

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER



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

May 2018

Gathered Meeting Retreat – May 4-6th

AFM's Gathered Meeting Retreat will be Friday, May 4th – Sunday, May 6th. To read more about this gathering, see page 2.

Intergenerational Dinner & Discussion – May 1st at 6:30pm

Come join Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS) Fellows in monthly intergenerational potluck dinner and discussions. Evening themes will include topics like racism, sexism, sexual fluidity, gender fluidity, etc. Our hope is to bridge intergenerational divides and foster meaningful conversation.

Our second Dinner and Discussion will take place at Atlanta Friends Meeting on Tuesday, May 1st at 6:30 PM. We invite Friends to bring a dish to share and an open mind. Look out for the upcoming discussion theme to be announced in the weekly announcement sheets! Or, contact the Atlanta QVS Fellows for more info:

atlantahouse@quakervoluntaryservice.org

Book Group Meeting – May 8th

The book group organized to read writings by and about People of Color will meet every second Tuesday of the month. Our upcoming meeting will be on Tuesday, May 8th at the Meetinghouse at 7:15 PM. We will be discussing the second half of Swing Time, by Zadie Smith. All are welcome. The meeting following this (on June 12th) will be spent discussing Jesmyn Ward's Sing, Unburied, Sing.

Lives and Callings: Spiritual Journey Sharing on First Sundays

On the first Sunday of each month, we listen to how one Friend in our meeting answers questions of God's leadings as well as questions about what brings them to the this meeting, what led them to become a member or why not, and what do they believe now. We call these stories of spiritual journeys, stories where Friends describe their understanding of God and religion in their life. Sara Patenaude will share on May 6th, and Alicia Rabideau, a Quaker Voluntary Service Fellow, will be sharing on June 3rd. Come hear more: 9-9:55 on 1st Sundays in the library.

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

QUERY

Does your vision of a just society include people living their lives without fear of discrimination based on who they are, what they believe, and whom they love? Are we willing to be in communion with each other, open to our differences yet secure in the one Spirit that calls us all to be Friends?

- Baltimore Yearly Meeting

Friendly Spotlight: Folami Adams, Gathered Meeting Retreat Facilitator

We are excited to gather for our annual Gathered Meeting Retreat this coming May and even more excited to be under the care of Folami Adams' facilitation. Read below for a peak into what led Folami into this work:

- **What has led you to this moment of facilitating the Gathered Meeting Retreat?**
The Gathered Meeting Retreat (GMR) committee asked me and I was honored. I am a professional facilitator and have wanted to lend my talents to the GMR for several years but never offered myself as facilitator. I am excited and honored to have been asked and look forward to bringing my approach to facilitation to the Atlanta Friends community.
- **Have you attended past Gathered Retreats? What did they offer you?**
I have and I love them! I was all set to bring my 3-year-old granddaughter last year and I got really sick and could not come. I see the GMR as a wonderful introduction to our community. It's such a relaxed setting. No one has to think about food with three meals provided in the cafeteria. The rooms are simple and comfy. I have gotten to know Friends in our community at the retreat who I otherwise may have never gotten to know at Meeting. The setting is beautiful as well. There is a lake, trails, and a variety of outdoor seating. There is also some down time... to take a nap, play with a child or read a book. And then there's the multigenerational talent show. Oh, what fun!
- **What sort of space are you hoping to create for Friends at the Gathered Retreat?**
I am hoping to create a nurturing space in which the theme is consistently reinforced. The theme is Building Stronger Community Through Deep Compassionate Listening. Friends will be provided with facilitated time to listen to self, others, nature, music, children and God / a higher power. Most of these activities will also provide an opportunity to build the AFM community. Attendees will get to know people who they have never met and learn more from those who they have known for a long time.

AFM's Gathered Meeting Retreat will be **Friday, May 4th – Sunday, May 6th** at the beautiful Charlie Elliot Retreat Center, about 1-¼ hours east of Atlanta. Come enjoy community and deepen Friendships as we explore our retreat theme: *Building stronger community through deep, compassionate, careful listening*. **All ages are welcome**. If you have any questions about your registration or scholarship requests connect with Clive at cmgord28@gmail.com.

