

# ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER



## JANUARY 2021

### LIFE AT ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING DURING COVID-19

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Out of an abundance of caution and a deep and prayerful concern for the health of our entire community, we are currently meeting for worship via Zoom instead of holding Sunday morning meeting for worship at the meetinghouse. See below for more details on this and other online worship and First Day School opportunities as well as other resources, including ways to connect to the meeting if you need help or if you can help others.

For those who prefer to worship in person, we are holding small, in-person worship groups at the meetinghouse on Mondays at 7 pm and Thursdays at 2 pm. Please stay tuned each week for more details or contact the office.

**A few other small groups are returning to the meetinghouse. If you are interested in this, please contact the Office Coordinator at [atlantaquakers@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaquakers@gmail.com) to discuss details.**

The newsletter and the announcement sheet will continue to be posted on the meeting's website. If you would like to be notified when the newsletter is posted online or to receive the announcement sheet via email, please see the final page of the newsletter as well as the announcement on page 6.

If you are used to bringing your contribution to the meetinghouse, you can instead mail a check (see address on last page) or pay securely with Paypal or credit / debit card on our website. Go to <http://www.atlantaquakers.org/contact.htm> and scroll down to the DONATE button.

The Office Coordinator continues to work from home and checks email / voicemail regularly.

### VIRTUAL EVENTS NOW ON CALENDAR ON WEB

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The calendar on the website (<http://atlantaquakers.org/events.htm>) now includes virtual events for the meeting. Thank you to Webmaster Aaron Ruscetta for his help with this! If you do not see your virtual event or if you have corrections, please email [atlantaquakers@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaquakers@gmail.com).

### SETTING UP MONTHLY / RECURRING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MEETING

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Contributions to the meeting throughout the year are always appreciated. You can set up monthly / recurring contributions when you use Paypal or your debit/credit card on our website at <http://www.atlantaquakers.org/contact.htm>. You can also set up payments through your bank's ACH bill payment system. (Please contact your bank for more details on their ACH bill payment system.)

Virtual Meeting for Worship  
Each First Day (Sunday)  
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

#### QUERY FOR JANUARY

"How does your meeting create a welcoming environment and spiritual home for everyone and involve newcomers?"

– Atlanta Friends Meeting

## RESOURCES FROM THE NOVEMBER 29 FORUM ON GRIEF AND HEALING

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We gathered after meeting for worship on November 29 for a time of worship sharing in small groups on the queries: *How does fear restrict my heart and spirit? What has worked for me to move through this? How can I open myself more freely to transformation and thus become more fully alive to the Spirit?* After a time of reflection and discussion, we offered a list of resources in the meeting, names of Friends who are therapists along with a list of books and quotations on grief and healing.

### Resources in Atlanta Friends Meeting:

*Ministry and Worship Committee: Bill Hooson*

*Care and Counsel Committee: Karen Skellie,*

*Spiritual Nurture Groups: Lewis Fuller, Bill Hooson, Mary Ann Downey*

*Therapists: Gordon Shippey, Elizabeth Valera*

### Books:

- ***When Things Fall Apart, Pema Chödrön:*** How can we live our lives when everything seems to fall apart—when we are continually overcome by fear, anxiety, and pain? The answer, Pema Chödrön suggests, might be just the opposite of what you expect, and shows that moving *toward* painful situations and becoming intimate with them can open up our hearts in ways we never before imagined.
- ***Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks, Diana Butler Bass:*** If gratitude is good, why is it so hard to do? In *Grateful*, Diana Butler Bass untangles our conflicting understandings of gratitude and sets the table for a renewed practice of giving thanks.
- ***From Beginning to End: The Rituals of Our Lives, Robert Fulghum:*** Here is a celebration of our everyday lives. With births, weddings, reunions, and funerals, we change from moment to moment, from one stage of life to another. Fulghum teaches us how to address our personal transformations, large and small, with dignity, love, and acceptance.
- ***On the Brink of Everything: Grace, Gravity & Getting Old, Parker Palmer:*** Seeking new insights and ways to engage the world, this was written to encourage adults of all ages to explore the way their lives are unfolding. It's not a how-to-do-it book on aging, but a set of meditations in prose and poetry that turn the prism on the meaning(s) of one's life, refracting new light at every turn.
- ***The Dance Between Hope and Fear, John Calvi:*** John Calvi is a Quaker healer. This book is not a how-to-do-healing book, but a mosaic of written pieces and speeches John set down in order to understand himself, his healing work, the elements of spiritual honesty, and giving over to Divine leadings.
- ***Holy Disunity: How What Separates Us Can Save Us, Layton E. Williams:*** Williams proposes that our primary calling as humans is not to create unity but rather to seek authentic relationship with God, ourselves, one another, and the world around us. And that means actively engaging those with whom we disagree.

