

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY 2022

Current and back issues of the newsletter are always available at <http://atlantaquakers.org/archive.htm>

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

UPDATES ON WORSHIP AND FIRST DAY SCHOOL

We are continuing to worship in person on Sunday at 10:00 am at the meetinghouse in combination with worship via Zoom, through at least June 2022. Please choose the option that is best for you.

Nursery care for children under three will continue to be available at the meetinghouse. First Day School for both adults and children and teens also continues both in person and via Zoom.

If you are attending in person, please wear a N95 mask or double mask.

Things to know:

- Please wear a N95 mask inside the meetinghouse or double-mask, even if you are vaccinated. If you speak during worship, please leave your mask on. (Children under two do not need to wear a mask.)
- Children can continue to join Meeting for Worship for the first 15 minutes or can go directly to Religious Education, as they and their parents / guardians prefer.
- Please sign in **every week** so we will know who was present in case we need to do contact tracing. Please include contact information so we can reach you if needed.
- There will be no coffee hour or potluck, but you are welcome to socialize after Meeting for Worship. Just bring your own beverage in your own container.
- 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.

For more details about in-person worship and for more info about First Day School and childcare, see <https://tinyurl.com/52u3waus> or contact the office: atlantaquakers@gmail.com or 404-377-2474.

QUAKER QUOTE

“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.”

Advices and Queries, Britain Yearly Meeting,
<https://qfp.quaker.org.uk/passage/1-02/>

QUERY FOR FEBRUARY

How do we support
those who serve our
meeting?

*source: Southern
Appalachian Yearly
Meeting and
Association's
Faith and Practice*

DETAILS FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP AND FIRST DAY SCHOOL AT ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

For the most up to date information, www.atlantaquakers.org/_announcements/Announcement_Sheet.pdf.



MEETING FOR WORSHIP (with new Zoom info as of September 5)
Combined in person and Zoom
10 a.m. Sundays
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89686276751?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89686276751?pwd=M29EYlFWEhSQUtZRVVPaIFFYmVDQT09)
[pwd=M29EYlFWEhSQUtZRVVPaIFFYmVDQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89686276751?pwd=M29EYlFWEhSQUtZRVVPaIFFYmVDQT09)
Meeting ID: 896 8627 6751
Passcode: 789456

ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL (see under Events below for more details for each Sunday)

Combined in-person and Zoom

9:00 to 9:50 am Sundays

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

Meeting ID: 860 6366 5797

Passcode: 013191

FIRST DAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH (with new Zoom info as of September 5)

In-person for all ages: Sundays 10:15 am

Children can continue to join Meeting for Worship for the first 15 minutes or can go directly to Religious Education, as they and their parents / guardians prefer. This class is also available via Zoom at 10:00. Teens will meet in person with an option for a blended FDS class from 10:15-11:00. For more info, contact Laura MacNorlin (laura.norlin@gmail.com, 404-762-3540).

Zoom for younger children: Sundays 10:00 am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7279961727?pwd=ck1ROVZlRWRCVDGzdGRocFhQWEduUUT09>

Meeting ID: 727 996 1727

Passcode: Quaker!

HOLDING IN THE LIGHT:

Joseph and Cindy Reid
Kelli Divis and family
Nzigimana Obede and family
Beth-Ann Buitekant
Cindy Berg
Bill and Teri Hooson 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 Committees and Other Contacts

Clerk of the Meeting: Jennifer Dickie, afmclerk1@gmail.com
Office Coordinator: Nina Gooch, atlantaquakers@gmail.com
Treasurer: Lynn Leuszler, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com
Ministry & Worship: Bill Hooson, bhooson@aol.com
Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280
Social Concerns: Glenn Plyler, 207-522-5295
Administration: Steve Collins, shcollins75@gmail.com
Care & Counsel: Karen Skellie, afm.care.counsel@gmail.com
Quakers for Racial Equality: Susan Firestone, susanfires@gmail.com
Religious Education: Laura MacNorlin, laura.norlin@gmail.com
Library: Cal Gough, calgough@bellsouth.net
Nominating: Lissa Place, lissplace@yahoo.com
Newsletter Editor: Nina Gooch, atlquakerltr@gmail.com
Webmaster: Aaron Ruscetta, arxaaron@gmail.com
Bookkeeper: Jonah McDonald, afmbookkeepe`ail.com

For information about these committees, download the AFM Handbook from <http://atlantaquakers.org/members.htm> (scroll down to the bottom to AFM Documents to Download) or contact the Clerk of the committee.

RESOURCES FOR TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT RACISM

<https://www.dearwhiteparents.guide/> not only explains the importance of white parents talking to their children about racism, but also provides helpful age-range specific guides for parents/ caregivers/ teachers having conversations with children. The site includes a short film with some parent-child conversations, a general guide, links to age-range guides, and further resources. Here are answers for those who wonder if kids are too young or who don't know how to get started talking about race. If you have further questions, you can contact Niya Randall, niyarandall@gmail.com.

