

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2020



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 Avenue
Decatur, GA 30030

ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL – FEBRUARY 2020

Each first Sunday of the month, we listen to how a Friend in our meeting answers questions of God's leadings as well as questions about what brings them to this meeting, what led them to become a member or not, and what they believe now. We call these stories of spiritual journeys, stories where Friends describe their understanding of God and religion in their life.

February 2, at 9:00 in the Library, we will hear the spiritual journey of Rebecca Grant. She began attending our meeting almost 2 years ago after moving here from Philadelphia, PA with her sons Grant and Elan. They are members of Green Street Monthly Meeting in Philadelphia and Elan was a student at Greene Street Friends School.

The second, fourth and fifth Sundays of each month are devoted to book discussion. Currently, we're reading *Our Life is Love* by Michelle. The third Sunday is a worship sharing session based on that month's query or, occasionally, a query chosen by that day's leader. Join us any Sunday at 9:00 in the library.

ON DISPLAY IN THE GREETING ROOM

Through early or mid-March, our current AFM art show celebrates love and commitment by displaying the Quaker Marriage Certificates of our members and attenders. In the Quaker tradition, marriage is a matter between God and the couple, witnessed by the meeting, and marriage certificates include the vows said by the couple and the signatures of everyone attending the wedding (or everyone old enough to write their name).

After reading about our missing care quilt, member Denny Webster (who lives in South Carolina) offered to give the Meeting her eight Healing Quilts. These were created from her leading to do something about "healing from trauma" and have been exhibited at FGC and will be exhibited at Atlanta Meeting in coming months. We are blessed to have them. See www.dennywebster.com for photos and more information.

For questions about the art displays in the greeting room, contact Mary Bartlett, art show coordinator, at marybart12@gmail.com

If you know the location of the missing care quilt or if you had a care quilt at any time during 2019 and have not talked to the Care and Counsel committee yet, they would be thrilled to hear from you. Contact Karen Skellie at meeting or email afm.care.counsel@gmail.com.

QUERY FOR FEBRUARY

Live adventurously.
When choices arise do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community?

-- Advices and Queries of
Britain Yearly Meeting

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER FRIEND-IN-RESIDENCE REPORT FROM ANTON FLORES

November:

- I continue to assist with the launching of the International Community School's community resource center (opening January 2020)
- I walked most of the Buddhist-led pilgrimage from Atlanta to the School of the Americas Watch vigil at Fort Benning.
- The weekend of the SOA Watch vigil, Charlotte had a medical scare that resulted in an overnight hospitalization. She will have outpatient surgery January 22.
- A friend of mine, Jason Chin, died from a drug overdose. I officiated his funeral in Columbus.
- I have enjoyed connecting with Candler students via presentations and one-on-ones.
- Our trivia team continues. I am organizing a team at Mellow Mushroom on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays; Aaron Ruscetta is taking lead on 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at Thinking Man's Tavern.
- I collaborated with Holy Trinity Episcopal Parish on immigrant justice-related matters. I consulted with them on a holiday letter-writing campaign for individuals in immigration detention. I also spoke on immigrant justice at a Sunday School class.
- I was the lead organizer and host of a delegation from Eastern Illinois U. Their immigrant justice tour took them from Atlanta to Lumpkin to Americus.
- I delivered two sermons at Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship (one in November; one in December)

December:

- I preached at Berea Mennonite Church in East Atlanta.
- I was honored to lead a Catholic Worker retreat organized by Jim and Shelley Douglass of Mary's House in Birmingham, AL.
- I delivered an Advent homily at Holy Family Catholic Church in Birmingham.
- I met with the executive director of Friends of Refugees in Clarkston.
- I continue to collaborate with the staff and volunteers (including a growing number of Friends) for the Innovation Law Lab asylum defense workshops.
- I am accompanying Rahjon, an asylum seeker currently residing at Columbia Presbyterian Church.
- Maybe it was the beard, but I got to play Santa Claus during Harmony Preschool's family party.
- I am collaborating with Presencia to plan a full day immigrant justice experience for the January SAYMA retreat.

Advent Every Day

Some describe unprogrammed Quaker meetings as non-liturgical, meaning lacking the standard form of a religious service. Others, and I fall in this camp, recognize structure to the meeting for worship and refer to it as a liturgy of silence.

Unprogrammed meetings do not generally follow a liturgical calendar. Historically, Friends believe every day is holy and sacramental. While many Quakers "draw spiritual nourishment from our Christian roots and strive to follow the example of Jesus . . . many other Quakers draw spiritual sustenance from various religious traditions" and some prescribe to no religious system.

But in the silence of meeting for worship I heard one of the best Advent sermons ever.

According to Friends General Conference, "Quaker worship is based on silent waiting, where we expect to come into the presence of God. In this living silence, we listen for the still, small voice that comes from God Worshiping together in silence is a way for a community to be brought together in love and faithfulness.

“During silent worship, anyone – adult or child – may feel inspired to give vocal ministry (speak out of the silence) Such messages may be offered several times during a meeting for worship “

During Advent, Christian liturgical communities mark the four Sundays before Christmas with expectant waiting and preparation for the Light of God incarnate in the form of Jesus. Expectant waiting. That’s what Quakers do every Sunday – sit in silent expectancy.