### Quotes and Advices:

*"Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: you don't give up." (Anne Lamott)*

*"I do not understand the mystery of grace -- only that it meets us where we are and does not leave us where it found us." (Anne Lamott)*

*"Somewhere out in the darkness, a phoenix was singing in a way Harry had never heard before: a stricken lament of terrible beauty. And Harry felt, as he had felt about phoenix song before, that the music was inside him, not without; it was his own grief turned magically to song that echoed across the grounds and through the castle windows." (J.K. Rowling)*

*(below is a longer version of reflections Mary Ann Downey shared at the Forum)*

### **On Gratitude, Grief and Healing**

Gratitude is not a passive response to something we've been given,  
gratitude arises from paying attention,  
from being fully awake in the presence of everything that lives within and without us.  
Gratitude is the understanding that many millions of things come together and live  
together and mesh together and breath together,  
in order for us to take even one more breath of air,  
that the underlying gift of living as a participating human being is a privilege,  
that we are miraculously part of something.

~David Whyte

David Whyte's words about gratitude help me remember to simply pause and be grateful for the gift of life at the end of 2020, grateful that I am breathing, feeling well and safe after the challenges of isolation, separation and uncertainty of this year. We see more clearly now how we exist in a web of connection to community, expressed as "Ubuntu," a Nguni Bantu term meaning humanity, often translated as "I am because we are." This meeting community has carried us through this hard year and is a source of love, joy and strength. Loss helps us see what we have left, and we see we still have each other.

It is a strange paradox, that when we are open to deep gratitude for what we have now, we see more clearly what we have lost. Our meeting began Sunday worship over zoom in March and midweek worship in person for small groups in July, but even as we adapt and compensate with connections by phone, email or zoom meetings, we feel the loss of the physical energy we exchange in hugs, and handshakes, or just a touch. Living with uncertainty about what is safe presents a special kind of loss. How do I protect myself and others?

I've been thinking about how we learn to grieve and how we can help each other in times of loss. Like many others, I was taught to be grateful, but not taught to grieve. "Count your blessings," my mother said, and her favorite Bible verse was "A merry heart does good like a medicine." My father took comfort from "God does not ask nor does the Lord require more than we are able to bear." I was in high school when he died and 25 when my mother died, both from a heart attack. At 25, I was married with a young daughter and working on a master's degree in counseling. A few months after my mother's death, I was in a psychology class when I heard the professor say, "Life is a series of losses." I was stunned by the truth of this simple and profound statement.

If life is a series of losses, how do we learn to grieve? The professor who made the statement about loss was also a therapist and became my therapist. I learned that in order to help others, I first had to work on understanding myself, and my losses. Grief is the price we pay for love, and healing from loss is a process that may never feel complete. We are woven into a web of family and community that holds us and is also torn by loss. Grieving helps us honor and mend the torn places, but some holes may remain. And like Kintsugi, the Japanese art of putting broken pottery pieces back together with gold, healing is built on the idea that in embracing flaws and imperfections, we can create an even stronger, more beautiful life of courage and resilience.

Here are some lessons on grieving that I keep relearning. There is no one right way to grieve and it happens gradually over time. Don't wait for the right time to start, just begin

where you are. Finding a companion for the journey, a therapist or trusted friend, and keeping a journal can help. You will feel alone even though you know that you are part of a community of others who grieve. We are all walking wounded. When we are able to honor smaller, more everyday losses we build our capacity for bigger, life changing losses. When we grieve, we may move through stages of shock, denial, anger, and bargaining before acceptance as described by Dr Kubler Ross but it is important to accept the truth of your experience however it happens. It is a journey, not a destination.

After my first husband Dave's death from a heart attack at 47, I continued coming to meeting even though I would often sit and cry. I felt held and comforted by this faith community. In the first months, I couldn't concentrate well enough to read books, or even poems. It was hard to read even a sentence before crying or drifting away. One day, however, I discovered a sentence that is for me the best response to deep loss, and to life as a series of losses. Poet May Sarton wrote, "Take anguish for companion and set out." Those words are now my guide for gratitude, grief and healing.

## THE OUTGOING EPISTLE OF THE 2020 VIRTUAL PRE-GATHERING OF FRIENDS OF COLOR AND THEIR FAMILIES AT FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE

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*"We are a harvest of survivors. But then, that's what we've always been."*

– Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Sower*

To Friends Everywhere:

We begin by remembering our ancestors who were strong enough to make a way for us. Friends of Color and their families met for Pre-Gathering Retreat on 26 Day through 28 Day Sixth Month 2020. This is the eighth year Friends of Color have met for our Pre-Gathering Retreat. First-timers felt welcomed and validated. This year, we met virtually with

our largest attendance yet. There were 47 attendees, ranging in age from 11 months through 77 years from Canada, Mexico, Switzerland and the United States of America.

The importance of this Gathering for Friends of Color worshipping in community together cannot be overstated. To our Friends in the wider Quaker world, we, the Friends of Color, can't breathe. During this weekend, we enjoyed the rare opportunity of not being othered In Quaker space. We experienced the joy of being seen as we are and the affirmation of a supportive spirit among ourselves in the "Amen corner". The term "Amen corner" comes from the Black church and is a communal space that validates, affirms and uplifts the spirit. In isolation, due to COVID19, we are being kept apart and away from those we love, trust and need. The pre-gathering retreat brought back the source of community and family that has been missing. We were able to exhale, relax, and breathe together. Many of us did not realize how exhausted we were until we were able to relax with one another. The gifts of the spirit were abundant. We shared in worship, gentle yoga and meditation, meaningful discussions, journaling and self-discovery. We also listened and shared in each other's joys, triumphs, pains and sorrows. We experienced spiritual renewal that was awakened by moving through pain to hope for the future for ourselves and our children. Attention and space was given for people to play games, dance, talk, grieve, play music, watch videos, and write.