DO YOU HAVE AN END OF LIFE PLAN?

from the Care and Counsel Committee

Have you been putting off preparing end of life plans? Why wait? As the old saying goes, "Tomorrow is promised to no one." Care and Counsel considered developing an online form for last wishes, but decided it would be best – especially during this time of the pandemic when we are more likely thinking about illness and the possibility of dying – to provide information each of us should think about, so our loved ones will know what our wishes are when they are needed.

The following notes are to serve as a guide for making final wishes known to family, friends, and caregivers:

- I would like to have a funeral, memorial, celebration of life, or some other service.
- I would like to be buried, cremated, or a whole body donor.
- I have selected an urn or casket.
- I have pre-purchased a burial plot.
- Designation of service location.
- Burial place information.
- I have specific end-of-life requests that I feel strongly about.
- Which individuals or organizations should be notified after I pass away?
- Is my will or trust in order?
- Have I made guardian arrangements for children or minors when I pass away?
- Do I have a few individuals or other options lined up to take care of my pets?
- Specific ceremony requests: No service. Open casket. Closed casket. Wake. Graveside ceremony. No preference.

If you want a ready-made form, please Google: "Final Wishes Document." There are a variety of free forms to be printed and completed by hand. Your completed form can be given to your loved ones, caregivers, or organizations. Your answers to likely questions will relieve much of the burden of pulling together information during a stressful time.

You have the option, if you choose to do so, of giving your "End of Life Plan" to the AFM Office Coordinator or the Clerk of Care and Counsel Committee.

Hopefully, this information will serve as a reminder for preparing your final wishes.

ABOUT MEETINGS FOR THRESHING

The purpose and processes used for a Meeting for Threshing is discussed in SAYMA's Guide to our Faith and Practice, 2012 and 2021 editions, pages 18-19. There are hard copies of the 2012 edition at the meetinghouse or visit http://www.sayma.org/online_documents.htm#F&P (and scroll down) for the 2021 version.

C. Meeting for Threshing

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

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

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

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

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

Guidelines for Threshing Meetings

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

MEETING FOR THRESHING REGARDING SAYMA – Sunday, January 30

On January 30 at the rise of Meeting (11:45 am to 1:15 pm), please join us in a blended Meeting for Threshing to share Friends' thoughts and feelings on minutes and letters submitted to SAYMA regarding what SAYMA clerk Bob McGahey calls "SAYMA's Existential Crisis and its future as a yearly meeting." He requests that each meeting in SAYMA "[s]pend time . . . on these minutes as we discern a way forward for SAYMA, as our constituent monthly meetings play the leading role in that process." He "invite[s] ongoing prayer for the organization and all of us who care deeply about it." Recognizing that some from AFM are actively engaged with SAYMA and have knowledge of the current concerns and many more Friends have not been actively involved, we ask all to read the minutes and letters posted at www.SAYMA.org to prepare for the Threshing session. We will also make printed copies available at AFM for those without internet access or who prefer a printed version. SAYMA's *Guide to our Faith and Practice* (pp 18-19) explains the process for a Meeting for Threshing along with guidelines for Threshing Meetings at www.sayma.org, then Documents or https://www.sayma.org/online_documents/faith_and_practice/F&P2021final.pdf. More details in minutes below for Meeting for Business. Child care will be provided for in person young Friends, and the Zoom coordinates will be the same as Meeting for Worship (see above).

MOST RECENT SAYMA MINUTES NOW ONLINE

Minutes from Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association's (SAYMA's) Yearly Meeting Session 50 (June 2021) and Representative Meeting 149b (December 2021), as well as previous meetings, are now posted on the SAYMA website at www.sayma.org under the heading "Documents" and then Representative Meeting and Yearly Meeting,

DIRECTORY UPDATES DUE BY JANUARY 31

Brent Wolff, our directory editor, is working on a revised and updated edition of the AFM directory. If you would like to be added to the directory or to make changes to your information, email afmdirectory@gmail.com. If you'd like a copy (electronic or paper) of the current (2020) directory, contact the office at atlantaquakers@gmail.com or 404-377-2474.

WEDNESDAY AM MEETING FOR WORSHIP ZOOM ONLY – Wednesdays, Feb 2, 9, 16, 23

8:30 am. This meeting for worship will be Zoom only until further notice. Watch announcement sheet for updates. Contact Bert Skellie at 404-680-4799 for general info.

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

Meeting ID: 92038862952

Password: 726229

WEDNESDAY EVENING WORSHIP WITH MACON WORSHIP GROUP – February 2, 9, 16, 23

The Macon Worship Group, which is under the care of Atlanta Friends Meeting, worships via Zoom every Wednesday at 7:00 pm.. They invite us to join them!

For more information, contact Bill Holland and Mary Ann Downey.

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

Meeting ID: 840 9589 9009

Passcode: 542278

BOOKS BY AND ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR – Thursday, February 3

The book group reading works by and about people of color meets at 1:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month, still via Zoom. On February 3, members of the group will discuss *Homeland Elegies* by Ayad Akhtar. Upcoming books include: March 3, *La Rose* by Louise Erdrich and April 7, *The Wrong End of the Telescope* by Rabih Alameddine. For more info or the Zoom link, email Susan Cole at cole2544@bellsouth.net.