Looking For a Way You Can Serve the AFM Community?

Care and Counsel is updating and expanding the Meeting's list of those willing and able to help those in need in our community. We occasionally get requests for assistance with transportation to the hospital or a doctor's visit, meals for those who might be in need, and those who might require assistance with simple repairs or cleanup. Also, we need a list of folks who would like to visit members and attenders who are hospitalized or homebound. Maybe you might enjoy reading to someone or taking short walks with them. There are many ways you can help someone! Just leave a note in the Care and Counsel pigeonhole in the Meeting Office with your name, contact information, and what you would be willing to do and how often you might be willing to do it. Or, contact Care and Counsel directly: afm.care.counsel@gmail.com

SUBMITTED WRITING:

*Interested in submitting a piece of writing? poem? drawing? or thought exercise?
Send it to Claire, the AFM Newsletter Editor: atlquakerltr@gmail.com.*

On Being Truly Blessed by Mary Ann Downey

Recently someone said to me, "You are truly blessed". I heard and felt the truth of the message and responded, "Yes, I know." The words are still with me, and as I consider them, I am beginning to understand the way I see blessings in my life. Blessings often come with strings attached or some pain within the blessing.

The person who told me I was blessed was referring specifically to the fact that I had the time and resources to travel, and without stating it, to the fact that she didn't. I was reminded of my mother saying "Think of the starving children in China," to get me to eat food I didn't like, and to consider it a blessing. Too often it seems I feel blessed in comparison to the deprivation or misfortune of others. In this view, it's as though God has lined us all up and doled out lots of blessings to some and only pain and hardship to others. This can make it hard to feel truly blessed because there's always that awareness and guilt over having something others don't have. Simply being a "have" in a world of "have-nots", knowing that I live a life of privilege is an unresolved and thorny issue.

"Count your blessings" was another way my mother reminded me of how well off I was. Like most people, I have my own score card or balance sheet where I mentally keep track of how many blessings I have on one side and how much pain I have on the other side. Summing up, I decide if I have a net gain or loss. In times of illness or grief, I feel cursed and acutely aware of what has been taken away. Loss can also make it hard for me to see or appreciate what I still have, and can blind me to new blessings that come sometimes as a direct result of the loss.

The words, "To him whom much is given, much is required" haunt me and lead me to feel that not only must I give back a percentage of what I have, but also that no matter how much I give, it's never enough. It's the view of God as a super IRS agent performing a continuous audit of my account, ever ready to hand out penalties for underpayment. And there are always so many competing requests for my time, money and skills that I find it hard to decide how to focus my resources in the best way. Is spending my time and money on problems of inner city students right here in Atlanta more important than writing letters for Amnesty International, or sending hygiene kits to Iraqi children? Is one main focus better than giving a little to a lot of different causes?

These thoughts lead me to wonder how I can feel truly blessed in a very deep and profound way without the baggage of guilt, the score card or the problem of payback. The answer came in meditation with a profound and reassuring sense of the Light within me that would guide me to the truth about the blessings of life. As I waited and prayed for guidance, I realized that this simple act of turning to the Light within reminded me that God is a presence in my life and with me always no matter what else happens. It is this practice of the presence of God that is the true blessing. To feel truly blessed, I need only let myself rest on that 'ocean of Light and Love,' feeling the power and love of the Spirit. All else is temporary.

Some People Still Feel Like They Can't Be Themselves by Lisa Pellegrino

I can't hide from the news
It's made its way in, it's coming through
So many living divided
So much they're hiding
So much stuffed inside

This song is inspired by a message Lisa received at meeting one Sunday.