We have much gratitude to the Program Coordinator for the Ministry on Racism; the pioneer who laid the groundwork to make the Pre-Gathering Retreat available to us within FGC gathering and who faithfully makes it happen each year. We are grateful for being able to acknowledge all that makes us human, for finding home and connection. Our inner Light is magnified and our capacity to breathe deeply is nurtured when that of God is acknowledged in each of us. It is our hope that other Friends of Color will know that such a space exists and know that they are desired, needed and will be warmly embraced.

The Pre-Gathering Friends of Color Retreat provides a reprieve. Friends of Color need respite from the systemic racism too often found in our American Quaker community that often goes unseen by many white Friends. Friends of Color need respite from the insidious lie of white supremacy manifested in daily oppressive traumatic stressors (microaggressions) which have the effect of blaming the oppressed for our own oppression. Friends of Color need respite and support which our home meetings have not provided. Friends of Color are fatigued from being asked to teach white folks.

We ask all Quakers to heed a Call to Action. Please sit with these queries:

1. What is the Spirit leading me to do about the historic and ongoing racial pandemic across my meeting, my community, my work environment and my country?
2. How can we honor the memory of people who have lost their lives to the struggle for a better world?
3. How can we construct ways for people to engage and remain engaged *beyond* good intentions in the struggle for true equality in health, education, wealth and against state sanctioned violence?
4. How can we encourage the support of Friends of Color in Quaker worship and meetings around the world?
5. How can Friends de-center themselves in order to listen to and hear Friends of Color?
6. How can I support respite for Friends of Color?

In this time of COVID19, People of Color discovered that a deadly pandemic is secondary to the long-time pandemic of racism in our lives. People of Color are more likely to die from COVID19 due to the effects of racism and oppression. Think about how this pandemic has turned your world upside down, economically, emotionally, psychologically. Now imagine there is no one working on a vaccine, and that if you get sick or die, no one notices or cares. For People of Color, the human-made pandemic of racism is deadlier than COVID19, and we need you to do work so that we can BREATHE.

In Peace, Love and . . . .

*2020 FGC Virtual Pre-Gathering Retreat for Friends of Color and their Families*

## QUAKER RESOURCES ONLINE

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Quaker parenting, recommended by the Religious Education Committee: [quakerparenting.org](http://quakerparenting.org)

Canadian Friends Service Committee: <https://quakerservice.ca/>, ncluding work with indigenous peoples and a guide to acknowledging the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples at <https://quakerservice.ca/slideshow/new-resource-on-writing-territory-acknowledgments/>

the Black Quaker Project: [www.theblackquakerproject.org](http://www.theblackquakerproject.org)

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and the princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among brothers,  
To make music in the heart.

– shared by the Black Quaker Project, [www.theblackquakerproject.org](http://www.theblackquakerproject.org)

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## AD HOC GROUP ON AFM POLICY & PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING RACISM

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The Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting (CURAFM) is forming an ad hoc group for the purpose of developing and publicizing policies and procedures about dealing with racism within AFM. Our first priority would be basic policies / procedures that are appropriate for our spiritual community and clarify who to call or what procedure to follow if racial discrimination or a racist incident occurs. As the work proceeds, we may broaden our focus. The ad hoc group will include representatives from CURAFM, Quakers for Racial Equality, Care & Counsel, Administration, Ministry and Worship, and the Friends of Color group. We also invite anyone else who is interested to join the ad hoc group. We expect that the group can start meeting by January 2021, and we can arrange a time that is convenient for participants. In addition, we welcome all Friends' feedback through email, call/text, or Zoom meeting. For more information, or to give feedback, contact Susan Firestone at [susanfires@gmail.com](mailto:susanfires@gmail.com) or 404-268-6480

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## CHANGES TO MEETING EMAIL LISTS

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Yahoo Groups ended December 15, and the meeting's email lists were moved to Google Groups. This includes the following lists:

- the newsletter list, which lets you know when this monthly newsletter is online on the meeting's website
- the announcement list, which includes the weekly announcement sheet and a very few other emails, all directly related to the life of the meeting (the announcement sheet is also posted on the website weekly at [atlantaquakers.org/\\_announcements/Announcement\\_Sheet.pdf](http://atlantaquakers.org/_announcements/Announcement_Sheet.pdf)).
- the discussion list, which includes the announcement sheet and a variety of other emails about a broader range of topics related to being a Quaker, often including social justice issues and opportunities **(NOTE: You do not need to be on both the announcement list and the discussion list!)**
- the Atlanta FLGBTQC (Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns) list for those who are LGBTQ+ or are interested in LGBTQ+ issues

If you are no longer receiving these emails or if you would like to join for the first time, please email the Office Coordinator at [atlantaquakers@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaquakers@gmail.com).



## SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS AND QUAKERISM 101 IN ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL

Sunday, January 3 and 10, etc

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Each first Sunday of the month in adult First Day School, 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. On January 3, Jennifer Thompson will share her spiritual journey. See below for Zoom details.