WHEN WE ACT – Saturday, February 5

Join the Georgia Poor People's Campaign (GAPPC) online at Oakhurst Baptist Church for a gathering that will kick off the church's celebration of Black History Month. Hear from GAPPC's Coordinating Committee members and special guests about the Poor People's Campaign, issues impacting our communities and ways to act for change. February 5, 10 am to 12 noon online. For more info, visit <https://actionnetwork.org/events/georgia-poor-peoples-campaign-joins-oakhurst-baptist-church-for-when-we-act>. Register at www.tinyurl.com/mtt5ybbh.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS AND ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL – Sundays, February 6, 13, 20, 27

Adult First Day School will meet in person at the meetinghouse, and people will continue to be able to join via Zoom. (See above for Zoom details.)

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 February 6, we will hear the spiritual journey of Pat Michaelson. To hear Larry Foster's spiritual journey, shared January 2, focusing on what brought him to Friends, visit <https://tinyurl.com/2p8rcc2z>. For the first part of his spiritual journey, shared in 2015, visit <https://tinyurl.com/mr3u3fhf/>. Larry also shared a written statement summarizing why he finds Quakerism attractive: <https://tinyurl.com/3y553h5y>. In a professional capacity, Larry has specialized in Mormon history and has described some of his experience and contrasts with Quaker views of religious authority: <https://tinyurl.com/2j6d2jr7>. (To hear or read previous spiritual journeys, contact Mary Ann Downey.)

On second Sundays (previously third Sundays), Adult First Day School will have worship sharing, usually on that month's query. On other Sundays, we will discuss *Biblical Literacy: The Essential Bible Stories Everyone Needs to Know* by Timothy Beal. Please join us, even if you haven't read the book.

GREEN FRIENDS FILM "FESTIVAL" – Sunday, February 6

What can individuals do about Global Warming? How about families and other small groups? What about social movements? Nations? And how should we feel about fossil fuels and the climate change they cause? Please come together on Zoom to see eight short films that raise these questions in a Green Friends film "festival" on Sunday, February 6, 12 pm to 1 pm.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84042193998?pwd=U0MweS9IMFRUZk5hdjc3MEJBYWxsQT09>

Meeting ID: 840 4219 3998

Passcode: 641857

MONTHLY EASY HIKE / WALK – Saturday, February 12

February 12's hike will be an easy walk of about 3 miles round trip on the new section of the paved Michelle Obama trail in South DeKalb. We hope to see deer and water birds along the South River. We should be done before 11 am. Meet at the Georgia State University Panthersville parking lot at 9 am. The parking lot entrance is at 2898 Clifton Springs Rd, Decatur, GA 30034. Look for the trail at the south end of the parking lot. To get there by MARTA, catch the 34 or 15 bus. A map of the parking lot and trail is at <https://tinyurl.com/3hd5y5vt>. Call Bert Skellie at 404-680-4799 if you have questions, if you have an emergency and need us to wait for you at the trailhead longer than 5 minutes, or if you would like information about future hikes, which are the second Saturday of each month.

BLACK QUAKER LIVES MATTER FILM FESTIVAL – every other Saturday, February 12 to April 9

The Black Quaker Project announces the Black Quaker Lives Matter Film Festival, a first-of-its-kind film festival that endeavors to educate all about the importance of Quakers of Color who for too long have remained within the margins of the Society of Friends and the wider world. From February 12, 2022, during Black History Month, until Paul Robeson's birthday on April 9, 2022, every other Saturday, they will screen a film centered on a Quaker of Color with an introduction from a guest expert and a follow up discussion facilitated by BQP Director Dr. Harold D. (Hal) Weaver. Screenings every other Saturday on Zoom at 1 pm ET. Details and registration at <https://www.theblackquakerproject.org/black-quaker-lives-matter-film-festival>.

FLGBTQC 2022 MIDWINTER GATHERING – Friday, February 18 to Monday, February 21

The national Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns (FLGBTQC) will gather for 2022 Mid-winter via Zoom, February 18 to 21. They “hope that offering a playful, open virtual space to connect with each other can be a source of joy in challenging times. Our gathering will take place via Zoom with welcoming events beginning 5 pm EST/ 2 pm PST on Friday, February 18 and wrapping up by 3 pm EST / 12 pm PST on Monday, February 21.” The keynote event will be Wendy Sanford and Cai Quirk in dialogue about telling our stories of authenticity beginning at 1:30 pm EST/10:30 am PST Saturday. Schedule details for the weekend at <http://bit.ly/m-w-schedule-2022>. Register at <https://bit.ly/m-w-reg-2022>. Nina Gooch is the contact for Atlanta's FLGBTQC if you have questions about this or about Atlanta FLGBTQC or other lgbtq issues.

MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – Sunday, February 21

Meeting for business for December 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. See above or announcement sheet for Zoom details. Minutes from last month are below. For more info about meeting for business, see these guidelines approved by the meeting in 1996: http://atlantaquakers.org/_site_pdf_docs/Guidelines_for_Meeting_for_Business.pdf

LET'S TALK ABOUT RACE – Wednesday, February 24

Our monthly online, drop-in forum about race meets at 7:30 pm. Each meeting starts with a quote from anti racist literature or other media to be the springboard for the evening's conversation. All are welcome whether you have attended before or not. No special knowledge or background needed. We contribute from our personal experiences and backgrounds. We learn from the stories and questions we are willing to share. For more info, contact Lissa Place, 678-793-9260.

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

Meeting ID: 846 7804 5805

Passcode: LTAR

RACIAL EQUITY IN HOUSING & LOCAL EFFORTS FOR REPARATIVE JUSTICE – Sun, Feb 27

On Sunday, February 27, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. ET via Zoom, we invite you to participate in the joint forum of Atlanta Friends Meeting (AFM) and the Friends School of Atlanta (FSA) on the topic of "Racial Equity in Housing and Local Efforts for Reparative Justice." The AFM Ad Hoc Reparative Justice and Right Relations group, in conjunction with FSA, have arranged for 3 guest panelists to speak about discriminatory racial impacts of housing policies and practices such as redlining and what advocates are doing locally for reparative justice. The guest speakers will be Odetta MacLeish-White, Director of Georgia Initiatives for the Center for Community Progress, Dr. Akinyele Umoja, Professor of Africana Studies at Georgia State University, and Mawuli Davis, Civil Rights Attorney and Human Rights organizer. The moderator will be Dr. Sara Patenaude, affordable housing researcher and advocate. Umoja, Davis, and Patenaude are all active with the Beacon Hill Black Alliance for Human Rights, which is working in Decatur to identify harms to Black people through interconnected discriminatory housing and education policies and planning to submit a reparations/ reparative justice proposal to the City of Decatur. Everyone is welcome. For more info, contact Sara Patenaude sdpatenaude@gmail.com or Waman French, waman.french@friendsschoolatlanta.org
<https://friendsschoolatlanta.zoom.us/j/5633230884>

Meeting ID: 563 323 0884

Passcode 6spices

Suggested Resources: [Segregated by Design](#), short video on discriminatory policies from *Race the Power of an Illusion* 2018. [Decatur Anti-Racism Speaker Series Robin Rue Simmons](#), speaking on Evanston, Ill program of reparations related to housing and how communities can work together to develop such programs.

MINUTES FOR FIRST MONTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS

January 16, 2021

held via Zoom

Minutes Recorded Pending Approval

Attendance: Alison Mawle, Ann Ritter, Bill Hooson, Teri Key-Hooson, Mary Ann Downey, Bill Holland, Aaron Ruscetta, Anton Flores-Maisonet, Brent Wolff, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Caroline Morris, Mike Aland, David Small, Don Bender, Donna Roberts, Erin Schroder, Free Polazzo, Georgia Lord, Glenn Plyler, Henry Slack, Jay Roache, Jennifer Crumpley, Jennifer Thompson, Judith Greenberg, Judy Lumb, Julia Ewen, Karen Morris, Lissa Place, Mary Place, Bob Place, Lynn Leuszler, Myrna Trapp, Nina Gooch, Paul Mangelsdorf, Steve Collins, Sue May, Susan Firestone, Susan Lippold, Jennifer Dickie (Clerk), Coryn Murphy (Recording Clerk)

Friends gathered near the appointed hour with opening worship. A member of Ministry and Worship shared the First Month Query out of the worship: What binds us together as Friends? What weakens or strengthens us on our path toward a stronger community?

Discernment

Ministry & Worship- Bill Hooson, clerk of Ministry and Worship, reported for the Ministry and Worship Committee. One of the central principles of the Religious Society of Friends is that ministries are recognized by the meeting as a body. In the Atlanta Friends Meeting, Ministry and Worship is charged with helping to recognize and support these ministries, they are, like membership, actions of the body. Bringing it annually to the Meeting reminds us all that we are responsible for these ministries, holding them in prayer/Light that they will be faithful. We don't always rise up to that level, but it is a hope.

Minute 1/16/2022:01: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee the Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the following anchoring committees:

Cathy Amanti, Charlotte Flores, Hannah MacNorlin, and Christina Repoley for the Ministry of Anton Flores.

Dave Thurman, Nan O'Connor, Lewis Fuller, and Bill Holland for the Ministry of Mary Ann Downey.

Mary Ann Downey, Ron Nuse, Caroline Morris, and Bill Holland for the Ministry of Julie Hilboki.

Karen Morris, Susan Firestone, Bert Skellie, and Ron Nuse for the Ministry of Richard Allen.

Naming Committee- Jennifer Dickie reported for the naming committee which names members to the nominating committee.

Minute 1/16/2022:02: On the recommendation of the Naming Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Lissa Place as Clerk of Nominating Committee for a term of three years starting January of 2022 through December of 2024.

