

# ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2021



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

UPDATED AS OF July 29, 2021

As of July 28, the Working Group on the Use of the Meetinghouse made the decision to delay the meeting's return to in person worship on Sunday mornings. This is the statement that they shared on July 29:

In response to concerns expressed by some members of Atlanta Friends Meeting, and the updating of mask recommendations from CDC announced on Wednesday, the working group on the use of the meeting house has advised postponing the renewal of in person worship on Sunday morning. We will continue meeting via zoom on Sundays, and the in person meetings on Monday evening and Thursday afternoon will continue.

The ad hoc committee will bring a recommendation for a revised reopening date to 8th month Meeting for Business.

The AFM COVID guidelines have been updated to state that all people who use the meeting house should wear a mask regardless of vaccination status, which adheres to the new CDC guidance.

**This Sunday (August 1), following announcements and instead of the usual breakout rooms, members of the working group on the use of the meeting house will make a brief presentation about the changes and be open for questions.**

The information below has not been updated. (It will give you an idea of what worship will probably be like once we return to the meetinghouse, with the exception that everyone over the age of two will be asked to wear a mask inside.) Please watch the announcement sheet, for the most up to date details: [www.atlantaquakers.org/\\_announcements/Announcement\\_Sheet.pdf](http://www.atlantaquakers.org/_announcements/Announcement_Sheet.pdf)

## SUNDAY MEETING FOR WORSHIP RETURNS TO MEETINGHOUSE & ZOOM WORSHIP CONTINUES

At our July meeting for business, Atlanta Friends Meeting approved our return to the meeting house for Sunday worship. (See minutes below.)

On August 1, we will resume in person Meeting for Worship on Sunday mornings at 10 am.

We will continue separate Meetings for Worship via Zoom also at 10 am, for those who prefer a virtual setting.

## QUERY FOR AUGUST

How do you endeavor to recognize your personal biases regarding race, class, gender, sexual orientation, or any other prejudice you hold? How do you seek to overcome these?

– source: Atlanta Friends Meeting

On the third Sunday of each month (this month on August 15), we will combine in person and Zoom worship in a hybrid / blended meeting. Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business will follow, also as a combined / blended in-person / Zoom meeting.

If you are not yet fully vaccinated, please continue to wear a mask and social distance. If you are fully vaccinated, you no longer need to wear a mask unless you prefer to do so. (Those two and under are not required to wear a mask.) Please stay home if you feel ill for any reason or if you have COVID-19 or think you have been exposed to it.

Detailed COVID guidelines for adults and anyone over 12 as well as guidelines for childcare and Religious Education are below.

**Childcare** will be available in the nursery for those under the age of three.

Children over the age of three are welcome to join their parents in the meeting room for the first 15 minutes of worship. For the fall, Religious Education will open the classrooms early so that children may go directly to their classrooms, as they and their parents choose.

**Religious Education for children** will resume in-person classes. On August 1, teachers, parents and students three and over will gather in classrooms A&B for an informational meeting at 10:15 am. More details about First Day School for children below.

Following the rise of meeting, parents are asked to pick up their children from their classrooms by 11:15.

**Adult First Day School** will also resume in-person classes on August 1 and will continue to offer a Zoom option so people can join from a distance.

**Mid-week Meeting for Worship** on Wednesday morning will continue (at a new time of 8:30 am beginning in August). Monday evening and Thursday afternoon in-person meetings for worship will end July 29.

## IMPORTANT CHANGES AND DETAILS:

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- When you arrive at the meetinghouse, greeters will offer you the option of a smile, a handshake or a hug.
- We are asking everyone to sign an attendance sheet each week, including contact information if you are not in the directory.
- Weather permitting, August birthdays will be celebrated outside.
- One person at a time in the restrooms. Knock and wait outside the restroom until it is clear.
- There will be no potluck or coffee hour at this time.
- You are welcome to socialize after Meeting for Worship, but please bring your own beverage in your own container. (The kitchen and water fountain are still closed.) Since the greeting room is small, please use the space on the patio and lawn as well.
- Those who work in the office request that everyone, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask in the office. Please limit the number of people in the office to two.
- Office hours are still by appointment for the month of August, but the Office Coordinator continues to check voicemail and email when she's working from home.
- Committees and groups, please check with your Clerk or other group leader to see when you'll be returning to in-person meetings.

## COVID GUIDELINES FOR IN PERSON WORSHIP, revised June 16, 2021

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### General

- If you are fully vaccinated (two weeks after your final vaccine shot), you do not need to wear a mask or physically distance.
- If you are not fully vaccinated, please wear a mask over your mouth and nose while you are in the meetinghouse and maintain physical distance (at least 6 feet) from people not in your household. This includes children 2 to 11.
- If you are outside the meetinghouse and are not fully vaccinated, please maintain physical distance and wear a mask, following CDC guidelines.
- Please do not come if you do not feel well, have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 10 days, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the previous 14 days.
- We will maintain an attendance register.
- Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the meetinghouse

### Worship

- If you enter the worship space and feel uncomfortable with the number of people, you may worship in the library.
- If you are moved to speak during Meeting, rise and speak from your seated location.
- If you are wearing a mask, please keep it on and speak loudly and clearly for the benefit of those with hearing difficulties.