To hear the spiritual journey of Becky Lough from December 6, visit <https://tinyurl.com/y79a52j4>.

On third Sundays, Adult First Day School will have worship sharing, usually on that month's query.

On other Sundays, we will be discussing *A Living Faith, An Historical Study of Quaker Beliefs* by Wilmer A. Cooper, as part of our annual Quakerism 101. This book will guide us through a brief history of Quakerism, a review of beliefs and testimonies, and then a look at where we are now and where we are heading. Whether you are new to Quakerism or just would like a review or a chance to discuss our beliefs, this is the class for you. Come for one class or come for the whole course.

## READING BOOKS BY AND ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR – Thursday, January 7

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The book group reading works by and about people of color continues to meet at 1:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month via Zoom. On January 7, the book for discussion is *The Night Watchman* by Louise Erdrich, and for February 4, the non-fiction book *How To Be An Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi. For questions or the Zoom link, contact Susan Cole (cole2544@bellsouth.net).

## SAYMA ASKS FOR INPUT ON 2021 YEARLY MEETING BY JANUARY 10

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Our yearly meeting, Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA), a group of monthly meetings including Atlanta Friends Meeting, is seeking input on the format of our 2021 Yearly Meeting, our summer gathering for fellowship, business and worship. They are also seeking input on children's programming options throughout the spring. If you have children and/or if you have ever attended Yearly Meeting or have ever even considered attending Yearly Meeting and especially if you would consider attending a virtual or hybrid Yearly Meeting, **please** fill out the survey at <https://tinyurl.com/ycwhsduk>. The Yearly Meeting Planning Committee and the Junior Year Meeting Committee request your input **by January 10** so they can review survey responses before making a decision about the the format of Yearly Meeting Sessions 2021 and about children's programming for the spring. For more information about SAYMA, you can visit [www.sayma.org](http://www.sayma.org).

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ADVOCATES OF GEORGIA – Wednesday, January 13

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The next monthly meeting of Restorative Justice Advocates of Georgia will be on Wednesday, January 13, at 7 pm. Attorney David Newman of Winnipeg will share his years of experience working toward integrating Indigenous & Restorative Justice practices into the Canadian legal system. Contact Bert Skellie for more information.

<https://zoom.us/j/94159383493>

Meeting ID: 941 5938 3493

Passcode 800260

## MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – Sunday, January 17

Meeting for business will be online again this month. Simply stay in the Zoom Meeting for Worship after worship ends. Zoom details below. Minutes from December are below.

## SEEKING THE SEED: EMBRACING WHOLENESS, EXPERIENCING THE DIVINE SEYM Michener Lecture & Seminars – Sunday, January 17th

On Sunday, January 17, at 1 pm, Southeastern Yearly Meeting presents the online Michener Lecture, *Seeking the Seed: Embracing Wholeness, Experiencing the Divine* presented by Dr. Petra Doan. Petra will share reflections from her own search for integrity and wholeness that led to a transformational gender journey and will attempt to generalize lessons for others seeking to strengthen their connection to the Divine (the Seed) for spiritual transformation and life enrichment. There will be an interactive seminar following the lecture. Register at <https://seymquakers.formstack.com/forms/michenerlecture2021> to receive the Zoom login info.

Dr. Petra Doan has been a Quaker since 1972 and a member of Tallahassee Monthly Meeting since 1989. She is Professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Florida State University and researches urban planning issues relating to marginalized communities and the LGBTQ community. She has edited the books *Queering Planning: Challenging Heteronormative Assumptions and Reframing Planning Practice* as well as *Planning and LGBTQ Communities: the Need for Inclusive Queer Space*.

## NEWSLETTER DEADLINE FOR NEXT MONTH – Wednesday, January 20

Please send articles, announcements, information about upcoming events, and other submissions to [atlquakerltr@gmail.com](mailto:atlquakerltr@gmail.com) by January 20. Word or other text format please.

## GEORGIANS FOR ALTERNATIONS TO THE DEATH PENALTY ONLINE VIGIL – Thursday, Jan 21

Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty will hold a vigil online via Zoom for federal executions January 21, 2021 at 6:30 P.M. Please email Kellie Divis at [kdivis@gfadp.org](mailto:kdivis@gfadp.org) to register.

## LEARN ABOUT “STOLEN WEALTH RETURNS” – Sunday, January 24

Have you heard about grassroots efforts to make amends to descendants of enslaved people and wondered how these projects work? Join Quakers for Racial Equality virtually on January 24 at 1:00 p.m. to learn about one project, Stolen Wealth Returns (SWR), a non-profit organization that makes reparations for systemic racism by paying the student loans for 13 Black social justice organizers. SWR has involvement from Quakers and other religious groups. SWR is looking for clusters of Friends or individual Friends who want to find just the right reparations project--who might combine their financial capacity in order to pay off one or more smaller student loans held by the Black organizers involved with SWR. Liz Oppenheimer and Kathryn White of Stolen Wealth Returns will share general information about SWR, how religious groups or individuals can help by donating to help pay down student loans of Black social justice advocates, and what goes into organizing a project like this. They will also invite our questions. This is a free event, and there is no obligation to donate. Everyone is welcome. See announcement sheet for Zoom info. For more info, contact Susan Firestone at [susanfires@gmail.com](mailto:susanfires@gmail.com) or visit <https://stolenwealthreturns.org/>.