Minute 1/16/2022:03: On recommendation of the Naming Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Jim Tolmach as a member of the Nominating Committee for a term of three years starting January of 2022 through December of 2024.

2021 Naming committee- Jennifer Dickie as clerk of the Atlanta Friends Meeting asked for approval to lay down and thank the naming committee of 2021.

Minute 1/16/2022:04: On the recommendation of the Atlanta Friends Meeting clerk, the Atlanta Friends Meeting approves laying down the 2021 Naming committee and thanks Mark Yates, Marilyn Johnson, and Natalie McLaughlin for their service.

Nominating- Lissa Place of the nominating committee brought Lynn Leuszler forward as treasurer for immediate approval as the interim treasurer will step down this month.

Minute 1/16/2022:05: On behalf of Nominating Committee Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Lynn Leuszler as Treasurer for a term of 2 years starting January of 2022 until December of 2023.

Minute 1/16/2022:06: On behalf of the Atlanta Friends Meeting the Clerk thanks Judith Greenberg for her extended service as treasurer.

SAYMA Representative Report- Free Polazzo reported as the SAYMA representative for the Atlanta Friends Meeting.

On Thursday, January 6, 2020, Bob McGahey, the Presiding Clerk of SAYMA sent the following letter to all of SAYMA's monthly meetings:

*"SAYMA's spring representatives meeting will be held virtually on March 26. The meeting will focus on SAYMA's ongoing existential crisis, and its future as a yearly meeting. We are posting two minutes, one an important piece of information, the other a longer document that will be a focus of our discussion. Since that minute refers to the Open Letter from the Racial Justice Working Group, the open letter is riposted for reference. **Please spend time in your meetings for worship for business on these minutes as we discern a way forward for SAYMA, as our constituent monthly meetings play the leading role in that process. I invite ongoing prayer for the organization and all of us who care deeply about it.**"*

Bob's request does not ask AFM to make any decisions or recommendations but rather to "Please spend time in your meetings for worship for business on these minutes. .." Recognizing that there are some from AFM who are actively engaged with SAYMA and who have knowledge of the current concerns as well as many more from AFM who have not been actively involved in SAYMA, I am asking Atlanta Friends to read both documents on www.sayma.org ("**An open letter to Friends Center for Racial Justice (FCRJ) and the Clerk of SAYMA**") and a minute from Charleston Friends Meeting in response.) The clerk also says that "The longer minute (Charleston Friend Meeting's) will be the focus of our discussion." (at the Rep. Meeting on March 26).

As your SAYMA Representative, I recognize that among AFM Friends there are differing opinions regarding what SAYMA clerk, Bob McGahey refers to as "SAYMA's ongoing existential crisis". As we don't have time during a Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business to allow for our very large meeting to address these documents and given the importance of the concerns raised by Clerk Bob, I am asking for approval of a Minute:

Minute 1/16/2022:07 On the recommendation of the SAYMA representative, the Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the Atlanta Friends Meeting to schedule a Meeting for Threshing for the purpose of sharing Friends' thoughts and feelings on the two minutes that have been submitted by Clerk Bob McGahey as a way to focus on "SAYMA's Existential Crisis and its future as a yearly meeting". The presiding clerk and the SAYMA representative will make the arrangements necessary.

Note: All documents are available at www.sayma.org. We will also make printed copies available at AFM for those without internet access or who prefer a printed version.

SAYMA's Guide to our Faith and Practice, also at www.sayma.org, Section II C; pages 18 & 19, explains the process for a Meeting for Threshing along with "Guidelines for Threshing Meetings".

Reports:

Ministry & Worship- Bill Hooson reported as clerk for the Ministry and Worship Committee.

1. This year, as of December 20, 2021, 360 asylum-seeking guests have been welcomed into the meetinghouse. Here, the guests are welcomed as friends and provided with simple but gracious acts of hospitality including meals, clothing, a hot shower, a warm bed, and a listening ear. This ministry is under the care of the Meeting and is stewarded by its Friend-in-Residence, Anton Flores-Maisonet. The ministry also has 501c3 non-profit status as Casa Alternativa.

Scores of volunteers, both directly affiliated with the Meeting and beyond, offered accompaniment to people from over 50 different countries both at the airport and at major hubs of transportation, especially at the Atlanta airport. This work of welcome this year involved over 30 members and attendees of the Meeting in both direct and indirect acts of service and solidarity. Additionally, for the past two months, students from the Atlanta Friends School have provided us with a weekly supply of sack lunches for our airport companions.

Thousands of asylum seekers have been assisted this past year at the airport with the 360 guests who stayed at the meetinghouse being the remnant who mostly needed one night's lodging while awaiting their plane, bus, or ride to take them to their new home in the United States.

Please go to casaalterna.org to read some of Anton's most recent essays and blogs to find out more information.

This partnership between Atlanta Friends Meeting, Casa Alterna, and other organizations and congregations including Airport Chaplains, Atlanta Mennonite Church, City of Atlanta Office of Immigrant Affairs, El Refugio, Epiphany Episcopal Church, FWD.us, Holy Trinity Parish, Hope Atlanta, Jubilee Partners, North Decatur Presbyterian Church, Virginia-Highlands Church, and many others are a testament to a love that crosses borders.