What a life to lead
What a life to leave
What I'd give to live
A life divided no more

No wonder we're so broken
We're only open
About the ways
We make the pain go away
It's a foolish game that we replay
So I stood up on Sunday
After listening for a while

I shared the things rolling around in my head
I ache for all men
Who've had to turn off their heart
Just to not get the shit kicked out of them
What a life to lead
What a life to leave
What I'd give to live
A life divided no more

And after I spoke
Fred came up to me
He said "My daughter's gay
She's got a partner, they've been together for 9 years..."
And then he said "Ya know I'm gay too
But I could never tell my wife"
And I looked at Fred
Seeing the faint pain in his eyes
Feeling the weight of what he said
And thought oh
What a life
To leave
Oh what a life to leave
What I'd give to live
A life divided no more

Emails from Meg Harper

Subject: Ireland Special Yearly Meeting

Dear Nina and Mary Ann,

Thanks very much again for your help with resources and to all Atlanta Friends for holding Ireland Yearly Meeting in the Light, as it met to consider whether 'same-sex' marriages will be witnessed (or solemnised, in the sense that they will be recognised by the Republic) in Meetings in Ireland. As you may know, GLTB marriages are still illegal in Northern Ireland and recognised in the Republic, which passed a referendum a couple of years ago.

The day-long gathering on Saturday was Rick's and my first experience with the larger body of Friends here. On a chilly morning that soon turned to a sunny spring day, we got up early and drove (with our beloved friend Pauline) the two-and-a-quarter hours to Quaker House, a bright complex on a hill from which you can see Dublin Bay.

The meeting was long (from 10.30 am to nearly 6 pm) and intense and good. There were over 160 Friends present, which is nearly twice the number that usually attend yearly meeting, from from all over the island. Messages coming from the central office in the last month or so had been nervous about the numbers (for parking, among other things). Much care was taken on the day to keep the meeting productive and loving. A number of northern Friends (and some from the Republic as well), especially those who identify as Evangelical Friends, are opposed to 'same-sex' marriage, and many others share Rick's and my strong commitment to marriage equality.

The day was carefully and well run, and Quaker process worked. Being part of it was powerful. Not much arguing, very little grandstanding, lots of truth telling of the 'what canst thou say' variety, lots of listening. Hearts opening. Rick and I met some new people we hope we'll see again. There are some impressive folks amongst Irish Friends.

The day began with four speakers giving prepared remarks: one on Quaker process, one advocating for same-sex marriages under the care of Friends, one against, and one discussion of Quaker 'theology'. After that, some elders read a selection of excerpts from statements sent in over the last year from

different monthly meetings. An open session followed, then we broke for lunch and a chance to get out into the sunshine. After lunch, we were divided into small groups to consider the question of how we might move forward, and then a last open session was finished with the clerk and her two assistant clerks writing and accepting a minute.

By the way, I have sent messages to Rick's and my friend Anne Goggin, who gave one of the speeches, to see if she'll send me an electronic copy to share with you and AFM. I've also asked Simon Lamb if he will share his remarks. He gave the one on theology. You may know Simon, who is the current clerk of FWCC. The open sessions were rich with wisdom: some of the vocal messages will stay with me for a long time.

At the end, we didn't get to equality, but we got partway and with a commitment to finish a detailed proposal by the regular yearly meeting in July. What will happen then is that GLTB Friends will be welcome to be married under the care of their meetings, but individual meetings will be able to decide for themselves whether they want to be included. I suspect some of the northern ones will decline. I also suspect that their situation will change in time. Interestingly, the morning began with contributions from people with grey hair. By the end of the day, young people were giving most of the messages, and there was a clear sense that Irish Friends are in good hands going forward. Those young Friends were mighty.

I got the sense that this result represents real progress, though it is not completely satisfying to Rick and me. This issue has been on Friends' minds for at least ten years here, but someone said that even a few years ago, the outcome would probably have been different.

One of the last things we were asked was not to talk to the media! apparently, this is an issue about which there'll be public interest. That, too, feels different.

Nina, as you'll see when Anne sends her remarks, she read and was very grateful for the material you sent. She found a quote from Fort Lauderdale Friends that she liked so much she chose it for her final words.

In love and light,
Meg

Selected Poems from Mary Oliver

Lingering in Happiness

After rain after many days without rain,
it stays cool, private and cleansed, under the trees,
and the dampness there, married now to gravity,
falls branch to branch, leaf to leaf, down to the ground

where it will disappear—but not, of course, vanish
except to our eyes. The roots of the oaks will have their share,
and the white threads of the grasses, and the cushion of moss;
a few drops, round as pearls, will enter the mole's tunnel;

and soon so many small stones, buried for a thousand years,
will feel themselves being touched.