## LET'S TALK ABOUT RACE – Wednesday, January 27

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This online, drop-in forum has become monthly, with meetings on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm. Sample topics include: "What is my Racial Identity?" and "How can I have meaningful conversations about race with others who do not look like me?" For more info or to suggest discussion topics, please email Alberta Guise (*see directory or contact office*).

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84678045805?pwd=cFdhcEd4UmdLWWNldDFpMm1mOEVTQT09>

Meeting ID: 846 7804 5805

Passcode: LTAR

No Waiting Room; participants can join before Host

## FORUM ON QUERIES: SHAPING ACTIVE SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR A WELCOMING MEETING – Sunday, January 29

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The Ministry & Worship committee sponsors a forum on the use of queries for spiritual growth at 11:45 on 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday, January 29. For this forum we will look specifically at queries and questions focused on welcoming, inclusion and racial equity. We will work in large and small groups for worship sharing and writing queries.

## MACON WORSHIP GROUP CHANGES TIMES OF ZOOM WORSHIP

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The Macon Worship Group, which is under the care of Atlanta Friends Meeting, will now have meeting for worship via Zoom every Thursday at 7:00 pm (except for fifth Thursdays). They invite us to join them. For more info: [maconquakers@gmail.com](mailto:maconquakers@gmail.com).

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84095899009?pwd=SFhhOGNnWHZFbDdKRUhVnFqdFk0dz09>

Meeting ID: 840 9589 9009

Passcode: 542278

## MEETING VIRTUALLY: WORSHIP AND FIRST DAY SCHOOL AT ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

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*An excellent overview of meeting for worship over Zoom is "Can You Gather With God Over Zoom?" is at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/arts/quaker-meeting-zoom.html>*

*See the most recent announcement sheet in your email inbox or on our website at [http://www.atlantaquakers.org/\\_announcements/Announcement\\_Sheet.pdf](http://www.atlantaquakers.org/_announcements/Announcement_Sheet.pdf) for the most up to date information and for more detailed instructions for connecting using Zoom. To call in using your phone, dial 1-253-215-8782 or 1-301-715-8592 and enter the meeting ID and password, if needed, when prompted. This may be a toll call from your landline.*

### **Sundays:**

ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL will meet at 9:00 am to 9:50 am

Meeting ID: 862 3546 3217

Password: Quaker

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86235463217>

On the first Sunday of each month, we will listen to the Spiritual Journey of one of our members or attenders. (January 3 will be Jennifer Thompson.) On the third Sunday of each month, we will have worship sharing, usually on that month's query, and on other Sundays, we will discuss *A Living Faith, An Historical Study of Quaker Beliefs*. We will end in time to be in meeting for worship.

## FIRST DAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN

Sundays 9:30 am to 9:55 am

First Day Class for Families and Friends

Link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/7279961727>

Meeting ID: 727 996 1727

Passcode: 679898

Families are invited / will have time to join meeting for worship after this ends.

Fourth Sunday is intergenerational/family worship and all members and attenders are invited to join.

## FIRST DAY MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Link: <https://zoom.us/j/908004190>

Meeting ID: 908 004 190

Passcode: 842962.

The meeting link will remain open until about 11:45 for those who would like to chat. On the third Sunday of each month we will have meeting for business via Zoom after worship and a short break.

### *Calling All Families:*

*We would like to issue a special invitation to all families with children to attend the first 15 minutes of worship, as usual. If your mike is muted, your children will not be distracting to others (even if we see them wiggle). And we really miss seeing you!*

### *Suggestions for Meeting for Worship on Zoom:*

*“Worship is our response to an awareness of God. We can worship alone, but when we join with others in expectant waiting we may discover a deeper sense of God’s presence. We 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.” (From Advices and Queries, Britain Yearly Meeting.)*

Some things to keep in mind as we adjust to “the new normal” of worshipping via Zoom:

Even though it is different and may feel strange, remember that this is a worship service. To help create the kind of shared space that allows all of us to listen for the Divine within us, please keep your mic muted unless speaking to us. If you’re eating or having a lengthy conversation with another member of your household, please also turn off your video temporarily or step away from the camera, to avoid distracting others. If your children are joining us for meeting for worship, please do not feel the need to turn off your video. We welcome their presence in meeting for worship.

YOUNG FRIENDS/HIGH SCHOOL GROUP usually meets at noon

For current high schoolers and students in upper middle school as well as recent grads.

Contact Emily Weyrauch at [emily.weyrauch@gmail.com](mailto:emily.weyrauch@gmail.com) for more information and Zoom details

## **Wednesdays:**

WEDNESDAY MORNING MIDWEEK MEETING FOR WORSHIP 9:30 am on Wednesday mornings

Link: <https://zoom.us/j/92038862952>

Meeting ID: 920 3886 2952

Passcode 726229

Contact Bert Skellie at 404-680-4799 for more info.