### Socializing after Meeting for Worship

- The kitchen and water fountain will be closed for use. Please bring your own beverages in your own container.

## Restrooms

- One person at a time in the restrooms.
- Knock and wait outside the restroom until it is clear.

## Children:

- Children should also follow the guidelines for physical distancing and mask wearing.
- Children under the age of two are not required to wear masks.
- See separate, detailed guidelines for childcare and religious education, just below.

## GUIDELINES FOR CHILDCARE AND FIRST DAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN UNDER 12 AT ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

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These guidelines are to be used for childcare and First Day School [FDS] activities for children who are not eligible for the Covid-19 vaccination.

- All children ages 2-11 will be required to wear masks while in the meetinghouse and also while using the AFM playground.
- All adults in contact with children as teachers, doorkeepers, or childcare volunteers will wear a mask regardless of vaccination status.
- Children in the nursery will be physically distanced to a degree that is reasonable based on the staff available.
- Adults in the nursery will maintain physical distance only as safety and care allow.
- Children in FDS classrooms will be physically distanced (at least 3') per CDC classroom recommendations.
- Adults working with children in FDS classrooms will maintain physical distance as safety and care allow.
- The AFM nursery and classrooms will be open starting at 10:00 am for drop off if parents or care-givers choose not to have their children in the larger meeting room from 10:00-10:15.
- Children who remain in the large meeting room from 10:00-10:15 will be accompanied by a parent or caregiver to their classroom at 10:15.
- Parents or caregivers will pick up their children from the AFM nursery and FDS classrooms at 11:15 and are responsible for their children in the Meetinghouse and on the grounds following that time.

## MEMBERSHIP REQUEST LETTER FROM ALBERTA GUISE

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*to be presented at meeting for business in August and considered for approval in September*

Friday, 2 July 2021

Dear Bill,

I'm writing to you in your capacity as Clerk of Ministry and Worship to formally request membership in the Atlanta Friends Meeting.

Since attending my first ever Quaker meeting at AFM in the spring of 2015, I felt the real possibility of finding a spiritual home among Friends. I started attending the First Day Adult School to begin learning more about Quaker history and practices. I found fellowship among this group, learning

through their example and wisdom about how real people live out the Quaker principles, while also absorbing the lessons of the books we discussed. I continue to be a regular participant in this group.

Before long, I found myself willingly drawn into AFM activities outside of Sunday worship and First Day Adult School. I learned that Business Meeting was actually "WORSHIP with attention to the meeting's business." I then realized that all my activism and interactions with Friends in these committees and groups:

Racial Equality, Undoing Racism, FCNL, Care & Counsel, QVS mentoring, Spiritual Nurturing, Friends of Color and People of Color book group

are, for me, WORSHIP with attention to the business of enacting SPICES in my life. I believe that AFM has helped me come the closest to my lifelong quest of "praying without ceasing."

I put off membership mostly due to my tendency to procrastination, but also because I have been able to enjoy, just as an attender, all the benefits of membership in every AFM group or committee, except Ministry and Worship. As I prepare to leave for a new life with my daughter and family in Massachusetts, I wish to become a member of this Meeting, the community which has nourished my continuing personal and spiritual growth.

As I hope to find an equally committed and enriching Meeting near my next residence, I want to become an official and worthy member of AFM, my first Quaker home.

In peace, hope, and light,  
Alberta Guise

## MINUTE OF DECLARATION AND COMMITMENT OF THE UJIMA FRIENDS MEETING

June 20, 2021

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*for more information, visit [www.ujimafriends.org](http://www.ujimafriends.org)*

In an act of declaration and commitment, we, a people of African descent, our families and friends, respond to the movement of the Spirit among us to form Ujima Friends Meeting within the Religious Society of Friends. Ujima Friends Meeting is a community of faith without borders, dedicated to bearing witness to peace, justice, and love.

We are a worshipping community of people of African descent who come together in the liberatory spirit of Ujima, recognizing that our brothers' and sisters' problems are our problems and committing to solving them together.

We recognize the power and richness of the historical and cultural heritage that nurtures our African centered experience among Friends. We gather together out of this common experience: the spiritual experience of the divine Light in everyone, regardless of social status, and the cultural experience, not of being born in Africa, but of Africa being born in us.

We celebrate the transformative leading of the divine Spirit which brought forth the Fellowship of Friends of African Descent in 1990, the Ujima Friends Peace Center in 2017, and which now calls us into an interconnected and independent spiritual community. We affirm our faith as Friends in this spiritual path that lifts up our common humanity, the direct guidance of the Spirit and the continuing revelation of Truth.