Finally, members of Anton's support committee include Cathy Amanti, Charlotte Flores, Hannah MacNorlin, and Christina Repoley.

2. Ministry and Worship are also processing two applications for Membership and will, hopefully, be bringing their names to Meeting for Business in 2nd Month.
3. There will be no Ministry and Worship Forum this month.
4. Bette Turlington's Memorial Service will probably be held in May.

Nominating- Lissa Place reported for Nominating Committee:

The nominating committee would like to bring the following names forward:

- Don Bender as Assistant Treasurer for a term of two years
- Jennifer Crumbley as a member of the Care and Counsel Committee for a term of three years.

Finance Committee- Paul Manglesdorf reported for the finance committee. The Atlanta Friends Meeting budget had a surplus of \$16,128 despite lower rental income. This surplus was mainly due to lower budgeting and slightly higher investments. The excess could go back into the permanent improvement fund. It was also reported that contributions for 2021 were the lowest they have been since 2014. Part of this report is in the 2021 Fund Reconciliation document - there are no concerns about any of these funds at this time. For more information please see the attached documents.

[Editor's Note: If you would like to read these documents, please contact the Office Coordinator.]

Minute 1/16/2022:08-The recommendation of the finance committee in conjunction with the clerk and Sayma representative to move forward with the first quarter payment to SAYMA but make a decision about further payments.

The meeting has recently received a \$100,000 bequest from the Kenworthy's estate. We are all extremely grateful for such a large donation and we want to use it wisely. Finance Committee had discussions on the topic and we see a combination of likely uses. We want to use part of the contribution to shore up our reserves and part for expenditures that would honor Suzan and Tom. We think that both the Kenworthys would have appreciated the need to prudently maintain our reserves.

However, we also want to use some portion of the funds to do something beyond our on-going operations. As a Committee, we have discussed using some of the funds to subsidize members' attendance/participation in wider-Quaker organizations which were so important to Tom. We also discussed sponsoring speakers from Quaker organizations to speak to the meeting (and the Decatur community). We have also discussed some capital improvements or work on gardens on the grounds that might be appropriate.

Following good Quaker process, we felt the need to bring the process to the meeting as a whole. The Finance Committee plans to sponsor a zoom threshing session where we would come up with recommended uses. The threshing session will be scheduled in the next couple of weeks. We expect to also ask the Kenworthy family for ideas. We plan on presenting a final plan to Meeting for Business in March.

The finance clerk welcomes those who have thoughts about the use of the donation to contact him in advance of the threshing session.

Minute 1/16/2022:09: On the recommendation of the finance committee the Atlanta Friends Meeting approves that the meeting will hold a threshing meeting in order to determine the best use of the \$100,000 bequeathed to AFM by the Kenworthys' estate.

Administration- Steve Collins reported for the Administration Committee. The Solar Panel project is still awaiting City of Decatur approval. Georgia Power's net metering program is closed for the rest of 2022, but there is a possibility the Meeting may be able to sell Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) to an Atlanta firm to offset some of our electric bills.

There were some questions and concerns about whether the meeting can resell or sell back some of the electricity generated which were answered by Henry Slack with the addition that the purpose for solar panels is not exclusively economic but also an important response to global climate change by the Atlanta Friends Meeting.

Administration Tech Report- Aaron Ruschetta reported for the administration committee.

Trial Period evaluations:

Starting in August 2021, the current hybrid equipment configuration was assembled and tested by volunteers Aaron Ruschetta and Alison Mawle, working with the guidance of AFM's Admin, Ministry and Worship, and ad-hoc Use of The Meeting House committees. Thanks to the donation of a larger flat-screen TV, our ability to repurpose older computer equipment being replaced in the AFM office, and the option to utilize our Assisted Listening System components for audio, the new equipment expenditures were less than \$200.00 (used to procure an OS upgrade, a webcam, a wireless keyboard+mouse, a headset, and cabling).

The standing configuration has been functioning well in trial use for more than 18 weeks now with only minor adjustments or tinkering. Anyone who is comfortable with hosting a private zoom meeting can run the equipment after a couple of assisted sessions to become familiar with the configuration. Several capable Friends have received training over the course of the trial period and are now available to share the volunteer hosting role, and a few more Friends are in the training process.

Current Hybrid Status & Known Challenges:

In order to preserve the contemplative nature of Meeting for Worship, a guiding design goal for hybrid meetings was that any Zoom technology be as unobtrusive as possible. The sense from ongoing solicited feedback is that the disruptions have been minimal. Friends have been largely welcoming of hybrid gatherings and appreciative of being able to participate in our meetings remotely.

We have also heard persistent concerns from a few voices, the most prominent issue being difficulty in clearly hearing and understanding messages and announcements. This kind of concern has regularly arisen within in-person worship meetings for years, and the problem is now being exacerbated by medical masks and the fickle complexities of internet conferencing. More than 15 years ago these issues prompted AFM to install, and then regularly revisit and optimize, our Assisted Listening System [ALS] (which is now being utilized for our Zoom broadcasts). As the consulting volunteer who has tried to provide solutions to the hearing issues then and since I have had to accept, and regularly remind AFM, that the predominantly human and environmental factors surrounding these problems cannot be readily addressed by technology.