Why I Wake Early

Hello, sun in my face.
Hello, you who make the morning
and spread it over the fields
and into the faces of the tulips
and the nodding morning glories,
and into the windows of, ever, the
miserable and the crotchety—

best preacher that ever was,
dear star, that just happens
to be where you are in the universe
to keep us from ever-darkness,
to ease us with warm touching,
to hold us in the great hands of light—
good morning, good morning, good morning.

Watch, now, how I start the day
in happiness, in kindness.

Taken from Why I Wake Early: New Poems by Mary Oliver

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business – April 15th, 2018, Recorded pending approval

Attendance: Richard Allen, Carolyn Coburn-Allen, Georgia Lord, Lynn Leuszler, Bill Hooson, Teri Key-Hooson, Myrna Trapp, Karen Skellie, Sue May, Sally Ferguson, Karen Morris, Jim Tolmach, Alberta Guise, Angie Love, Terri Rushing, Kathy Johnson, Austin Wattles, Liz Nicholson, Gray Folger, Chris Lahowitch, Kat Bailey, Susan Firestone, Bert Skellie, Waman French, Mark Yates, Julia Ewen, Ron Nuse, Steve Collins, Karen Morris, Bill Holland (Clerk), Sara Patenaude (Acting Recording Clerk) – 31 Friends

Query: Karen Morris shared the query for Fourth Month: “Do we find that we are spiritually refreshed, enriched and sustained by Meeting for Worship?” – Friends General Conference

Discernment

Ministry & Worship: On behalf of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Karen Morris brought forward the following names for membership and transfer of membership:

- **Minute 04-15- 2018-01:** On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting joyfully approves Wendy Giere-Frye as a member of the Atlanta Friends Meeting. We welcome her to our fellowship and look forward to our mutual spiritual growth.
- **Minute 04-15- 2018-02:** On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting welcomes Mark Yates as a member of the Atlanta Friends Meeting. We look forward to continued growth in the spirit together.
- **Minute 04-15- 2018-03:** On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee we ask Lancaster Friends Meeting to accept Erika Fitz into your meeting. Erika has been a faithful member of Atlanta Friends Meeting and offered her gifts to us in many different ways. We ask that you receive her membership into your tender care.
- **Minute 04-15- 2018-04:** On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee we ask Limerick Friends Meeting to accept Meg Harper and Rick Stoops into your meeting They have been faithful members of Atlanta Friends Meeting for many years and we will sorely miss them.

Reports

Ministry and Worship:

- Karen Morris reported that the ad hoc committee on SAYMA query revisions will begin meeting in May, with Karen Morris (convener), Elizabeth Lamb, Hannah MacNorlin, Sara Patenaude, and Susan Firestone, plus Bob Lough as consultant. The committee will give attention to queries addressing racism and discrimination, as well as discerning and removing underlying assumptions that may be biased. They welcome more members. Please contact Karen Morris. Watch the newsletter and announcement sheet for more information. The committee will have a first draft ready for the Meeting for Business to consider in October 2018, before sending it to the Faith & Practice Revision Committee of SAYMA.
- Ministry & Worship formed a clearness committee, which met with Sara Longwell, and the committee found her clear for membership. Please get to know her and her son Henry, who joins the nursery crew. Her name will be brought forward next month for the Meeting’s discernment.
- M&W is pleased to bring forward for discernment next month the marriage of Angie Love and Terri Rushing under the care of the Meeting. A clearness committee has met with Angie and Terri and found them clear for marriage. A marriage committee, led by Christina Repoley, will include the committee members. M&W will bring the additional names in May. Karen shared a rough draft of the couple’s vows to give a clearer idea of their intentions and their love and respect for each other.

They have chosen Saturday, June 9 as the date for a Meeting for Worship for Marriage, held at the Meetinghouse.