On this fourth Sunday of Advent the sacred silence was accentuated by unscripted, Spirit-inspired messages of hope, peace, joy, and love – the very themes of the expectant season of Advent.

Hope:

I’ve often wondered what draws Quakers to sit in communal silence. This Sunday’s first messenger spoke truth to this mystery. He expressed his gratitude for a community willing to gather in the hope that even one person may have the inspiration and courage to edify the entire meeting with a message of encouragement and wisdom. His appreciation for those gathered was genuine and affirming, and I believe his words set the tone for what was to follow.

Peace:

A woman stood to her feet and recognized that these are challenging days. From divisive politics to seemingly irreversible climate change, one can easily feel overwhelmed, cynical or despondent. But she spoke words of peace. Reminding us that winter solstice promises that the (L)ight will return, she used this to speak metaphorically about the promise of new life. And then quoting the most life-affirming phrase of the apocalyptic revelation of St. John, she reminded us of a mysterious promise, “See, I am making all things new.” How wonderful it was to hear such trustworthy and true words.

Joy:

What do you do when you want to choose efficiency and comfort for the holidays but it’s your children who remind you of what matters most? This was the reflection of a mother in the meeting for worship.

This mother did not look forward to the idea of many hours of solo-driving in a car full of kids and gifts. She proposed to her children that they opt for air travel but forgo bringing gifts so as to reduce stress and save money on luggage costs. But one of the younger children penetrated her heart with a reminder that driving would not just mean extra money and fewer gifts, driving with a full car represented what mattered most to the child – exchanging tokens of love with those who matter most. With this reminder from a wide-eyed child the mother was able to adjust her expectations and realign her values and before Friends proclaim that she was looking forward to the drive where the visit with family would include a jubilant exchange gifts and love.

Love:

Sitting alongside a Friend who lives with a terminal illness, another woman interrupted the liturgical silence with divine words of comfort. I’m not sure if she knew the man she was sitting beside, much less that he is confronting his own mortality with courage and cancer, but her words were a balm to anyone struggling with fear. Yes, these are hard days she expressed; days when we may fear our circumstances or even death. But she reminded us that love is stronger than fear and that fearless love is always present and active. When she sat down I noticed my courageous, cancer-ridden friend reach out and grab her hand in gratitude and as love-in-action.

Advent Every Day:

Maybe Quakers aren’t liturgical. Maybe Quakers don’t celebrate Advent. But Quakers do believe every moment is holy and that silence is holy expectancy. So maybe every moment is an invitation to live with an advent spirit every day.

KIDNEY DONOR SOUGHT

from Jeremiah Gold-Hopton and Karen Gold

Please join us as possible living kidney donors for our 30-year-old son Daniel, who grew up in Atlanta Friends Meeting. Although he is on a waiting list for a deceased donor, it could take 7 years for him to get to the top of that list. Also, transplanting a kidney from a living donor is much more likely to be a success. The more people who volunteer as living donors on Daniel's behalf, the more likely he is to have a successful transplant before it's too late.

People who have donated a kidney outlive the average person. Some experts explain this fact as a result of the careful screening process. Other experts explain the longer lifespan of kidney donors as a result of the happiness and satisfaction that follows the act of giving life.

As a donor, you would not have medical bills or insurance claims. Other donation-related costs (including lost wages) would be reimbursed by various funding sources. If your donation surgery is in Georgia, we would assist you and help take care of you during your recovery. If your donation surgery is in Massachusetts (where Daniel lives), his mothers-in-law (both of whom are nurses) would host you, assist you, and take care of you during your recovery.

If you are 18 to 42 years old, your age makes you a better candidate for donating a kidney directly to Daniel, so please fill out an online questionnaire on the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) website at <https://www.mghlivingdonors.org> because MGH is the National Kidney Registry (NKR) transplant center where Daniel is registered and pre-approved for immediate transplant surgery.

If you are over 42 years old, you could still be a good candidate for a paired or chain or swap donation in which the NKR arranges for you to donate a kidney to a person your age in exchange for Daniel receiving a kidney from a person his age. You can use any NKR transplant center for your screening. We are using Emory. To fill out the Emory online questionnaire, go to <https://emory.donorscreen.org/register/donate-kidney>

For the online questionnaire: your designated recipient is Daniel Raymond Gold-Hopton, birthdate 9/27/89, blood type AB (which means that he's a match for AB, A, B, or O), on dialysis since October 2019.

If you have questions or would like us to give you more information, please contact us:
Jeremiah Gold-Hopton email: jeremiah313134@mac.com or call or text: 404-431-4342
Karen Gold email: kjgpinelake@yahoo.com or call or text: 404-431-4046

QUAKER VOLUNTARY SERVICE BLOGS

from Detmer Kremer, a QVS Fellow in Atlanta in 2016, originally posted on QVS' website
www.quakervoluntaryservice.org

For the longest time I was fearful to step into faith, even though I felt Spirit stir for so long. *Quaker* Voluntary Service appeared unexpectedly, and initially I was hesitant. I asked if it was okay that I was not religious, and the answer I received was that faith, or lack thereof, was not a requirement, only the willingness to listen and to share.