As people of the African diaspora within the Religious Society of Friends, we continue to endure the social insult and practical indifference of the settler colonial enslavement culture which infects the western religious experience. With this act of kujichagulia (self-determination), we establish a spiritual and cultural space to protect ourselves from the undue influences that would attempt to

define the character of our worship and our work. We will not be exclusive, yet we also will not allow ourselves to be dominated. We will be vigilant against intrusions motivated by curiosity, the desire to correct or control, or the wish for absolution from ancestral guilt.

We gather after the manner of Friends, establishing an open and meditative space, without hierarchy or judgment, dogma or creed; a space where we can breathe, worship, listen and respond to the call of the Spirit. We are confident that through the inspiration of intentional silence and spontaneous prayer, music and song, we will be led to right action; action that bears witness to the liberation of this planet and all of its people, particularly those who are disinherited, suffering and oppressed.

With gratitude to God, who has been both Mother and Father, we stand on the shoulders of the spiritual ancestors who came before us, those whose work and whose lives continue to lead us toward this way. Inspired by the teachings of Jesus, we place our time and our resources on the altar of service for others. At the same time, we gratefully acknowledge our own need to be encouraged and supported by this Ujima Friends Meeting community as we travel on the journey of life together.

*Ujima Friends Meeting*  
*June 20, 2021*

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#### ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL – Sundays, August 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

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Adult First Day School will meet in person at the meetinghouse beginning August 1. People will continue to be able to join us via Zoom. (See below for Zoom details, which are new as of March.)

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 spiritual journeys, stories where Friends describe their understanding of God and religion in their life. On August 1, we will hear the spiritual journey of Eugene Jennings. (To hear Nina Gooch's spiritual journey from July 4, visit <https://tinyurl.com/2kuhtyc8> . If you'd like to hear other past Spiritual Journeys, please contact Mary Ann Downey.)

On third Sundays, Adult First Day School will have worship sharing, usually on that month's query. On other Sundays, we will be discussing Howard Thurman's *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Beginning August 22 we will be discussing *The Great Conversation, Nature and the Care of the Soul* by Belden C. Lane. Please join us, even if you haven't read the book.

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#### ANTI-RACISM WORKSHOPS – beginning Wednesday, August 4

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The Center for the Study of White American Culture, a multi-racial anti-racist group founded by Quakers, is offering a series of live, interactive, online anti-racism workshops this summer. Susan Firestone says these workshops are very interactive, with excellent facilitators. Each workshop is \$125 for three meetings, and scholarship help is available if needed. Contact Susan at [susanfires@gmail.com](mailto:susanfires@gmail.com) for scholarship help and questions. For more information and registration for workshops, visit <http://www.euroamerican.org/default.asp>.

- Transforming White Organizational Culture, Wednesdays, August 4, 11 and 18, at 7 to 9 pm
- What White People Can Do About Racism, Part 2, Thursdays, September 23 and 30 plus October 7, at 7 to 9 pm
- Raising Anti-Racist White Children, Saturdays, October 2, 9 and 16, at 7 to 9 pm

WEDNESDAY MORNING MIDWEEK MEETING FOR WORSHIP AT NEW TIME – Wed, Aug 4, etc

Beginning Wednesday, August 4, the Wednesday morning midweek Meeting for Worship will start at 8:30 am. You will also still be able to join this worship via Zoom; details below. Contact Bert Skellie at 404-680-4799 for more information.

BOOKS BY AND ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR – Thursday, August 5

The book group reading works by and about people of color meets at 1:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month via Zoom. On August 5, the book for discussion is *Kindred* by Octavia Butler, and on September 2, poems selected by members of the group. For questions or the Zoom link, contact Susan Cole (cole2544@bellsouth.net).

MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – Sunday, August 15

Meeting for business for August will be a blended meeting, combining in-person and Zoom. Simply stay after Meeting for Worship, whether you attend Meeting for Worship in person or via Zoom. Zoom details as well as minutes from July are below. For more information about meeting for business, see these guidelines approved by Atlanta Friends Meeting in 1996:  
[http://atlantaquakers.org/\\_site\\_pdf\\_docs/Guidelines\\_for\\_Meeting\\_for\\_Business.pdf](http://atlantaquakers.org/_site_pdf_docs/Guidelines_for_Meeting_for_Business.pdf)

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE FOR NEXT MONTH – Friday, August 20

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

QRE FORUM: SAYMA PLENARY “Black Lives Matter: Black Quaker Lives Matter” – Sun, Aug 22

**August 22, 1:00 p.m. via Zoom:** Friends from the Ad Hoc Reparations Forum Planning group and Quakers for Racial Equality will co-sponsor showing the recording of Hal Weaver's SAYMA plenary: "Black Lives Matter: Black Quaker Lives Matter," which covers the Black Quaker Project, retrospective justice/reparations, systemic racism, and what Quakers need to do. This topic is also related to the QRE June forum on Housing Justice, since Hal Weaver also focuses on housing as a key element related to repairing the harm of systemic racism. See later announcement sheets for Zoom details.