The perceptions are what matters, however, and the concerns call for assurance that our media systems are working optimally. AFM's decisions to extend the evaluation of hybrid meetings for another 6 months also justify the further time and money investments in exploring improvements. What follows is a listing of my recommendations with notes on continuing efforts to refine the technology and elevate perceptions.

In continuing to support hybrid meetings, I can identify four separate challenges we need to address:

Challenge 1) Guiding Friends toward sharing messages and announcements effectively:

--No technology can change our behaviors, so finding and implementing solutions that guide Friends to speak effectively is deferred to Ministry and Worship Committee. Defining "Zoom Etiquette" practices, including consistent reminders to speak clearly at meetings, are suggestions that have been heard.

Challenge 2) Overcoming the meeting room acoustics:

--The meeting room's "bright" and reverberant acoustic qualities create hearing challenges for many Friends. Our choir microphone array very effectively picks up every voice and sound in the room, but all that sound is amplified proportionally for Zoom attendees and over the ALS radios. The specialized mixer in the system selects the microphone with the strongest signal automatically, reducing room noise in the mix and significantly improving the audibility of speech, but it can't eliminate extraneous sounds entirely.

++ Improvements may be possible with audio processing tools being applied to the Zoom and ALS system feeds. Two trial devices are being provided on loan for the continuing evaluation period.

1. A Graphic Equalizer was installed on January 2nd. Its function is to reduce the volume of audio frequencies that fall outside the human vocal range.
2. A compressor/limiter/gate device will be installed by January 23rd. This tool manipulates audio dynamics based on input intensity over short time frames and can serve to reduce the volume of quieter sounds and delayed reverberations.

Challenge 3) Optimizing the internet streaming (aka ensuring Zoom broadcast quality):

-- Our repurposed computer equipment has proven fully functional for streaming and monitoring with Zoom, but internet bandwidth has been a persistent concern as we experience frequent "unstable connection" warnings and occasional Zoom crashes despite stable wifi signal strength. Bandwidth is critical to streaming broadcast quality, so improvements here are a priority, with the important caveat that we have no control over our packets once they leave the building; service provider manipulations and limited capabilities on receiving systems will remain potential problem points.

- This week our office coordinator, Nina, was able to arrange a significant increase in bandwidth delivery on our AT&T account, which also reduces our monthly charges by 30%
- To address the bandwidth competition and packet losses inherent to wifi, we plan to run a hardwire ethernet line to the Zoom broadcast computer. Having hard wire networking in the meeting room media closet also provides future internet distribution options. With volunteer installation, the cost will be minimal.

Challenge 4) Better hearing clerks and presenters in Meeting for Business and forums:

-- From my professional experience, and in the opinion of qualified sound engineers who were invited to evaluate our ALS design, the mic array and automated mixer arrangement we are using is an optimal solution for delivering audio from the meeting space within the constraint of preserving the contemplative spirit and practices of our Meeting for Worship settings. However, in settings with assigned presenters, a more traditional PA configuration could be desirable and may provide audibility improvements.

++ By utilizing the mic inputs on the powered PA speaker that is already being used to hear incoming audio from Zoom participants, adding amplified wireless (or wired) handheld microphones is easy.

- A simple to use wireless mic option has now been demonstrated at a listening forum and an Admin meeting (using loaned equipment). Usage testing is also planned for the January 16 Meeting for Business. The transmitter/receiver pairs can be plugged into any microphone or mixer respectively. The small, wireless modules are rechargeable via common USB phone chargers and will run ~5 hrs on a charge.
- Currently, the handheld mics are run directly through the PA speaker and attendees on Zoom still hear all the proceedings through the ALS connection. For optimal quality, a small dual output audio mixer will combine the clean handheld mic audio with the ALS mics on the feed for Zoom broadcast, while sending an isolated microphone only mix to the room speaker alongside the incoming (remote attendee) Zoom audio.
- When implementing the various microphone and processing additions, we will be doing supporting upgrades to the signal paths that will include conversion to balanced wiring, a proper line splitter for the automated mixer output, the small utility mixer mentioned above, and an outboard Analog to Digital converter for Zoom audio input.

Below is the list of recommended equipment with exact costs and links to supplier pages.

Sweetwater is the suggested source for most of the items; I have purchased a lot of audio and music gear from them over the years and have found their prices to be very competitive and their customer service to be exceptional.

As of 01/13, the Admin committee has approved the plans and equipment purchases described here, along with permission to continue tinkering and seeking refinements in the systems. I'm happy to leave my legacy Graphic EQ and Comp/Limiter devices on loan until the end of our continuing 6 month evaluation period in June, noting that newer devices would likely perform better. I will procure and install all the other selected equipment by the first week of February 2022.