Throughout my time in Atlanta I indeed tried to listen and share, and QVS helped me understand how to do both more equitably and peacefully. It allowed me to truly see the multiplicity of ways to engage with the sacred, a multiplicity that almost paradoxically connects and unites. Although not intentional, I realized Quakerism was a home for me, whereas others realized it was not, and that both paths were valid. It was this grace that grounded me in community and that I try to carry everywhere I go.

At my still new and current job, I realized the importance and necessity of this grace. I work as a Human Impacts of Climate Change programme assistant for [Quaker United Nations Office](#) in Geneva, Switzerland. During one of the first weeks my supervisor and I went to Monaco for the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on the state of [the ocean and the cryosphere](#) (which are all the areas in the world which are frozen such as glaciers and permafrost). The IPCC collects climate science from around the world to understand what is happening to our world, and at its meetings every single state has to agree on the summary that it specifically writes for policymakers around the world.

It was already strange to be in a country that lives in the contradiction of entirely funding a conference on climate change science while also having streets lined with the most expensive car dealers and fur shops. Stranger yet, was being in a room filled with diplomats and scientists discussing exactly how to phrase the information policymakers need to understand about what is happening to our world and what it needs in response.

This is where I realized the gifts QVS had given me, for there was a reason why the small organization I currently work for is the only faith-based organization worldwide with observer status at the IPCC. It is partly because we bring a kind of Quaker grace often absent in these types of negotiations.

This means several things. It allows us to be a voice desiring truth, and thus we can lend support to scientists by individually thanking them for their hard work but also publicly by making statements about the need to believe the climate science, especially when it is being undermined.

It helps us see the need for language that reflects that everyone is sacred, and must be included in the recommendations of what we need to do to counter climate change. This resulted directly in us working on, and succeeding in getting, the inclusion of explicit wording about the need for public participation in all climate change related processes.

Most significantly however, it grants us the ability to see all shades of humanity while permitting us to act on that kindly yet justly. One particular delegation employed a range of stalling techniques, causing our final day of negotiations to end up being 26 hours long. It felt easy to demonize this one country, and to pile the blame onto the shoulders of these delegates.

The grace QVS taught me, however, showed me that for two reasons this is not right. Firstly, it reduces the complex story of an entire country into a vilified soundbite. This country was poor less than half a century ago, and through a deeply oil-dependent economy has been able to achieve tremendous wealth that have made its citizens well-cared for in terms of health, education, and housing. There is a valid fear that in the climate movement they could lose so much of that and return to a state of impoverished dependence. This grace allows that side of the story to be visible, and ensures our climate crisis pathways must be inclusive and account for how we re-imagine global economic systems.

The second part is that extending this grace to such countries allows the acceptance of my own complicity in climate change. It is easy to point fingers, and much harder to look in the mirror. QVS taught me how essential it is to not dwell on guilt, but to focus on ownership, agency, and action.

from Arron Luo, current Atlanta QVS Fellow, from his personal blog at arronluo.wordpress.com:

“Where are you really from?”

Despite how often white people ask me this, I am not used to white people asking me this. I am, though, tired. Usually, my follow-up response to their follow-up question is that my first answer is also my final answer. At the same time, I also think insisting that “Long Island, New York” is my final answer

is dishonest, because it doesn't honor my full story, or that of my family. So, why don't I welcome the "Where are you really from" question more? Shouldn't I actually embrace the invitation to share?

When I think more about it, however, I realize there is no contradiction. The tiredness is because of the power dynamic being constantly iterated in that recurrent interaction. It reflects the power dynamic in which white people are atop a US-based, globally-exported racial hierarchy, under which whiteness is imagined as natural, white supremacy as normal, and a white person as entitled to all things. Including non-white people's cultures, objects, and stories.

Like, hell yeah, I'm not "from here" (the US) even if I was born here. For that matter, you (white person) are not from here, either. Neither of us should be here in the first place. We both come from a long, long history in which your ancestors went all over the world and fucked things up and hurt people, including into me and my friends's ancestral homelands, where your ancestors fucked things up and hurt people, and into the Americas, where your ancestors also fucked things up and hurt people. Your ancestors have mostly left me and my friends' ancestral homelands since then – but here, you've stayed. And now, here I am, too, because of all of that (see: "[We are here because you were there.](#)"), and you are being silly to think you have a right to my story.

The problem is not that you are assuming I'm not really from here or that I'm not telling you the full story. Both are true: I am not really from here. I am not telling you my story.

But you don't get to ask about mine without also examining, and being honest about, your own.

We both should not be here.

BOOKS BY AND ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR BOOK GROUP – Thursday, February 6

The book group reading books by and about people of color will continue to meet at 1:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month in the Meetinghouse library. The book for February 6 is *The Light of the World*, by Elizabeth Alexander and for March 5, *A Place for Us*, by Fatima Mirza. All are welcome. If you have questions, contact Karen Morris (karenh.1415@gmail.com) or Susan Cole (cole2544@bellsouth.net).