HECTOR BLACK MEMORIAL – Saturday, September 4, 2021

"To celebrate the remarkable life of our Dad, we're planning an early afternoon event with an in-person option (on the farm at 170 Hidden Springs Lane, Cookeville TN) and via live-stream. Details to follow. Questions? Contact [aggieblack@shaw.ca](mailto:aggieblack@shaw.ca)"

Love, Rose, Aggie and Annie Black

## 2022 FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE GATHERING – July 3 to 9, 2022

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The 2022 Friends General Conference (FGC) Gathering will be held in-person at Radford University in southwestern Virginia, from July 3 to July 9, 2022. The theme will be “. . . and follow me.”

The four clerks for the 2022 Gathering introduce the Gathering at

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sF6j\\_vCzJk0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sF6j_vCzJk0). More details will be forthcoming, but Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting is excited to be hosting the 2022 FGC Gathering and are reaching out to Monthly Meetings in the southeast to ask them to help them find members to support the Planning of the FGC Gathering. If you're interested, visit <http://www.tinyurl.com/PlanGathering2022>. General information about Friends General Conference is at <https://www.fgcquaker.org/>

## ZOOM DETAILS FOR WORSHIP AND FIRST DAY SCHOOL AT ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

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*For the most up to date information, see the most recent announcements at [www.atlantaquakers.org/\\_announcements/Announcement\\_Sheet.pdf](http://www.atlantaquakers.org/_announcements/Announcement_Sheet.pdf) or in your email inbox. 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

In person and Zoom combined. For general info about Adult First Day School, see above.

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86063665797?pwd=Nms0Vm5MSW91UXdWRGJSOXA5NWRjZz09>

Meeting ID: 860 6366 5797

Passcode: 013191

### FIRST DAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN

In person and Zoom combined. Zoom begins at 9:30 am. Contact Laura MacNorlin for details.

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

Meeting ID: 727 996 1727

Passcode: 679898

SUNDAY MEETING FOR WORSHIP will begin at 10:00 am

We are resuming in-person meetings for worship at the meetinghouse, but are continuing Meeting for Worship via Zoom. Most Sundays, these will be dual meetings, with the Zoom and in-person meetings happening separately, both at 10:00 am. On the third Sunday of the month, we will combine in-person and Zoom worship for a blended meeting, followed by a blended meeting for worship with attention to business.

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

Meeting ID: 908 004 190

Passcode: 842962

### **Wednesdays:**

WEDNESDAY MORNING MIDWEEK MEETING FOR WORSHIP at 8:30 am **(new time!!!!)**

Also in person at the meetinghouse. Contact Bert Skellie at 404-680-4799 for more info.

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

Meeting ID: 920 3886 2952



Passcode 726229

## SEVENTH MONTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS

July 18, 2021, held via Zoom

Minutes Recorded Pending Approval

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**Attendance:** Steve Collins, Bill Hooson, Teri Key- Hooson, Mary Ann Downey, Bill Holland, Alberta Guise, Alison Mawle, Anton Flores-Maisonet, Becky Lough, Brent Wolf, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Caroline Morris, Mike Aland, Cathy Amanti, David Small, Donna Roberts, Elizabeth Lamb, Eugene Jennings, Folami Prescott-Adams, Free Palazzo, Glenn Plyler, Jay Roache, Jennifer Dickie, Jennifer Thompson, Julia Ewen, Karen Morris, Laura MacNorlin, Lynn Leuszler, Myrna Trapp, Nina Gooch, Robin Biro, Ronald Nuse, Sallie Carpentier, Noel Kirby, Susan Frestone, Georgia Lord (Assistant Clerk / Clerking), Coryn Murphy (Recording Clerk)

Friends gathered near the appointed hour with opening worship. A member of Ministry and Worship shared the Seventh Month Query out of the worship: "How do you welcome a variety of styles of expression as being appropriate and spirit-led during the Meeting for Worship and Meeting for Business?"

### **Discernment:**

**Ministry and Worship:** Bill Hooson reported the proposed minute for reopening the meeting for worship. After considerable threshing the following minute (incorporating changes to paragraph (c)) was adopted.

#### **Minute 07-18-2021:01:**

The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship committee that when we return to in-person meeting for worship, each first day friends will have the option of either meeting in person or by zoom at the 10:00 hour. Friends will choose either in-person or zoom format. One Sunday a month, the entire community will worship together in a hybrid format.

a. Ministry and Worship Committee recommend that this be the third Sunday of the month, to permit those joining by zoom to participate in business meeting. Ministry and Worship will arrange for the opening and closing of meeting for worship including welcoming newcomers, sharing joys and making announcements.

b. The third first day hybrid meeting will require the development of the capacity for those gathered in the meeting room and those gathered by zoom to hear and to be heard, to speak and be spoken to.

c. This plan is adopted on a trial basis only. Ministry and Worship will modify this plan as we gather experience. Ministry and Worship will report back at least every other month on this question.

