

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER



October 2014

Worship with Attention to Children on November 9

In autumn 2012 Atlanta Friends Meeting held a special Meeting for Worship to welcome babies and recognize the children of the Meeting and to make certain promises to them. A second such meeting will be held during Meeting for Worship on November 9th that will recognize children who have subsequently become a part of this Meeting.

During Meeting for Worship that day the attenders and members of the Meeting will be asked to make certain promises to the children of the Meeting. In addition, some parents may make individual or family promises to their children. Each child participating will be presented with a certificate that reflects the Meeting promises given. Worshipers present will be invited to sign each child's certificate.

The promises that members and attenders will be invited to make to the Meeting's children on November 9th will be:

- Will you promise to welcome these children as full participants in this spiritual community, forming a community learning together across all ages?
- Do you acknowledge that these children bring many valuable gifts to our community and that we would be the poorer without the love, insights and questioning they provide?
- Do you promise to see our children as individuals we want to know and care for, and provide opportunities when they can get to know and care for us, growing together through sharing prosperity and adversity?
- Do you recognize that this Meeting as a whole shares a responsibility to impart to every child within it those values and practices that are central to our practice as Friends?
- Will you always strive to be mindful that the manner in which we live our lives should serve as patterns, as examples, of the Light within, teaching by example how to speak and to listen with love?

We hope you will all join us for this special occasion. For further information, please contact Jenny Foster, Karen Morris, Georgia Lord, Mary Jahntz, or Kate Swett.

Atlanta Meeting of the Religious
Society of Friends (Quakers)
All are welcome

Meeting for Worship
Each First Day (Sunday)
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
701 W. Howard Ave.
Decatur, GA 30030

QUERY

Are you alert to practices here and throughout the world which discriminate against people on the basis of who or what they are or because of their beliefs? Seek to understand the causes of injustice, social unrest and fear. Are you working to bring about a just and compassionate society which allows everyone to develop their capacities and fosters the desire to serve?

- Britain Yearly Meeting

Gifts: An Essay Excerpt from *Breathing Light* by Julie Hilboki

The following was written for Hilboki's upcoming book, Breathing Light, which features poems and short essays about transforming loss and grief into love and gratitude. The writings will be accompanied by David Foster's photographs. "Gifts" arose from Hilboki's chaplaincy ministry, which is held under the care of the AFM.

During a recent chaplaincy visit to the local hospital, I met with three patients awaiting organ transplants. Each bestowed upon me unique gifts, which deepened my sense of the awe and impermanence of life.

The first patient gave me the gifts of serenity and connection. He was scheduled for his third round of intensive, weeklong chemotherapy. He knew the effect this poison would have on his body, but he was ready. "It's in God's hands," he told me. His calm attitude was remarkable to witness, and his sense of peace palpable. When we prayed together for intercessory healing, he wrapped his bare hands around my gloved hands and held on tightly. I wished the safeguard of the glove membranes had not been necessary, but he did not mind. We both understood it was for his protection.

The second patient shared with me the gifts of curiosity and joy. He and his wife delighted in discovering that I was a Quaker and in learning about this new tradition. We talked about theology, conscientious objectors during the Vietnam War, Richard Nixon (a self-proclaimed Quaker), and oatmeal. They wanted to understand the differences between Quakers and Presbyterians / Baptists, their respective traditions. The couple kept quizzing me until they understood a few theological differences, but also admitted "there are hardly any at all."

This patient had a kidney transplant a couple of years ago and he was now feeling awful. The doctors had not yet determined what was wrong. Both he and his wife stated that it is "in God's hands," but that they also hoped that God would give the doctors the wisdom they needed to diagnose the issue. We prayed together for wisdom and healing. When I was finished, they exclaimed, "that sounded just like a Baptist prayer, hardly any difference at all!" and laughed with joy. I did not reveal that I tailor my prayers to the patient's religious traditions.



"Cherry Blossoms Three" by David Foster

The third patient offered the gifts of kindness and humility. Her first Bone Marrow Transplant had not succeeded so she was here for a second try. The regimen, as she described it, sounded grueling. She stated she only had a 40% chance of the BMT working, and then if it did stick, merely a 40% chance of surviving after that. She said a number of times that it is "in God's hands" whether she lives or dies, but she was also afraid. What was hardest for her was leaving her meaningful work as a pediatrician and not knowing if she would ever get back to it. This saddened her greatly.

Her spirits lifted as she told me about how important chaplains are in a hospital setting. She shared several stories ending each with "I could not have done this without a chaplain being present." She implored me to understand and trust "how valuable you are. Don't let any anyone tell you differently." We prayed together for healing. When I was finished with my part, she jumped in and continued to pray for me, "an angel sent to help her heal." I was deeply moved and humbled by her kind words.