FRIENDLY HIKE WITH MACON FRIENDS– Saturday, February 8

All are welcome to join us for monthly easy hikes / walks! Including children! (Note: There will usually be some hills, but we take it slow.) On Saturday, February 8, we will meet at the Meetinghouse parking lot at 9 am to take a hike with the Macon Worship Group! Please plan to join us for a three-mile hike in High Falls State Park and Dauset Trails Nature Center. High Falls State Park plus Dauset Trails Nature Center would give us our usual 3 miles of walking. (High Falls appears to have only 1.2 miles of trail <https://www.atlantatrails.com/hiking-trails/high-falls-state-park-falls-trail/#directions>). Here's a link for Dauset: <https://www.dausettrails.com> . Leaving Atlanta about 9 am should get us to High Falls by about 10:15. We could do the scenic walk, then eat lunch at the end while looking at the view. Then drive about 15 minutes and walk about 2 miles at Dauset Trails, driving back about 1:30 or 2:00 pm. That should get us back to Atlanta by around 3 pm. Call Bert Skellie at 404-680-4799 if you have questions, or if you have an emergency and need us to wait for you at the Meetinghouse longer than 5 minutes.

EXPANDING VOTING RIGHTS FOR THOSE FORMERLY IMPRISONED – TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Join the Georgia Justice Project in their push for better expungement laws in Georgia! Tuesday, Feb. 11th we will gather for Second Chance Day at the Capitol, with discussion focused on Expanding Expungement and Voting Rights. More information and an event schedule can be found below. Register to attend at <https://tinyurl.com/secondchancefeb11>.

Second Chance Day at the Capitol
February 11, 2020 9 AM- 12 NOON
Central Presbyterian Church
201 Washington Street, Atlanta, GA 30303
(across the street from the State Capitol)

9:00am – 9:30am: Strategies To Expand Voting Rights For People With Felony Convictions

9:30AM – 10:45AM: Current Efforts To Expand Expungement In Georgia

Story Sharing: How Georgia's Narrow Law Impacts Individuals, Families and Communities
Responses from Invited Legislators

10:45am – 12:00pm: Advocacy

Advocacy Training

Call to Action

Advocacy at the Capitol – meeting with legislators

NEWCOMERS WELCOME DINNER – Tuesday, February 18

February's Newcomers Welcome Dinner will be Tuesday, February 18. Newcomers are invited to be our guests, and others encouraged to bring a potluck dish. See the Announcement Sheet for details.

If you would like to host a Newcomers Welcome Dinner, held the 18th of each month, please contact Jim Tolmach at jimtolmach@icloud.com. If you'd like to host a Welcome Dinner in 2020, contact Jim Tolmach at (jimtolmach@icloud.com or 404-294-5194) to reserve a date. Welcome Dinners, held on the 18th of each month, welcome newcomers to the Friends Meeting community and is a fun chance to get to know both new- and old-timers better. Generally, the host provides the core of the meal, old-timers bring a dish, and newcomers are our guests.

INFORMATIONAL MEETING ABOUT FGC – Sunday, February 23

Please come to an informational meeting / seasoning session with representatives from Friends General Conference (FGC, the national Friends body with which our Meeting is affiliated) to learn about what the organization has to offer Friends today, and its exciting plans to strengthen its programming. FGC is in the preliminary phase of considering a major fund-raising campaign to bolster its endowment, invest in programming, and dramatically increase its long-term sustainability, and is not now seeking gifts, but rather help in seasoning these plans. We will gather to hear and respond to the proposed vision for what an expanded FGC could accomplish on February 23 from noon to 1:30 in the meeting room, with Lebanese lunch provided. This is a wonderful chance to learn more about Friends General Conference. Please contact Elaine Meyer-Lee at eemeyer87@earlham.edu with any questions.

ABOUT MEETINGS FOR THRESHING

The purpose and processes used for a Meeting for Threshing is discussed in SAYMA's Guide to our Faith and Practice, 2012 edition, pages 18-19 (the one with the Blue Cover) or see online at http://www.sayma.org/online_documents.htm#F&P (scroll down).

C. Meeting for Threshing

Friends believe that the Light is accessible and within each of us. Thus, we make corporate decisions with faith that the Divine Spirit will guide us to unity. However, strains that develop over troublesome issues can prevent us from seeing the fullness of truth. In such situations, Friends' meetings often hold one or more "Threshing Sessions" to allow ample time and opportunity for differences to be aired and faced.

Meetings for Threshing are usually called by a decision of the Business Meeting but may also be called by the meeting clerk or Committee for Ministry and Nurture or the appropriate counterpart committee. They are not part of Business Meeting or any other meeting. In Threshing Meetings no decision is made, but through them the chaff can be separated from the grain. Such meetings can clear the way for later action on the issue.

It is essential that full notice of a Threshing Session be given and special efforts made to see that Friends of all shades of opinion can and will be present. To the extent that Friends of a given view are absent, the usefulness of such a meeting will be impaired. If factual material needs to be presented, persons knowledgeable about the topic should be asked to present it and be available to answer questions. It is essential that someone take notes for later reference. The clerk of the Threshing Session may make a report to the Meeting for Business.

Clerking a Threshing Meeting takes great sensitivity and care. The clerk of a Threshing Session makes it clear at the start that the meeting not only expects, but welcomes expressions of wide differences of opinion. Friends are urged not to hold back what troubles them about the issues at hand. Hesitancy to share a strong conviction because it may offend someone reflects a lack of trust. The clerk's job is to draw out the reticent, limit the time taken by too-ready talkers, and see that all have an opportunity to speak, rather than to listen for a sense of the meeting.