**Nominating:** Eugene Jennings reported on behalf of the Nominating Committee that the committee asks for approval of the proposed changes in the Handbook Description of the Memorial Committee.

**Minute 07-18-2021-02:** The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the changes in the handbook for the Memorial Committee.

**Purpose:** At the time of death, many details require our immediate attention, and we form a Memorial Committee to tend to them. The Committee acts on specific, practical concerns, and can sensitively offer help to a bereaved family. The family starts the process by notifying the Clerk of the monthly meeting. If the Clerk is not immediately available, either the clerk of

Ministry and Worship or of Care and Counsel should be called. The clerk taking the initial call will ensure that both of the other clerks are informed and that a memorial committee is formed.

**Membership:** Members or attenders of the Atlanta Friends Meeting. The Memorial Committee will be formed with 1-2 members from both the Ministry and Worship and the Care and Counsel committees to work closely with the family.

**Meetings:** Scheduled as needed

**Duties – General:**

1. Burial or cremation arrangement: The Committee starts by checking for a member's file in the Meeting Office that may contain previously determined wishes. The committee helps the family identify options for burial or cremation, and funeral homes providing these services.
2. Notify Friends and Relatives: The committee notifies the meeting and helps the family with notices to others.
3. Managing Visitors: If needed, the committee arranges for help in answering the door and telephone and keeping a record of calls and visitors.
4. Food: The committee coordinates and records the gifts of food to the family.
5. Memorial Service: The committee helps the family plan, announce and conduct a memorial service including their wishes regarding donations.
6. Obituary - The committee may assist the family in writing a newspaper obituary to the appropriate media, including arrangements for services, and wishes regarding flowers or donations.
7. Meeting for Business - The memorial committee notifies Meeting for Business of the death. The committee invites a Friend to write and present a memorial minute to Meeting for Business for approval.
8. Memorial Minute: This minute is a celebration of the Friend's life and relationship to the Meeting and to the world. It includes revealing anecdotes or illuminating reminiscences that capture the gifts and spiritual characteristics of this person that made them special.

**Duties – Friends Memorial Service**

1. Schedule (meetinghouse or other location): The committee schedules and announces the time and place of the service to the meeting.
2. Family Wishes: The committee consults with the family about any special arrangements for the service, such as flowers, music, or speakers and prepares a memorial service program.
3. Program: The committee arranges for a friend to prepare and print copies of a program for the memorial service that may include: name, photo, date of birth and death; "Memorial Service in the Manner of Friends,"; order of service (music, welcome, worship, closing) and an obituary.
4. Greeters: The committee arranges for greeters to hand out a program for the memorial service.
5. Building and Parking: The committee prepares the building and arrangements for parking.

6. Registration: The committee obtains a guestbook and permanent ink pen for attenders to sign if the family wishes. Arrange for someone to ask guests to sign.
7. Memorial Meeting: A member of meeting is asked to open and close the service with an explanation about Friends Worship, order of service, the closing of meeting and arrangements for refreshments after the service.
8. Refreshments: If refreshments are to be served after the service, arrange this with the Hospitality Committee.
9. Childcare: Arrange for adequate childcare during the service.

*The statement below is often included in the program for a Memorial Service.*

### **Memorial Service in the Manner of Friends**

The Religious Society of Friends holds, as the basis of its faith, the belief that God endows every human being with a measure of the divine spirit.

Our manner of worship is an outgrowth of this belief. We gather in quiet worship mindful of the words: "Be still and know that I am God."

A Friends memorial service is similar in many ways to a Meeting for Worship. We come together in reverent silence, with the desire to draw nearer to God, and to understand God's will. It is a time not only for a sharing of loss, but also a time of thankfulness for the life of the person for whom the memorial service is held. We reflect on the value of that life as it relates to the lives of all of us.

All present share equally in this service. We sit quietly; at times an individual may be moved to speak, to offer prayer or a message that has come out of the silence. All are welcome to do this. The meeting closes with handshakes.

The responsibility for the spiritual depth of the meeting rests with each person. Those who keep silent as well as those who give a vocal message do their part when they yield their minds and hearts to the guidance of the Spirit.

Friends hope that in the Meeting for Worship a consciousness of the Divine Presence will come to every person to be a source of direction and of strength after leaving the meeting.

### **Reports:**

**Ministry and Worship:** Bill Hooson presented the Ministry and Worship Committee's proposed minute on Reconciliation, and Reparations:

We believe there is the light of God in each person, and we are connected to God and to each other by this light. We separate ourselves from God and each other by our prejudices which are the root of destructive conflict. We acknowledge our need for forgiveness and grace. We are called to be involved in the work of reconciliation and reparations to the descendants of formerly enslaved Africans.

