hallward)
- Lloyd Bauer (parents Briana and Dennis Bauer)
- Cressida Acacia McGee (parents Emily and Ryan McGee)
- Daelyn Amelia Reynolds (parent Meredith Ann Reynolds)
- Walter Harmon Repoley Leeper (parents Deen Leeper and Christina Repoley)

- Charles Libert MacNorlin, John Lewis MacNorlin and Margaret Lucretia MacNorlin (parents Laura and Hannah MacNorlin)
- Milo Orion Kruse Childs (parents Lisa Kruse and Scott Childs)
- Annie Mae Gold McDonald (parents Jonah McDonald and Dana Goldman)

Those serving on the planning committee were Jennifer Foster (clerk), Karen Morris, Kate Swett, Mary Jahntz and Georgia Lord. Carol Gray created the certificates provided to each child. Jennifer Dickie and others baked the cakes. Dieudonne Ntibayazi and Georgia Lord clerked the Meeting for Worship.

Finance Committee: On behalf of the Finance Committee Paul Mangelsdorf presented the 2014 Income Statement, which shows a net income of \$7,314 for Atlanta Friends Meeting.

Administration Committee: On behalf of the Admin. Committee Erica Schoon reported that the Library Project is underway, digitizing, simplifying and purging the collection. They are also working on the physical space. If you have suggestions or questions please see Jack Honderd or Erica Schoon. She also reported that, since the Garden House Project is not possible due to buried debris, the funds will be used for other outdoor improvements such as installation of a chain link fence, removal of invasive plants and possibly construction of a gazebo. Please contact the Admin. Committee with questions or concerns.

Nominating Committee: On behalf of the Nominating Committee Ron Nuse asked that all committees read through the descriptions of their committees in the Handbook and report back to the Nominating Committee by March 31, 2015 with any changes or corrections needed. These changes, if any, will then be presented to the Meeting for approval.

Clerk's Items: The first draft of the State of the Meeting Report for 2014 was presented. It was noted that some information, such as the average attendance at Meetings, deaths and births will be added. It was also noted that many activities of the Meeting are missing due to lack of reports by some committees. If your committee has not yet turned in a report to the clerk, please do so as soon as possible so that the report will be a complete record of the life of the meeting. There was discussion of the possibility of breaking this report into two, one showing what we have done as a meeting and the other addressing our spiritual health as a meeting. There was also discussion about modifying the way we prepare the report and the way we obtain the information needed for the report so that it is not such a burden on the Clerk. Please continue to discern this process.

Religious Education: Betsy Eggers shared her experience from First Day School this morning. She reported that on this third Sunday in January her class of children read pages 17-18 from As Way Opened ... A History of Atlanta Friends Meeting. They then watched a YouTube documentary, We Shall Overcome, with black and white photos from the 60s. In the discussion they talked about MLK, AFSC, Gandhi, QCS, Mennonites, "I am a Man" signs, the KKK and Ebenezer Baptist Church. The children were familiar with all of the terms and events. Betsy asked that we all read the story on pages 17-18.

Mary Ann Downing reported that the Meeting of the Corporation would begin immediately after the close of Business Meeting and invited all interested to remain.

Minutes of December 2014:

- **Minute 01-18-2015-06:** The Minutes of the December 2014 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business were approved as submitted.

Meeting closed with Silent Worship.

Respectfully submitted by: Elizabeth Lamb, Recording Clerk; and Mary Ann Downing, Acting Clerk.



Please Hold in The Light:

Julia Ewen
Muireann Brennan's mother,
Mrs. Dimphne Brennan

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: Lynn Leuszler, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com
Ministry & Worship: Bill Holland, 404-892-2358
Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280
Social Concerns: Michael Allison, 770-832-3539
Administration Clerk: Steve Collins, shcollins75@gmail.com
Care & Counsel: Clive Gordon, afm.care.counsel@gmail.com
Religious Education: Jennifer Dickie, michaeljen@bellsouth.net
Library Clerk: Cal Gough, calgough@bellsouth.net
Newsletter Editor: Kate Swett, atlquakerltr@gmail.com
Webmaster: Aaron Ruscetta, arxaaron@gmail.com

Calendar for Second Month (February) 2015

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 9:30 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: Lynn Leuszler, 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 Emily Lawson at elawson7@gmail.com or 404-200-8479. 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.