Threshing is an activity to nurture and strengthen the community. Friends must take care that expressions of strong opinions and feelings do not spill over into personal attacks. Periods of silence can help Friends hear each other more clearly. Friends need to remain mindful that a Threshing Session is not only an opportunity to speak but also an opportunity to listen carefully and deeply.

Guidelines for Threshing Meetings

- Speak from your own personal experience or perspective.
- Address remarks to the clerk; do not reply directly to or rebut others.
- All ideas and thoughts on an issue are welcome for consideration.
- Everyone should have a chance to speak.
- Everyone with dissenting views has a responsibility to make them known.
- A Threshing Session is not an opportunity to admonish others.
- Passion is permitted!
- Corporate decisions are not made during a Threshing Session.

MEETING FOR THRESHING FOR SAYMA – Sunday, March 1

There is a Meeting for Threshing scheduled for March 1, 2020 after pot luck from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM in the AFM meeting room. This meeting is in response to an email we have received from the SAYMA (Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association, our yearly meeting) Ministry and Nurture Committee (M & N). SAYMA M & N has reached out to each meeting and/or worship group because they were hearing from meetings were feeling tension and conflict around the SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice Committee (SAYMA URJ). They are encouraging SAYMA Meetings to engage in conversations about these issues in threshing sessions and/or small group discussions. We are asked to reflect on our history in preparation for the March 14, 2020 Representative Meeting which will be held at the Atlanta Meeting.

“THE GATHERING” – COMING TO A TOWN NOT TOO FAR FROM US! – June 28 to July 4

The FCG Gathering is a week of Quaker worship, workshops, and community for all ages, sponsored annually by Friends General Conference (FGC). This year it will be nearby, in the hills of southwestern Virginia. With a theme this year of “Way Will Open,” The Gathering will be held June 28-July 4 2020 at Radford University in Virginia.

Each year F/friends from around North America come together to form a welcoming, intergenerational and inclusive community. Gathering offers a variety of programming for different ages. Junior Gathering is open for infant thru rising 9th graders, while the High School program is for teens who are rising 10th grade thru just finished high school. There is a vibrant Adult Young Friends community for Friends ages 18-35. FGC’s arrangements in this campus setting are attuned to differing abilities and ages. Junior Gathering and the High School program offer opportunities for young people to strengthen their spiritual foundation and make life-long friends. (All youth must attend with a parent or sponsor.)

Morning workshops and activities (a choice among about four dozen!), afternoon topic groups formed on-the-spot, music springing up on campus walkways, stimulating evening lectures and joyous concerts, late night movies and dances, group outings, and much more fill the days. Or take a break, mingle in conversation groups on campus walks – oh, yes, and even naps are encouraged! This year’s Gathering will feature an exciting evening plenary program featuring Valarie Kaur of the Revolutionary Love Project, Quaker climate activist Kallan Benson, and a performance of Deeper Than The Skin by Reggie Harris and Greg Greenway!

You can attend Gathering for a half-week (3 days) or full-week (7 days). Or extend your Gathering by signing up for one of the pre-Gathering retreats! Scholarships and workgrants are available – register during early registration (between April 1-14, 2020) to have the best access to financial aid. Learn more and register for the 2020 FGC Gathering beginning April 1st at FGCgathering.org. For additional questions, feel free to contact Elaine Meyer-Lee at eemeyer87@earlham.edu, as Gathering has been a very important part of the Meyer-Lee's family Quaker identity/experience for decades.

Save those dates - June 28-July 4 2020 - and plan to come to The Gathering in Radford, Virginia. Way will Open. See you there!

Financial assistance is available through AFM's Ministry and Worship Committee for those attending SAYMA and/or FGC. More details later, but if you have questions now, please see Cynthia Berg or Muireann Brennan for forms and information

HOOSONS LEAD TRIP TO REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA – September 2020

Georgia, located on the crossroads of Europe and Asia, is a unique blend of cultures and traditions. The country offers an amazing variety of heritage, religions and fascinating landscapes from snowy peaks of the Caucasus mountain range to the fertile lowlands; semi-deserts to wetlands and subtropics. At every step you come across the profound evidence of flourishing culture and centuries-old traditions that are still alive.

Officially recognized as the birthplace of wine-making, Georgia keeps producing great variety of wines in its unique and ancient way – fermenting the grapes in clay jars buried in the ground. Georgian Polyphonic singing and folk dancing culture is another highlight. This culture is still vibrant and visitors are often treated with improvised concerts and shows anywhere they are in Georgia – because and as the saying goes “every Georgian is a Singer and Dancer”.

But perhaps no other part of Georgian culture reflects the nature of its people as the cuisine and feasting habits associated with it – a diversity of tasty dishes from various parts of the country that have been influenced by many cultures that passed through.

This trip departs on September 7 and returns on September 17. The best way to travel is with friends. And this trip is being led by Bill & Teri Hooson. Bill has been traveling to Georgia since the country declared independence from the Soviet Union to help the country establish YMCAs! Teri traveled to the country in 2002 and 2017 to inspect their “Animal Control Programs,” to observe the phenomenon of a patriarchal society under Communist control moving towards a matriarchal takeover for survival with the fall of communism, as well as to celebrate with the Georgians their 10 & 25 year anniversaries for the YMCA. The trip is sponsored by YMCA Alumni and the cost is \$2,475. For further information contact Bill or Teri @ 770 786-8096.