Reconciliation requires acknowledging and atoning for the wrong done — asking those harmed for forgiveness while resolving never to repeat the wrongs and working to ensure their rights as fellow citizens. Reparations refer to compensation, which may include a national apology; educational, housing and health care programs; and financial redress from the U.S. government to African Americans to eliminate, to the extent possible, the badges, incidents, and relics of slavery and involuntary servitude which only perpetuate and deepen past

injustices and effect society. More specifically, reparations are a system of redress for injustices since 1619. This focus on reparations and reconciliation for African Americans in the 21st century is a continuation of the work against racial injustice by the Religious Society of Friends. The Quaker campaign to end slavery and the slave trade began in the 1600s, and in 1761 Quakers were prohibited from owning slaves. In 1790, Quakers petitioned the U.S. Congress for the abolition of slavery. Before the American Civil War, Levi Coffin was one of many Friends in the Underground Railroad network that helped thousands of fugitive slaves escape to freedom. During the 20th century, Quakers took a leadership role in the civil rights movement through the American Friends Service Committee, Quaker monthly meetings, and the action of many individuals. Bayard Rustin's Quaker/Gandhian principles led him to become both a close adviser of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and one of the two organizers of the march on Washington for jobs and freedom on August 28, 1963.

At this march, Dr King, in his speech, "I Have a Dream" stated: "We have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. ... It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt." A recent article by the Brookings Institution on reparations noted this statement by Dr King and concluded, "Given the lingering legacy of slavery on the racial wealth gap, the monetary value we know that was placed on enslaved Blacks, the fact that other groups have received reparations and the fact that Blacks were originally awarded reparations only to have them rescinded provide overwhelming evidence that it is time to pay reparations to the descendants of enslaved Blacks."

The Atlanta Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is called to honor the work of Quaker activists for equal rights of African Americans by acknowledging and working to redress the evils they fought against. We will engage in racial reconciliation and healing through apologizing to the descendants of those who were enslaved in our meeting community and atoning for wrongs we have committed in the past that influence the present. We acknowledge that we are the beneficiaries of slavery and that the enslavement of Africans contributed to the accumulated wealth we have today. We apologize that these truths were not fully acknowledged by us sooner. We will atone for these past oppressions and injustices in the hope of healing justice through support for reparations to African Americans. The Atlanta Friends Meeting will actively engage with organizations at the local, state, and national level to generate and implement policies for reparations.

**Report on SAYMA:** Free Polazzo reported on the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting (SAYMA)'s 2021 Business Meeting.

1. A budget for the fiscal year 2021-2021 was approved. Karen Morris, who serves on the SAYMA Finance Committee, kindly sends this report on the YM Budget for Fiscal Year 2022. "The finance committee brought forward the FY2022 budget with income set at \$98,000, of which approximately \$51,000 comes from Monthly Meeting (MM) assessments, with about \$2,000 coming from other contributions. The remaining \$45,000 comes from income for annual Yearly Meeting (YM) sessions, which is all expended on the annual gathering. The YM approved the budget and withheld approval on 4 line items: groups who asked for set aside funds. Here are the groups with the amounts proposed by finance that were not approved.

1. Friends World Committee Annual expense Conference fund - money to send a SAYMA delegate to the FWCC conference scheduled for 2024 -- proposed \$1800
2. FWCC 3rd World delegate annual expense fund - money to send one or more delegates from "3rd world" countries to the 2024 conference -- proposed \$3000
3. Southern Appalachian Young Friends fund --proposed \$2000
4. Uplifting Racial Justice Fund -- proposed \$10,000

These line items, if they had been approved, would have increased the budget by about \$17,000 (creating a \$115,000 total budget). Finance Committee proposed using the undesignated equity line, which is about \$31,000 for these expenses, as opposed to raising MM assessments or fund-raising.”

Submitted by Karen Morris, member, SAYMA Finance Committee

2, The Ad Hoc Committee to Revise A Guide to our Faith and Practice asked for approval of the revision of the Queries Section of the "Guide". The committee had submitted its report to the March 2020 Representatives Meeting that was to have met here in Atlanta but was cancelled due to the spread of the Covid-19 virus. The report from the Ad Hoc Committee and the Revised Queries Section had already been submitted to the clerk and that was what was presented to the June 2021 SAYMA Meeting for Business, which was held via Zoom.

The business session APPROVED the revised Queries Section as submitted, except for one query. Afterwards, the ad hoc Committee which had been created to revise "A Guide to our Faith and Practice" was laid down by the clerk. Note that while the Queries Section needed 6 years to be approved; the revisions to the rest of the Guide needed 17 years. Work has already begun to create the 2021 edition of SAYMA's "A Guide to Our Faith and Practice".

Note: The Atlanta Meeting's minutes that were sent to the revision committee suggesting improvements to the queries sent to them helped the Revision Committee to further improve upon the committee's work, especially when it came to using more inclusive language. (Free Polazzo, Clerk, SAYMA ad hoc Committee to Revise "A Guide to Our Faith and Practice."