CLOSING NOTES ON VIDEO CHALLENGES:

This report evaluates our immediate ALS and Zoom AUDIO concerns only. There were a few concerns and perceptions about our broadcast VIDEO that arose in the hybrid trial feedback, so I also did substantial research into possibilities of video enhancements for our configuration, satisfying my own geek curiosity about the latest tech and tools. In considering options that might address the video improvements wish list, it was clear that simply swapping in a better static webcam wasn't going to shift perceptions, and that more involved approaches are being expected. Searching the long list of automated PTZ gadgets and multiple camera options quickly branched into requirements for turning our meeting space into a television studio, with all the associated complications and expenses of video switching gear, camera interfacing, needs for multiple skilled volunteers, and lots of intrusive equipment and cabling. My expert and experiential determination is that AFM should not even begin to pursue Video changes or additions to our hybrid configuration without first making a very large and long-term holistic commitment to internet streaming of our meetings.

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Recommended equipment and costs:

<u>200ft Plenum rated Cat 6 ethernet cable</u> ~ (\$100)	[\$100.00] (top priority)
<u>Bheringer Graphic EQ</u> (\$110)	[\$110.00] (similar device on 6 mo. loan)
<u>DBX Comp/Limiter/Gate</u> (\$190)	[\$190.00] (similar device on 6 mo. loan)
<u>Xvive wireless mic Xmtr/Rcvr pair</u> (\$200 x 2pr)	[\$400.00] (high priority)
<u>Sennheiser e835 s mic s</u> (\$100 x 2ea)	[\$200.00] (high priority)
<u>Xenyx 802 mixer</u> (\$60)	[\$ 60.00] (available for evaluation)
<u>Rolls XLR Splitter</u> (\$60)	[\$ 60.00] (top priority)
Supporting peripherals & cables ~ (\$120)	[\$120.00] (applicable in part for all items)
	total \$ 1,240.00

Committee Corner:

QVS Local Support Committee- Steve Collins reported for the QVS Support Committee. The Fellows' mid year retreat is scheduled for February. They have requested assistance with food to support the retreat. If you'd like to help, please contact me (shcollins75@gmail.com) or Rachael Carter (rachael@quakervoluntaryservice.org) who will be sharing the Fellows' retreat meal plans shortly. One way to contribute would be VISA gift cards.

The process of selecting site placements and QVS applicants for 2022-2023 will begin soon. AFM members can reach out to me or Rachael if they have ideas for site placements.

Care & Counsel Committee- Karen Skellie reported for the Care & Counsel committee who looks forward to a time in which we can again meet in-person to resume monthly welcome dinners for newcomers as well as encourage Friendly 8 groups, such as ethnic dining, games, movie-going, etc. These are such good ways to get to know people on an informal basis. The hiking/walking group is active monthly on second Saturdays and had 16 people walking the Peachtree Creek Greenway this month. All are welcome to join outdoors where it's safer these days.

Meanwhile, to help newcomers find answers to their frequently asked questions we have updated the Next Steps flyer and developed a sheet of Quaker lingo, such as "What is First Day?" (thanks to Susan Firestone for this.) These should be available on the website soon as well as a form for attenders to list emergency contacts in case of a medical emergency while at the Meetinghouse. In next month's newsletter, there will be an article, written by our newest committee member, Jennifer Crumpley, encouraging all of us to consider end-of-life planning at whatever age we are.

[Editor's Note: This article is actually in this month's newsletter. See above.]

Announcements

AFM Corporation meeting will be held following the rise of Meeting for Business

Approval of Minutes from 12th month 2021

Minute 1/16/2022:08: The Atlanta Friends Meeting approved the minutes from the 12th-month meeting.

Events in the life of the meeting

Betty Turlington passed away on December 23, 2021.

Aaron Ruschetta's grandson, Garyth Oliver Giletta, was born on Jan 12, 2022.

Closing Worship

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

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

Regular Office Hours have resumed: Monday thru Thursday, 10 am to 1 pm and Friday, by appointment
web and email: atlantaquakers.org, atlantaquakers@gmail.com voicemail/phone: 404-377-2474
Clerk: Jennifer Dickie, afmclerk1@gmail.com Treasurer: Judith Greenberg, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com

Ways to communicate and share information:

- You may receive the announcement sheets and other announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting. This is the announcement email 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 via email. This is the discussion email list.
- You may receive notification that the newsletter is online. This is the newsletter email list.
- To join any of these email lists above, please email the office at atlantaquakers@gmail.com
- To receive weekly emails with details about Zoom and in-person meetings for worship and First Day School, email atlantaquakers@gmail.com
- To join the meeting's Facebook page, search for Atlanta Friends Meeting & click the + **Join Group** button.

If you need a directory:

Email atlantaquakers@gmail.com or call 404-377-2474

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.

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. Thank you!

Want to submit an announcement, letter, article, and anything else of interest to Friends for the newsletter? Send to atlquakerltr@gmail.com. Submissions may be edited for length and format. THE DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS IS THE 20TH DAY OF EACH PRECEDING MONTH.

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