FIRST MONTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS

January 20, 2020

Recorded Pending Approval

Attendance: Judith Greenberg, Suzanne Cole Sullivan, Georgia Lord, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Caroline Morris, Dwight Harriman, Ronald Nuse, Dee DeBra, Lynn Luezler, Pat Williams, Glenn Plyler, Eric Glenn, John A. Adams, Clive Gordon, Betsey Eggers, Jack Honderd, Kellie Divis, Susan Firestone, Alison Mawle, Mike Chapman, Cath Amanti, Sara Patenaude, Myrna Trapp, Elizabeth Lamb, Karen terHorst Morris, Alberta Guise, Kevin Wong, Anton Flores, Rebecca L. Grant, Bill Holland, Mary Ann Downey, Paul Mangelsdorf, Lissa Place (Clerk), and Rebecca Cole Sullivan (Recording Clerk) (35 Friends)

Friends gathered near the appointed hour with opening worship. A member of Ministry and Worship shared the First Month Query out of the worship: “How can we make the meeting a community in which each person is accepted and nurtured, and strangers are welcome?”

Discernment Items

Nomination Committee: Myrna Trapp reported on behalf of the nominating committee. Nominating recommends the approval of Mary Ann Downey and Bill Holland to serve as members of Ministry and Worship Committee for a three-year term.

Minute 01-19-2020-01: On the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Mary Ann Downey to serve as a member of the Ministry and Worship Committee for a three-year term beginning January 2020 and ending December 2022.

Minute 01-19-2020-02: On the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Bill Holland to serve as a member of the Ministry and Worship Committee for a three-year term beginning January 2020 and ending December 2022.

Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association Representative Announcement:

John Adams, SAYMA Representatives from AFM, read the following request:

SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee is reaching out to each meeting or worship group because we are hearing that meetings are feeling tension and conflict around the SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice Committee. We encourage your meeting to engage in conversations about these issues (e.g., threshing sessions, small group discussions, reflecting on your history, inviting a SAYMA M&N member to lead a discussion) in preparation for the March 14, 2020, Representative Meeting.

Atlanta Friends Meeting will hold a threshing session in February. [Editors note: March 1.] Susan Firestone, and Clive Gordan will help Free Palazzo and John Adams plan the threshing session.

Minute 01-19-2020-03: Friend approved holding a threshing session to talk about AFM's feelings around the tension and conflict in SAYMA around the SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice Committee.

Naming Committee: Naming Committee recommends Kevin Wong and Margaret Nagawa for a three-year term on Nominating.

Minute 01-19-2020-04: On the recommendation of the Naming Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Kevin Wong as a member of the Nominating Committee for a three-year term beginning January 2020 and ending December 2022.

Minute 01-19-2020-05: On the recommendation of the Naming Committee, we approve Margaret Nagawa to serve as the Religious Education Liaison to the Nominating Committee for a three-year term beginning January 2020 and ending December 2022.

Minute 01-19-2020-06: Atlanta Friends Meeting offers grateful thanks to the members of naming committee and lay down this committee: Betsey Eggers, Liz Nicholson and Jim Tolmach.

Ministry and Worship: Elizabeth Lamb, clerk of Ministry and Worship, reported on behalf of the committee. Last month, Ministry and Worship read parts of Leeland McPhail, Martha Kang McGill, Joseph Jackson and Jane Lang's applications for membership and asked friends to get to know them. Today we bring these names forward for approval. We look forward to getting to know and love these friends even more through their membership in the coming years.

Minute 01-19-2020-07: On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Leeland McPhail for membership.

Minute 01-19-2020-08: On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Martha Kang McGill for membership.

Minute 01-19-2020-09: On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Joseph Jackson for membership.

Minute 01-19-2020-10: On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Jane Lang for membership.

Atlanta Friends Meeting has received a Certificate of Transfer from Chatham-Summit Monthly Meeting in Chatham, New Jersey for Peter Lang. He and his wife Jane have been worshipping with us regularly and we are happy to accept his transfer.

Minute 01-19-2020-11: On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship, Atlanta Friends Meeting gladly accepts the transfer of membership for Peter Lang from Chatham-Summit Monthly Meeting to Atlanta Friends Meeting.

Atlanta Friends Meeting has received a request from Susan E. Cozzens to transfer her membership from Atlanta Friends Meeting to Eastside Friends Meeting in Bellevue Washington. Parts of her letter were read.

Minute 01-19-2020-12: On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship, Atlanta Friends Meeting asks Eastside Friends Meeting (WA) to accept Susan E. Cozzens into your meeting. She has been a faithful member of Atlanta Friends Meeting for many years. We will miss her insight, her tireless work, and her loving presence. We ask that you take her membership into your tender care.

Ministry and Worship has held under our care the ministry of Christina Repoley for many years. We have shared with her the joys of developing Quaker Volunteer Service and watching it grow. As her life and service continues to change, she has requested that we lay down her anchoring committee.