3. Once the Minutes of the 2021 Yearly Meeting for Business is received, I will report further to the AFM.

**Administration:** Steve Collins reported, on behalf of the Administration Committee, that Aaron Ruscetta, long-time Young Friends Program Coordinator (YFPC), has laid down his role as coordinator, effective July 1, 2021. He has been performing as an unpaid coordinator since mid-2020 and has offered to continue in that role until a new YFPC is hired by the Meeting. Administration thanks Aaron for his years of dedicated service to Young Friends, the Meeting, and the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA).

The meeting asks Administration committee to bring back a Minute of Thanks to Aaron Ruscetta for his work.

The plan is to form an ad hoc group to review the current job description for the YFPC and the committee description for the YFPC Support Committee (both of which are in the Meeting Handbook), followed by the formation of a search committee for a new YFPC.

In late July, before the Meetinghouse fully reopens, several rooms will be repainted --- classrooms C, D, and E; the shower area; and the atrium near the classrooms. The carpets, except for the Meeting room, will also be cleaned. The Meeting room carpet was cleaned a year ago.

Groups and renters that have returned to the Meetinghouse or indicated to Nina Gooch, the Office Coordinator, that they will be returning in August include the following: Wednesday morning meeting for worship, two spiritual nurture groups, the Ferguson Cabin committee, Green Friends, Harmony School (the Meeting's largest renter), Citizens Climate Lobby, Ulysses Book Group, Atlanta Insight Meditation, Couples ATL, and Deep Waters Center for Prayer and Meditation.

Nina, Anton Flores (Friend-in-Residence), and Steve spoke with representatives from the Harmony School on July 12 and discussed in detail their plans for readying their spaces and the Meeting's scheduled maintenance and physical changes to specific rooms. They provided a list of requested maintenance items, and Anton briefed them on his Casa Alternativa ministry work and how it will continue once the Meetinghouse fully reopens.

**QVS Local Support Group:** Steve Collins reported for the QVS LSC.

Steve Collins reported for the QVS Support Committee. The Atlanta QVS Fellows are winding down their year of service, a challenging one to say the least. Rachael Carter, the Local Site Coordinator, and the QVS Support committee are planning for year-end activities for the current Fellows while preparing for the arrival of the 2021-2022 Fellows.

There was a QVS alumni gathering at Mary Ann Downey's home on July 10 where the new national alumni coordinator was introduced. The last day of work for Atlanta Fellows will be Friday, July 23, with their last Sunday as Fellows on July 25. At the close of worship on the 25th, candles, mugs, and books will be presented to them as parting gifts. Sunday evening, there will be a potluck for Fellows, Spiritual Nurturers, and the QVS Support committee at the Meetinghouse. The Fellows' end of year retreat is scheduled for July 26-29, with the Fellows moving out of the Grant Street QVS house on July 31. Orientation for the Local Support Committee and Spiritual Nurturers for next year is on August 7 at the QVS house. As the Local Support Committee helps ready the house for the next group of Fellows, there will be opportunities for others in the Meeting to help with cleaning, food, and items such as linens.

**Green Friends: Carbon Dividend Act:** This minute was proposed by Henry Slack, but, in Henry's absence, Jennifer Thompson of Green Friends explained the Proposal to Endorse the Energy Innovation.

**Proposal:**

The continued build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere creates increasingly dire threats to human societies, and the effects fall disproportionately on BIPOC communities, a situation that is widely recognized by climate scientists. To reverse these effects will require a wide range of actions around the globe by many elements of societies — manufacturing, transportation, mining, agriculture, and many more.

Economists and others largely agree that probably the single most effective action to achieve the desired reduction would be to place a robust and increasing price on carbon, returning the funds collected evenly to all residents. There is a bill now before the House of Representatives, H.R. 2037, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, which would do just that. A wide range of organizations and prominent individuals have endorsed the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, or a more generic carbon fee and dividend act. The endorsements include hundreds of local and state government officials, business leaders, and faith groups, including nine Friends meetings. We request an endorsement of the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act by Atlanta Friends Meeting.

A concern raised was that that it may be inappropriate for our Meeting, as non-profit religious organization, to endorse legislation. The proposed minute will be considered further at the next Meeting for Business.

**Clerk's Item:**

Update on Litigation Challenging Rezoning of Property Adjacent to Ferguson Cabin:

As discussed during June's Meeting for Business, the property on the other side of the property line from the Treetops Cabin in the Ferguson Cabin property was rezoned from Agricultural to Commercial Business, and the owner of that property is planning the construction of a large storage facility. A group from the neighborhood hired counsel to explore possible litigation challenging the recent rezoning. They sought our help, asking the Meeting to join their group in bringing this litigation. At the June Meeting for Business we agreed to authorize such assistance. At this time, a lawsuit has been prepared but has not yet been filed. It will probably be filed very soon. The parties bringing the suit will be Friends of Murray Cove, LLC; the Lake Burton Civic Association, Inc., and our Meeting. If anyone would like further information about the suit or would like to see a copy of the proposed complaint, please contact Georgia Lord at [Georgia@deaturlegal.com](mailto:Georgia@deaturlegal.com).