## FINANCIAL HELP THROUGH THE AFM ASSISTANCE FUND

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This is a time to reach out and care for each other. Do you have a need for temporary financial assistance? Care & Counsel Committee maintains an Assistance Fund for Members and Attenders for providing temporary assistance with financial emergencies. If you have a financial need, don't hesitate to ask. The information about the process and an application form are on the AFM website: [Assistance Fund Description & Request Process](#) and [Assistance Fund Application Form](#). Instead of filling out the paper form, you can email the information to the Clerk of Care & Counsel, Karen Skellie, [kskellie@gmail.com](mailto:kskellie@gmail.com). Care & Counsel is meeting regularly online & by e-mail.

Would you like to help others through the AFM Assistance Fund?

**By mail** to the meetinghouse address to the attention of the treasurer. Make out the check to Atlanta Friends Meeting, and on the "for" line of the check, write "For Assistance Fund".

**Through AFM website by PayPal or Credit Card**, go to <http://www.atlantaquakers.org/contact.htm> and scroll down to the DONATE button.

To designate an online donation for the Assistance Fund, please also send an email addressed to both the treasurer and the bookkeeper:

[afmtreasurer1@gmail.com](mailto:afmtreasurer1@gmail.com) and [afmbookkeeper1@gmail.com](mailto:afmbookkeeper1@gmail.com)

## CARING CONNECTIONS AT ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

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If you need help during this time, or if you can help, Care and Counsel Committee has set up an online way to connect people, using something Gordon Shippey set up earlier in the year to create a general list of those willing to deliver meals, drive people to appointments, run errands, or visit people at home or in hospital. In response to social distancing, we've also added an option to connect people via email or phone. To request help or to volunteer, go to: <http://www.atlantaquakers.org/members.htm#CARINGCONNECT> (under Members and Attenders) or contact Karen Skellie at 404-680-4524 or [kskellie@gmail.com](mailto:kskellie@gmail.com).

## TWELFTH MONTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS

December 20, 2020, held via Zoom

Minutes Recorded Pending Approval

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**Attendance:** Bill Hooson, Teri Key-Hooson, Steve Collins, Alberta Guise, Anton Flores, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Caroline Morris, Mike Aland, Cheryl Cowherd, Clive Gordon, David Small, Diane Rowley, Don Bender, Elizabeth Lamb, Erin Schroder, Eugene Jennings, Folami Prescott-Adams, Georgia Lord, Jennifer Thompson, Judith Greenberg, Judy Lumb, Julia Ewen, Karen Morris, Mary Ann Downey, Bill Holland, Coryn Murphy, Myrna Trapp, Nina Gooch, Patricia Garrett, Paul Mangelsdorf, Ronald Nuse, Susan Firestone, Susan May, Caroline Coburn Allen, Mark Bryans, Lissa Place (clerk) and Rebecca Cole Sullivan (Recording Clerk).

Friends gathered near the appointed hour with opening worship. A member of Ministry and Worship shared the Twelfth Month Query out of the worship: "How am I experiencing abundance in my life right now? What are areas in which I am still struggling to be free or am not living an abundant life?"

## Discernment Items

**Finance:** Paul Mangelsdorf, clerk of Finance, brought the Meeting budget for 2021. Since last month the only changes have been a decrease rental income due to renters reevaluating when they want to return to the building and a few program line items were adjusted.

Committee on undoing racism at Atlanta Friends Meeting asked for their budgeted line to be increased to 500 for 2021. Friends agreed.

**Minute 12-20-2020-01:** On the recommendation of the Finance Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the 2021 Atlanta Friends Meeting Budget as amended.

**Nominating Report:** Clive Gordon, clerk of Nominating, reported on behalf of the committee. Nominating recommends the approval of Folami Prescott-Adams to serve as a member of the Ministry and Worship committee for a three-year term.

**Minute 12-20-2020-02:** On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Folami Prescott-Adams to serve as a member of the Ministry & Worship committee for a three-year term from January 2021 to December 2023.

**Ministry and Worship:** Bill Hooson, clerk of Ministry & Worship, reported on behalf of the committee. They bring forward a request to transfer Chris Roesel's membership to Penn Valley Friends Meeting (IYM-C). They also bring forward the acceptance of a transfer to Atlanta Friends Meeting for Beth Muller from Exeter Friends Meeting.

**Minute 12-20-2020-03:** On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship, Atlanta Friends Meeting asks Penn Valley Friends Meeting (Iowa Yearly Meeting - Conservative) to accept Chris Roesel into your meeting. We ask that you take his membership into your tender care.

**Minute 12-20-2020-04:** Atlanta Friends Meeting joyfully accepts the transfer of membership for Beth Muller of the Exeter Friends Meeting in Douglassville, PA.

## Reports:

**Ministry and Worship:** Bill Hooson, clerk of Ministry & Worship, reported on behalf of the committee. The Ministry & Worship committee will sponsor a forum on the use of queries for spiritual growth at 11:45 on 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday, January 29. For this forum we will look specifically at queries and questions focused on welcoming, inclusion and racial equity. We will work in large and small groups for worship sharing and writing queries. Everyone is welcome.

Ministry & Worship is working with other committees to launch a series of forums dealing with Reparations.

Ministry & Worship continues to examine our Zoom Meeting for Worship and if anyone has feedback, they welcome hearing it.