Minute 01-19-2020-13: On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship, Atlanta Friends Meeting lays down our responsibility for the anchoring committee for Christina Repoley's ministry in leadership and spiritual nurture.

Minute 01-19-2020-14: On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship, Atlanta Friends Meeting offers grateful thanks to the members of Christina Repoley's anchoring committee: Laura MacNorlin, clerk, Kelsey McNicholas, Lewis Fuller and Sadie Forsythe.

Reports

Ministry and Worship: Elizabeth Lamb reported on behalf of the committee. Ministry and Worship has received an application for membership for Susan Lippold. A clearness committee has met with her and finds her clear for membership. Please get to know her over the next month. Her name will be brought forth in February for approval.

In May 2017, Meeting for Business Ministry and Worship read a letter from Farmington Friends Meeting introducing sojourning member Diana White. There was not a formal minute naming her as such, but she attended meeting faithfully for a while and helped with Sarah Walton's ministry. She has now written requesting to terminate her sojourning status. Let us hold her in the light now and going forward.

Finance Report: Paul Mangelsdorf, clerk of Finance Committee, gave the year-end finance report. The meeting ran a surplus of \$40,657. Noticeable variance from the what was budgeted: Investment income, which is unbudgeted, was large this year, rental income was higher than budgeted, and the biggest driver is the employee expense line ran extremely underbudget due to vacancies and temporary help throughout the year. The Fiscal Year 2019 surplus will be transferred to the permanent improvement fund.

Administration Committee: Kevin Wong, Property Coordinator, reported on behalf of the Administration Committee. The meeting has partnered with Georgia Interfaith Power and Light (GIPL) to undertake Power Wise, Water Wise and Solar Wise audits. An ad-hoc committee has been formed around this work, consisting of Anton Flores, Jack Honderd, Henry Slack and Kevin Wong (point of contact). The audits will take place in the next month. Friends asked that the use of the gas stove be a part of the energy audit so we can have more information about if we want to replace the stove with electric.

In addition, AFM has updated all eight thermostats in the Meetinghouse with Nest thermostats. These units provide three major benefits: each of scheduling, smart usage and energy savings, and cost savings. The Friend in Residence is responsible for inputting the weekly schedule into the HVAC system to ensure that the rooms are comfortable when people arrive, and that the rooms are not being heated/cooled when vacant.

Nominating Committee: Clive Gordon on behalf of nominating brought forward a new description of the Social Concerns Committee responsibilities for the Meeting Handbook. This was read and will be entered in the newsletter so people can review before it is approved next month.

Minutes of 12th Month:

Minute 01-29-2020-15: Friends approved the Twelfth Month Minutes.

Clerk's Items: I am honored to be your Clerk and am grateful for the opportunity to serve this community. One issue that I have felt strongly about for a long time is "How does Meeting Identify and Support those people who have not been attending Meeting for awhile?" I have seen multiple people who have been very important to Meeting over the years fall through the cracks because nobody reached out to them when they stopped attending. I ask that you consider this over the coming month, and we will bring this item up for discussion next month.

Events in the Life of the Meeting

- Martha Kang McGill and Leeland McPhail's welcomed Felix Kang McPhail born December 26, 2019.
- James Quenton O'Day (born Sept 20, 2017) welcomed a new little brother, Max Honderd O'Day, born December 19, 2019. These are the grandchildren of Betsey Eggers and Jack Honderd and children of Elizabeth Honderd O'Day.

Closing Worship

Friends closed with a moment of open worship.

Lissa Place (clerk)

Rebecca Cole Sullivan (Recording Clerk)

PROPOSED CHANGE TO SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION FOR HANDBOOK

Proposed Description of

Social Concerns Committee

Approved 12/1999, Draft update 7/2019 – approved by Social Concerns, September 2019

Membership: Members and attenders of the Atlanta Friends Meeting. Meetings are open to all that wish to attend.

Terms for Clerk: Three-year, non-consecutive terms.

Meetings: Meetings are held regularly, at a time chosen by the committee.

Purpose: This committee encourages and supports individual members and attenders in their social concerns leadings. It plans and organizes the Meeting's social outreach. Quakers for Racial Equality, Friends of Color, and Green Friends are currently active examples of the kinds of subgroups that can be periodically formed under the wing of the Social Concerns Committee. Each of these groups is responsible for discerning spending a portion of the annual budget (see below).

Duties:

1. *Financial:*

a) After discussion and input within the Committee, prepares an annual budget and presents it to the Finance Committee and then to the Monthly Meeting for Business for approval. Items in the budget include support for projects or organizations, which involve one or more Meeting members or attenders. Social Concerns Budget also covers community organizations when the Meeting is a member and some other organizations and projects. Meeting members and attenders may request support from the Committee for a project or group in which they are involved. Budget requests are generally at most a few hundred dollars for such a request.

b) Reviews larger requests for support for special leadings for an individual or for increasing the Meeting's budget for special Social Concerns projects involving the whole Meeting, or a number of Meeting members and attenders. These projects may be funded at amounts above \$1000. Presents recommendations for funding such projects to the Meeting for Business. *(Note: For more information on how best to bring a request for financial support for a Social Concerns-related leading, please contact the Clerk of the Committee.)*

2. *Education:* Informs the Meeting about social issues through forums, written articles and announcements.