Each patient referred to their condition as, "in God's hands," and truly believed this. I could tell by the look in their eyes and the sincerity in their voices, both expressing the raw vulnerability of the human condition seeking peace. They feared the potency of the treatments but they also conveyed tremendous faith that either they

would pull through the procedure or that they would die. Either way, it was in God's hands and they found solace in this.

With these three, I certainly felt the presence of God flowing through them and me, meeting somewhere in the middle but also encompassing us together, completely. God was touching their hurting bodies, minds, and hearts with compassion and mercy. The experience of sitting with these patients gave new meaning to the words, "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them"(Matthew 18:20). The patient, God, and me were linked through the wonder of suffering, hope, and grace.

As I now ponder these three meaningful connections, I find the practical and the mystical aspect of my chaplain experience in each of them. The practical includes visits, conversation, and prayer. Yet the mystical of an ever-revealing God surrounds and infiltrates all. Each time I have intimate encounters such as these I realize my life will never be the same. I have been cracked open yet again, moved more deeply into awe, and have come face-to-face with the unconditional love and the compassionate presence of God.

Breathing Light: Relax your body and rest in a comfortable position. Next, relax your thoughts. You might even massage your forehead or temples to aid the relaxation of your mind. Allow your thoughts to meander gently back through the past 24 hours surveying gifts both given and received. Inhale gratitude into your heart; exhale joy for all.

Quakers for Racial Equity Present "Anne Braden: Southern Patriot" October 8

On October 8th from 7-9pm in the Meeting Room, Quakers For Racial Equality is presenting "Anne Braden: Southern Patriot (1924-2006)," a 77-minute-long first person documentary about the extraordinary life of this little-known American civil rights leader. Braden was hailed by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his 1963 Letter from Birmingham Jail as a white southerner who was "eloquent and prophetic" in her critique of racial discrimination. Ostracized as a "red," she was a radical who fought for an inclusive social justice movement and mentored three generations of activists in the struggle against racism. For more details, see annebradenfilm.org.

This film screening will be followed by a discussion with Anne Braden's biographer, Cate Fosl, former member of AFM, author of the award-winning 2002 *Subversive Southerner*, and a humanities adviser and commentator for the film. We welcome our F/friend Cate and hope you will support this important event with your presence.

Letter from Bethany Vega Childers

Dear Friends, my name is Bethany Vega Childers. I've been a member of the Memphis Friends Meeting for fifteen years (since I was 16). I've been active in both the SAYF and YAF programs of SAYMA. In the capacity of YAF representative to the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee, I get to do work that I'm passionate about that is very fulfilling for me. An idea I had during the Fall '12 SAYMA Reps Meeting was adopted for the theme of yearly meeting in 2013. I have developed many relationships and made many treasured memories with precious f/Friends during Reps Meeting weekends, and am grateful to be continuing to serve in this capacity. I am writing to request assistance from the Atlanta Friends Meeting and reached out first through the Care and Council Committee for support during my move from Memphis to Atlanta. I'm currently in a state of transition and I know that being near a support system and remaining involved in caring community are imperative to success in my current efforts toward independence and wellness. I decided to move to Atlanta (Decatur in particular) after having become familiar with it a few years ago while visiting. I don't have a vehicle, so relocating to a city with an accessible transportation system was one very compelling factor in my decision. Additionally,

being close to f/Friends and their children who are like family to me (and love me as such) was very important, as was being near to the Atlanta Friends Meeting.

I arrived September 8th, and have a place to stay through the 25th. A Friend has graciously offered her place for me as she travels in October and November. I wonder if there might be any friends in Decatur or the vicinity that feel led/have the space and willingness to host me for a while past that time until I get back on my feet. I don't have a car, so being within walking distance of a MARTA station is a necessity for me to maintain employment as I'm coming with little more than pocket money. Care and Counsel has helped me with a MARTA pass to assist in my job interview process. I am applying for EBT benefits (food stamps) as further support, as well as sending out resumes, so I can obtain employment and become self-sufficient as quickly as possible. My aim is to save my earnings and rent a modest place of my own (something like an efficiency/studio/carriage house, etc.) by the end of October or November. I know that is ambitious, and recognize that my endeavors very much depend on a successful job process.

Thanking you heartily for your presence, time, and consideration, and appreciating very much being held in the Light. In gratitude, Bethany.