**Nominating:** Clive Gordon, clerk of Nominating, reported on behalf of the committee. Nominating brings the name Glenn Plyler for clerk of Social Concerns. Glenn's name was brought to nominating from within Social Concerns. Please get to know him this month. His contact information is in the directory. Nominating will return next month for approval.

**Naming:** Cheryl Cowherd reported on behalf of the naming committee. The naming committee brings forward the following names to serve on nominating for a three-year term: Diane Rowley, Ann Ritter, Jennifer Thompson and Eugene Jennings. These names will be brought forward next month for approval.

**Cabin Committee:** Mark Bryans reported on the use of the Ferguson Cabin. The cabins were used more than ever before this year, after an AFM special Covid-19 committee determined that the cabins were safe to use with careful protocol. For the 5 months June – October, there were only 3 days when there was no one at the cabins. Out of approximately 83 people who stayed at the cabins, 17 were there for the first time.

Due to Covid, unrelated individuals or families were not scheduled to use the cabins at the same time and Friends were asked to increase cleaning standards. Cabins committee members and stewards met for a work weekend in December before the Covid crisis began and did additional cleaning, repairs and routine maintenance as individuals or family units.

The cabin brought in \$3491 in rental income. The expenses of for the year were \$1122.60 which included Lake Burton Civic Association, electrical/utilities, tools and supplies leaving a \$2368.40 surplus for the year.

Some projects being planned include obtaining a new survey of the property, re-grading the driveway and laying down new gravel, installing a new metal roof on Tree Tops, recoating the metal roof on Dwight Cabin and Dwight Cabins' screen porch, recoating the metal roof on Squirrel House and installing flooring Irene Cabin. The committee plans to continue exploring options to manage humidity in Irene Cabin. All projects will be carried out as committee members are able to do them with Covid protocols in place.

The cabin committee is going to make sure that there is information on the AFM website about how to rent the cabin and amenities. The Cabin committee will work together to create clean out procedures to help us all meet the same standards.

**Suchitoto:** The Suchitoto Fund Committee, established in 2016 to manage a large bequest by Frank Cummings, supports youth development in the Suchitoto, El Salvador, area. The Committee will complete its work this year and plans to turn over the remaining funds to a youth-led Suchitoto non-profit, "The Association of Current and Graduated Scholarship Students from Suchitoto" (ABESUCHI).

Since our last quarterly report, ABESUCHI has completed the criteria for hiring a new director. They are developing a document for fundraising which tells the story of their organization's history. The Suchitoto Fund Committee has clarified in writing expectations after the AFM Committee is laid down at the end of this month. Starting in 2021, ABESUCHI will report its annual budget and monthly expenditures both to the AFM Finance Committee and to local representatives of the AFM Finance Committee in El Salvador. Any proposed expenditure over \$5,000 will require approval by a local representative.

The last of the Meeting's Suchitoto Fund assets are planned to be transferred to a bank account in El Salvador before the end of 2020. That account is expected to have about \$80,000 available for routine and special use by ABESUCHI for economic development work. For the next few years, AFM Finance Committee will continue to send future annual amounts of about \$2,000 from Frank's bequest to Suchitoto for their scholarship fund. Individuals in AFM will continue to be able to make donations earmarked for Suchitoto scholarships. Two members of AFM Finance (Paul Mangelsdorf and Lynn Leuszler) have served on the Suchitoto Fund Committee during the past four years. A third member (Don Bender) will be available to consider Suchitoto funding decisions in the future.

Next month we will bring a minute of appreciation for this committee.

**Ad Hoc Committee on the Atlanta Friends Meetings Facebook Group:** Nina Gooch reported on behalf of the ad hoc committee. This month the committee worked on a job description for the Facebook Moderator role. The description is below. In November, the committee was asked if those under 18 could join the Facebook group. After consulting with the parents of teens and those that work with teens, they've concluded that those under 18 aren't interested in Facebook at this point. However, should that change, they would welcome those under 18 and believe the guidelines that are in place would be sufficient protection.

*Proposed Job Description of the Facebook Moderator Role:*

Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the new positions of moderators for the meeting's Facebook group. There will be two moderators, both to be selected by the Nominating Committee and approved by meeting for business. The terms of the two moderators should end in alternating years. The position description is as follows:

- *The moderators of the Facebook group are available to help with questions about the group, including technical issues.*
- *They approve new members to the group.*
- *The moderators also have the responsibility to see that the AFM Facebook group remains a place where people feel safe sharing their ideas and experiences. Should moderators recognize that posts do not fit within the purposes of the group or do not follow the guidelines listed above, they will decide on an appropriate response. Posts or comments may be removed. The person sharing the inappropriate post or comment may be warned, muted or, as a last resort, removed from the group, in any order. After 30 days, a member who has been removed may appeal to rejoin the group.*

*Moderators can consult with the Clerk of the Atlanta Friends Meeting or with the Clerk of the Ministry & Worship committee, as needed. Members of the group who have concerns about the way an issue is being handled and who cannot resolve these concerns with the moderators may also consult the Clerk of the meeting or the Clerk of Ministry & Worship.*

This description will come back next month for approval with some additional information about how long the terms will be and how many terms a person can serve.

