

Opportunities, joys, and challenges were seen throughout 2017 as we met the many and varied needs of our large meeting and pursued our leadings and commitments in the wider community. We gave gifts to others, addressed issues around racism and incidents of sexual harassment and welcomed newcomers. We committed to our community, both with Quaker-affiliated organizations and community partners.

Gifts of Spirit given to others come in many forms. This spring the Meeting hosted two large national Quaker groups: The Friends General Conference Long-Range Planning Committee and the Steering Committee for the Quaker Earthcare Witness Annual Meeting. Both required in-home hospitality, transportation, food, and coordination of matching guests-to-hosts. Ministry and Worship continued to provide multiple anchoring committees (a group of 3-5 different Friends who meet regularly with each individual) to give spiritual support and ongoing clearness opportunity to seven individuals who feel called to a personal ministry.

We provided almost \$4000 in scholarships to attend FGC and SAYMA, supported a teacher to attend the Quaker Religious Education Collaborative Conference in Richmond, Indiana, and sponsored six Friends to attend an Undoing Racism workshop. In-kind gifts were given to the Stone Mountain Evangelical Friends Church after deep considerations in Meeting for Business; the gift of use of the meetinghouse space was provided to the Church of Mary Magdalene. The Ferguson Cabin was used by more than one hundred different people, including Quaker Women, Quaker Men, Spiritual Nurture, Quaker Voluntary Service, viewers of a solar eclipse, and several extended family get-togethers. Through the work of Green Friends Committee, we made two sizable donations to support pipeline protesters at Standing Rock Sioux reservation as well as making many gifts of education and support around climate change issues.

The Meeting continues its strong Religious Education Program, both for adults and children throughout the year. For the first time, children's teachers formed a committee that worked to develop monthly themes from Old Testament lessons, and to inform these additional lessons with Faith and Play and other storybooks that RE bought to build our library. Religious Education has been especially focused on offering stories that connect children across differences in culture, race, family structure, and class.

Around racism, we feel called to act on our testimony of equality at the personal, institutional, and societal levels. Key themes in our racial equity work have included education on white privilege, education around white people's harm to Native Americans, restoring relationships and making amends, and expanding witness on racism in the local community and in the wider Quaker community. Work included support of and funding toward FGC's Institutional Assessment to Uncover Racism Project, SAYMA's plenaries on experiences of racism, and an AFM Friends of Color group. We grappled deeply and resolved to have a "Black Lives Matter" sign on the meetinghouse's front lawn. Meeting members also joined Decatur neighbors to work with local government leaders around removing Civil War monuments. Responding to incidents of sexual harassment, Care and Counsel appointed committees to work with three different individuals whose words and actions adversely affected several Meeting attendees. We came together with feelings of confusion, aloneness, support, and hope for further growth of awareness and sensitivity to make the Meeting a safe place for everyone.

We welcomed newcomers --- which number 8-10 or more each First Day --- through invitations to monthly Welcome Dinners and a newly amended brochure. A forum on Welcoming Newcomers, co-sponsored by Ministry & Worship and Care & Counsel, brought forward a list of ideas and concerns. Work continues from those discussions, including how to be best welcoming to Friends of color and Friends in the LGBTQ community.

We welcomed new members, and said goodbye to others. New members included Mark Watson, Penny Summers, and Sara Patenaude. Bill Hooson transferred into the meeting, and Sharon MacDonnell transferred membership out. Bill Herrington laid down membership. Diana White sojourns from Farmington Friends Meeting. Memorial services were held for several: Harry Lefever, Maria Ladd, Lyle McCormick, Mike Mykel, Doug Unfug, and Jada Tidwell. We mourn all these Friends, and will especially miss those who had been active in our meeting for more than 35 years.

We committed to work in the wider community, including with Quaker-affiliated organizations, community partners, and others. Our commitments to the wider community were both as appointed AFM representatives to SAYMA and other organizations and as individuals pursuing leadings. Meeting members and attendees are also being led to serve with roles of support in Quaker Voluntary Service and the Friends School of Atlanta, among others. AFM members and others formed an FCNL Advocacy Team to advance peace and justice legislation. Our meetinghouse is rented to like-minded groups, is often in use, and Administration Committee led a re-visioning of what

handling the large job of maintaining the building will look like in the future. To continue to sagely distribute the generous bequest of Frank Cummings, AFM contracted with a nonprofit to supervise the work of a youth organization and other youth development work in the Suchitoto, El Salvador area.

Our many obligations include those through Nominating Committee, who filled almost fifty positions of appointed members and committee clerks. The Nominating Committee also helped establish an Ad Hoc Archives Committee to address issues in the AFM Archives and the years of missing a consistent archivist.

Atlanta Friends Meeting met opportunities, joys and challenges in 2017 with prayerful deliberating at Meeting for Business, centering in gathered Worship, working diligently in strong, committed standing Committees, and forming Ad Hoc committees when necessary. We move forward to the upcoming year with hope and gratitude.

Final submission  
1/21/18

Meeting for Business