Finance:

· Lynn Leuszler reported that as of March 31, 2018, Atlanta Friends Meeting is running a \$15,364 deficit YTD. A deficit through this part of the year is not unusual as contribution income is largely received in the 4th quarter. However, the deficit is \$16,827 unfavorable to the same period last year and \$6,888 unfavorable to the budget. Gifts are lower than usual, possibly because of higher donations last year in advance of the tax changes. Expenses are not running outside of the budget, though they are falling earlier in the year. We will still need to pick up the pace of contributions.

· **Minute 04-15- 2018-05:** Atlanta Friends Meeting appreciates the generous and welcoming sense of possibility that Lynn is calling us to become.

Clerk's Items:

· The Clerk of Meeting discussed the conflict of the scheduled June Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business with the SAYMA annual conference. The Meeting agreed that the June business meeting will not be held so that friends may stay at SAYMA and not feel concern of missing their duty to Atlanta Friends Meeting.

· **Minute 04-15- 2018-06:** Atlanta Friends Meeting welcomes the births of Sendak Davey Morrison and Jay Harper Morrison on February 12, 2018.

Minutes of March 2018:

· **Minute 04-15- 2018-07:** The minutes of the Third Month 2018 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business were approved.



PLEASE HOLD IN THE LIGHT:

*Suzanne Murdock &
Dave Erickson*

Those wishing to have requests for holding included in this monthly newsletter may give the names to a member of Care & Counsel.



Atlanta Friends Meeting Contacts

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Calendar for Third Month (March) 2018

Area Meetings for Worship

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Every First Day (Sunday) | 10:00 a.m. – Meetinghouse (AFM), with a smaller group in the Library. 10:30 a.m. – Peachtree Friends Meeting (Christian-friendly, affirming, open to all), 3980 Florida Ave, Norcross GA, peachtree.quaker.org 1:30 p.m. - Stone Mountain Friends Church (Evangelical), at Rock of Ages Lutheran Church, 5135 Memorial Dr, Stone Mountain, GA 30083 |
| 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 First Day | 10:30 a.m. – Macon Friends Worship Group. Contact Diana Hensley, 478-227-8892; maconquakers.org |
| Sixth Day (Friday) | 11:00 a.m. – East Lake Commons, Decatur. Contact Bert Skellie at bertskellie@gmail.com or 404-680-4799. (Mid-August through May), 9:00 a.m. – Friends School of Atlanta. Community Meeting Room, 862 Columbia Dr., Decatur, 404-373-8746. |

Regular Events at the Meetinghouse

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Every First Day (Sunday) | 9:00 a.m. - Adult Religious Ed, Library Every second Sunday, 9:30 a. m. - Singing, Classroom A/B 10:00 a.m. - Meeting for Worship 5:00 p.m. - Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship, Meeting Room |
| Second Day (Monday) | Every other Monday at 6:30 p.m. - Spiritual Nurture Group, Library (contact Lewis Fuller for info on how to join) |
| Third Day (Tuesday) | 6:00 - Alex Zinnes Yoga, Nursery Second and fourth Tuesdays at 7:00 - Deep Waters Center for Prayer & Exploration, Meeting Room |
| Fourth Day (Wednesday) | 8:30 a.m. Morning Worship, Library First and third Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m. Worship at David & Freer Jarvis' home 7:00 - 8:30 pm: Semi-programmed worship at AFM. Contact Ashley Wilcox: ashleymwilcox@gmail.com , 206-300-5836. |
| Fifth Day (Thursday) | 7:00 p.m. Bible Discussion, Library |
| Sixth Day (Friday) | Every third Friday, Meeting for Business, Meeting Room |
| 18 th of Each Month | Newcomers Welcome Dinner, rotating location |

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: atlantaquakers.org, atlantaquakers@gmail.com

Clerk: Bill Holland, afmclerk1@gmail.com

Treasurer: Lynn Leuszler, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com

Are you a newcomer to the Atlanta Friends community?

We would be happy to make you a permanent nametag. You can 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 Brent Wolff at rbkwolff@gmail.com. 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 our Meetinghouse 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. 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.