3. *Clearness:* Assists Meeting members and attenders with discernment for their social concerns leadings through a clearness process. (see

http://atlanta.quaker.org/Clearness_Committees_and_Their_Use_in_Personal_Discernment.pdf)

A clearness process may result in a recommendation for a request for funding either through the Social Concerns budget, Special Leadings line of Atlanta Friends Meeting (AFM) Budget, or through an increase in the AFM Budget (see #1). The clearness committee may also recommend setting up a support/anchoring committee for the person through the Ministry and Worship Committee (see.....*need link about support committee. Here's an example:*

<http://www.mounttobyfriends.org/organizational/procedures-of-care-and-counsel/clearness-and-support-committees/>)

Here are some brief notes about how the two descriptions differ, as presented at the last meeting for business (1/19/20).

Membership: dropped number of members.

Meetings: "regularly" instead of once a month. (presently every two months with additional meetings in between as required)

Purpose: New sentence at end ("Each of these...budget"...))

Duties:

1. Financial:

a) Last sentence updates how to request support, breaking off larger requests

b) Clarifies how larger requests are handled now

3. Clearness- more detail added on how to do this.

4. Reports- This section has been dropped. The section previously read: "Reports: Explains to the Meeting the process that led to a recommendation, as well as why some issues were not brought forward."

Contact Bert Skellie if you have any questions.

HOLDING IN THE LIGHT:

Cindy Berg
Beth-Ann Buitekant
David & Freer Jarvis
Gail Nuse
Joanna Reid

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

Atlanta Friends Meeting Contacts

Clerk of the Meeting: Lissa Place, afmclerk1@gmail.com
Office Coordinator: Nina Gooch, atlantaquakers@gmail.com
Treasurer: Judith Greenberg, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com
Ministry & Worship: Elizabeth Lamb, gelds@comcast.net
Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280
Social Concerns: Bert Skellie, bertskellie@gmail.com
Administration: Steve Collins, shcollins75@gmail.com
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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 St. Timothy United Methodist Church
5365 Memorial Dr, Stone Mountain, GA 30083

Every Second & Fourth First Day 2:30 p.m. – Macon Friends Worship Group.
Contact Kellie Divis at MaconQuakers@gmail.com; maconquakers.org

Every Third First Day 11:45 p.m. – Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, Meeting room
12:30 p.m. – Carrollton Friends Worship Group.
St. Andrew's UMC Youth Center, 1106 Maple St.; contact Jean Hudson,
jhudson30116@yahoo.com or 678-378-3368; carrolltonfriends.org .

Fourth Day (Wednesday) 8:30 a.m. Morning Worship, Library
First and third Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m. Worship at David & Freer Jarvis' home

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.

Other Regular Events at the Meetinghouse

First Day (Sunday) 9:00 a.m. - Adult First Day School, Library
10:00 a.m. - Meeting for Worship
Third Sunday of every month, 11:15 a.m. - Listening Ear for those with a concern about racism
Third Sunday of every month, 11:45 am, - Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
5:00 p.m. - Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship, Meeting Room

Second Day (Monday) Every other Monday at 7:00 p.m. - Spiritual Nurture Group, Library

Third Day (Tuesday) Second & fourth Tuesdays at 7:00 - Deep Waters Center for Prayer & Exploration, Meeting Room

18th of Each Month Newcomers Welcome Dinner, rotating location (No Welcome Dinner in December)

Atlanta Friends Meeting
701 W. Howard Avenue
Decatur, GA 30030-2902

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

Office: Mon-Thurs 10 am to 1 pm and Friday by appointment

phone: 404-377-2474 – web and email: atlantaquakers.org, atlantaquakers@gmail.com

Clerk: Lissa Place, afmclerk1@gmail.com Treasurer: Judith Greenberg, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com

Are you a newcomer to the Atlanta Friends community and would like a nametag?

We would be happy to make you a permanent nametag. You can leave a request in one of the baskets on the front table. When Carol Gray has made one for you, it will be placed in the black file box on the greeting table.

Atlanta Friends Meeting has three email lists:

To receive the announcement sheets and other announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting, send a blank email to

afmannouncements-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

To receive announcements AND posts about a broader range of topics relating to being a Quaker, send a blank email to

afmdiscussion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To receive the newsletter by email, send a blank email to

afmnewsletter-subscribe@yahoo.groups.com. When asked to confirm, select the option to confirm by email.

Would you like to appear in future AFM Directories?

Send your name and contact information to Brent Wolff at afmdirectory@gmail.com.

What does investing in your spiritual community look like for you and your family?

Atlanta Friends Meeting accepts contributions of your time, resources, and money! You can place a financial contribution in the slot marked "Contributions" in the greeting area of the Meetinghouse or mail to the Treasurer at our mailing address.

To donate online with a credit card, visit atlantaquakers.org/contact.htm. Thank you!

Want to submit an announcement, letter, article, and anything else of interest to Friends for the newsletter?

Send items to atlquakerltr@gmail.com. Submissions may be edited for length and format. THE DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS IS THE 20TH DAY OF EACH PRECEDING MONTH.

This newsletter is a publication of the Atlanta Friends Meeting. Views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily that of the Meeting.