**Committee Corner:** QRE – Susan Firestone reported for Quakers for Racial Equality and, on behalf of QRE, invited everyone to upcoming online forums:

**July 25, 1:00 via Zoom** Join Quakers for Racial Equality for an online discussion led by AFM member Dr. Folami Prescott-Adams on supporting equity and respect for all students, educating students about past and present systemic racism, and having honest discussions in schools about racism. We will also hear from Tracey Nance Pendley, 2020 Georgia Teacher of the Year, who opposed the Georgia State Board of Education resolution that limits educators' ability to discuss race or explore diverse perspectives in schools.

**Aug. 22, 1:00 p.m. via Zoom:** Friends from the Ad Hoc Reparations Forum Planning group and Quakers for Racial Equality will co-sponsor showing the recording of Hal Weaver's SAYMA plenary: "Black Lives Matter: Black Quaker Lives Matter", which covers the Black Quaker Project, retrospective justice/reparations, systemic racism, and what Quakers need to do. This topic is also related to the QRE June forum on Housing Justice, since Hal Weaver also focuses on housing as a key element related to repairing the harm of systemic racism.

Quakers For Racial Equality Approves Statement Supporting Schools Teaching About Racism: Quakers for Racial Equality has approved the following statement supporting schools teaching about systemic racism. We can now share it with the groups we support, educational leaders, and governmental officials. Please share!

Here is a link to a pdf document that anyone with the link can view:

QRE Supports Schools Teaching about Racism (7-14-21)

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lgHUQZ67aqhe\\_hX1jtl8k-5NNpcuaoy/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lgHUQZ67aqhe_hX1jtl8k-5NNpcuaoy/view?usp=sharing)

Quakers for Racial Equality statement supporting schools teaching about systemic racism (approved 7/14/21)

Quakers for Racial Equality of Atlanta Friends Meeting stands with City Schools of Decatur, Atlanta Public Schools, Beacon Hill Black Alliance for Human Rights, Friends School of Atlanta, and the many other Georgia education and community groups supporting equity and respect for all students and honest discussions about racism and anti- racism.

The Georgia State Board of Education Resolution of June 3, 2021 statements of belief that "Georgia is not a racist state" and "The U.S. is not a racist country" misrepresent history and

disregard the effects of racism experienced regularly by People of Color in school communities, including students, parents, teachers, administrators, non-teaching staff, and school board members. The State Board of Education's admonitions to educators to not talk about race, diverse perspectives, or current events reduce students' opportunities to practice critical thinking skills and impinge on free speech. For students to become engaged citizens who can help the country live up to its ideals of liberty and justice for all, students also need to learn about the systemic racism that is embedded in our history and institutions. Once we recognize that laws, policies, and practices developed over time have had racist effects, we can work to make them equitable for everyone.

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) believe that there is that of God in everyone. We support educating youth to value everyone's common humanity and to have compassion for others. In keeping with Quaker testimonies of equality, peace, community, and integrity, Quakers for Racial Equality of Atlanta Friends Meeting are committed to addressing racism at the personal, institutional, and societal levels. That also means humbly facing the uncomfortable truth that predominantly white Quaker Meetings and Friends Schools in the U.S. have not fully lived up to our equality testimony. To address this, Quakers, especially those of European descent, need to examine all of our history, including those parts that don't match up with our image of ourselves as being "among the good ones- not racist."

Similarly, Americans throughout the U.S need to know our country's whole history. Nobody is born racist. People learn these patterns through our culture, including through our schools. Georgians and others in the U.S. can move toward equity by educators having the difficult conversations about race, teaching about the complete history of our nation, and valuing all children's identities and abilities to work for a more just society. Doing this learning and truth-telling in a compassionate, respectful manner can help with the healing of our nation.

Minutes from June 2021:

**Minute 07-18-2021-03:** The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the Minutes from June 2021.

Meeting ended with closing worship.

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

Cindy Berg  
Beth-Ann Buitekant  
Kellie Divis and family  
Jeremiah Gold-Hopton  
Bette Turlington  
Harriet Unfug  
Pete McCaughan and family

*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**

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#### ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

Office Coordinator working from home while meeting house closed

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#### **Atlanta Friends Meeting email lists & facebook group:**

- You may receive the announcement sheets and other announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting. This is the announcement list. (The announcement sheet is also posted online.)
- 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 above, please email the office at [atlantaquakers@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaquakers@gmail.com)
- To receive weekly emails about Zoom and in-person meetings for worship, email [atlantaquakers@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaquakers@gmail.com)
- To join the meeting's Facebook page, search for Atlanta Friends Meeting & click the + **Join Group** button.

#### **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.  
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