**Committee Corner:**

**Care and Counsel:** Care & Counsel is continuing our mission of concern for all members/attenders especially during this difficult time of the pandemic. We plan to reach out again soon to everyone just to see if there are needs for community that we can assist with, such as formation of small groups for those feeling isolated. We are also discussing ways our committee can bring the anti-racism work of the Meeting more fully into our work.

We have been offered a Zoom program on seeing God in those people we dislike or disagree with by a Quaker from New Jersey and will be assessing interest and possible times this program could be offered to the Meeting.

**Announcements:**

**Ad hoc group on AFM policy & procedures for addressing racism:** The Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting (CURAFM) is forming an ad hoc group for the purpose of developing and publicizing policies and procedures about dealing with racism within AFM. Our first priority would be basic policies / procedures that are appropriate for our spiritual community and clarify who to call or what procedure to follow if racial discrimination or a racist incident occurs. As the work proceeds, we may broaden our focus. The Ad hoc group will include representatives from CURAFM, Quakers for Racial Equality, Care & Counsel, Administration, Ministry and Worship,



and the Friends of Color group. We also invite anyone else who is interested to join the ad hoc group. We expect that the group can start meeting by January 2021, and we can arrange a time that is convenient for participants. In addition, we welcome all Friends' feedback through email, call/text, or Zoom meeting. For more information, or to give feedback, contact Susan Firestone at [susanfires@gmail.com](mailto:susanfires@gmail.com) or 404-268-6480.

**SAYMA Survey:** Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association Yearly Meeting Planning Committee and Junior Yearly Meeting Committee requests your input on planning for the yearly meeting sessions next summer and children's programming options over the spring. Please take the survey [here](#) by January 10. Giving the committee time to review the survey prior to our making a decision about the format of Yearly Meeting Sessions 2021. Here is the survey address, if it is easier to copy and share this way.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScOtu2--a11AHLMPNeTC0p8jVuPPJvMk7d4W-3UyIV4yjdacg/viewform>

### **Approval of Minutes for November 2020**

**Minute 12-20-2020-05:** Friends approved the Eleventh Month Minutes.

### **Events in the life of the Meeting**

Beth Garrettson died November 18, 2020. Atlanta Friends Meeting held a zoom memorial on December 12, 2020.

Mary Ann Downey and Bill Holland celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary via zoom on December 16 with the Meeting who holds their marriage under our care.

### **Closing Worship**

Friends closed with a moment of open worship.

Lissa Place (Clerk)

Rebecca Cole Sullivan (Recording Clerk)

### ***HOLDING IN THE LIGHT:***

Beth-Ann Buitekant  
David Smalls  
Eugene Jennings  
Nina Gooch  
Harriet Unfug  
Renda McCaughan  
Rick Martinson

*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](mailto:afmclerk1@gmail.com)  
Office Coordinator: Nina Gooch, [atlantaquakers@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaquakers@gmail.com)  
Treasurer: Judith Greenberg, [afmtreasurer1@gmail.com](mailto:afmtreasurer1@gmail.com)  
Ministry & Worship: Bill Hooson  
Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280  
Social Concerns: Bert Skellie, [bertskellie@gmail.com](mailto:bertskellie@gmail.com)  
Administration: Steve Collins, [shcollins75@gmail.com](mailto:shcollins75@gmail.com)  
Care & Counsel: Karen Skellie, [afm.care.counsel@gmail.com](mailto:afm.care.counsel@gmail.com)  
Quakers for Racial Equality: Susan Firestone, [susanfires@gmail.com](mailto:susanfires@gmail.com)  
Religious Education: Laura MacNorlin, [laura.norlin@gmail.com](mailto:laura.norlin@gmail.com)  
Library Clerk: Cal Gough, [calgough@bellsouth.net](mailto:calgough@bellsouth.net)  
Nominating, Clive Gordon, [afm.nominating@gmail.com](mailto:afm.nominating@gmail.com)  
Newsletter Editor: Nina Gooch, [atlquakerltr@gmail.com](mailto:atlquakerltr@gmail.com)  
Webmaster: Aaron Ruscetta, [arxaaron@gmail.com](mailto:arxaaron@gmail.com)  
Bookkeeper: Jonah McDonald, [afmbookkeeper1@gmail.com](mailto:afmbookkeeper1@gmail.com)

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

#### ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

Office Coordinator working from home while meeting house closed  
voicemail/phone: 404-377-2474 –

web and email: [atlantaquakers.org](http://atlantaquakers.org), atlantaquakers@gmail.com

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

#### **Atlanta Friends Meeting has three email lists:**

*You may receive the announcement sheets and other announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting. This is the announcement list.*

*You may receive announcements AND posts about a broader range of topics relating to being a Quaker. This is the discussion list. (You do not need to belong to both the announcement list and the discussion list.)*

*You may receive notification that the newsletter is online. This is the newsletter list.*

*To join any of these email lists, please email [atlantaquakers@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaquakers@gmail.com)*

#### **Would you like to appear in future AFM Directories? Do you need to correct your directory information?**

Send your name and contact information to Brent Wolff at [afmdirectory@gmail.com](mailto: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 or paypal, visit [atlantaquakers.org/contact.htm](http://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](mailto:atlquakerltr@gmail.com). Submissions may be edited for length and format. THE DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS IS THE 20<sup>TH</sup> 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.*