Women's Weekend at the Ferguson Cabins

Around a dozen women gathered at the cabins the last weekend in August with plenty of room for more. We enjoyed hiking, swimming, kayaking, canoeing, sharing meals, playing games, reading, sunning and conversations as we got to know each other better in many ways. Just sitting on the dock looking out at the lake and the mountains in the distance restores one's soul and brings a sense of peace. Quaker women have been retreating to the cabin/s for many years and reveling in the beauty of nature. What a gift Dwight and Irene Ferguson gave the Meeting to share. Waking to the calls of a wood thrush, seeing the sun rise while kayaking through morning mists, sharing a campfire and singing after sunset, eating our traditional spaghetti dinner, taking a hike to nearby waterfalls, and very meaningful Meetings for Worship on Sunday mornings have all been part of our gatherings. Please join us next summer! Contact Joan Thompson 404-273-3489 to reserve time at the cabins. Submitted by Karen Skellie.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business – September 21, 2014 **Recorded pending approval**

Attendance: Genevieve Beck-Roe, Don Bender, Muireann Brennan, Mark Bryans, Kai Callaway-Singer, Kelly Callaway-Singer, Nylgia Callaway-Singer, Tali Callaway-Singer, Steve Collins, Jennifer Dickie, Mary Ann Downey, Betsy Eggers, Julia Ewen, Sally Ferguson, Susan Firestone, Nina Gooch, Clive Gordon, Carol Gray, Judith Greenberg, Julie Hliboki, Bill Holland, Kathy Johnson, Lynn Leuszler, Georgia Lord, Erica Schoon, Peter Sederberg, Karen Skellie, Henry Slack, Rebecca Sullivan, Joan Thompson, Jim Tolmach, Myrna Trapp, Perry Treadwell, Bethany Vega, Sarah Walton, Ashley Wilcox, Nan O'Connor (Clerk), Elizabeth Lamb (Recording Clerk) (38 Friends).

Query: Ashley Wilcox presented the query: "Are you honest and truthful in all you say and do? Do you maintain strict integrity in business transactions and in your dealings with individuals and organizations? Do you use money and information entrusted to you with discretion and responsibility? Taking oaths implies a double standard of truth; in choosing to affirm instead, be aware of the claim to integrity that you are making."

Ministry and Worship Committee: On behalf of the Ministry and Worship Committee Bill Holland brought forward the following report item. It is presented early in the agenda in order that the children could be present when the item was presented.

We have received a request to take under our care of the marriage of Nylgia and Kelly Callaway-Singer. A clearness committee has met with the couple and found them clear. Ministry and Worship recommends we take this marriage under our care and will bring this back to 10th Month for discernment.

Bill then brought forward the following items for discernment:

Marriage Recommendation. In 8th Month Ministry and Worship reported that we received a request from Caroline Noyes and Susan Bacher to be married under the care of the meeting. A clearness committee met with the couple. Ministry and Worship recommends we take this marriage under our care.

- **Minute 9-21-2014-01:** *On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, we joyfully take the marriage of Caroline Noyes and Susan Bacher under our care.*

The Meetinghouse has been reserved for October 11 to hold this marriage.

- **Minute 9-21-2014-02:** *On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship, we approve Jenny Foster, Paul Baker and Steve Collins to serve on the Marriage Committee for Caroline Noyes and Susan Bacher.*

Janet Ross requests to transfer her membership. Janet has written a lovely letter thanking the meeting for its support and requesting a transfer to Yonge Street Monthly Meeting (Canadian Yearly Meeting). [Bill read her letter to those present.]

- **Minute 9-21-2014-03:** *Atlanta Friends asks Young Street Monthly Meeting (Canadian Yearly Meeting) to accept Janet Ross as member by transfer to your meeting. Janet was a faithful member of our meeting and brought many gifts to our spiritual life. We rejoice she has found a community of Friends. We ask you to tenderly care for her spiritual life.*

Nominating Committee: On behalf of the Nominating Committee Carol Gray brought forward the following for approval to serve in Religious Education.

- **Minute 9-21-2014-04:** *Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the following teachers: Jonah McDonald (High School); Gwen Davies, Folami Adams and Perry Treadwell (Upper Grades); Julia Ewen, Alison Mawle, Kacy Burbank and Blake Williamson (Middle Grades); Betsy Eggers and Beth Marthinson (Middle and Upper Grades singing); Angie Love, Lynn Leuszler and Carolyn Manley (Lower Grades).*

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Friends: On behalf of LGBTQ Friends Nina Gooch brought forward a request to minute the Meeting's participation in the Atlanta Pride parade each fall.

- **Minute 9-21-2014-05:** *Atlanta Friends Meeting approves that members and attenders march under the AFM banner in the Atlanta Pride parade this October.*
- **Minute 9-21-2014-06:** *Atlanta Friends Meeting approves that members and attenders march under the AFM banner in future Atlanta Pride parades.*

Nina will ask the office manager and various committees about having a small handout available for those who ask participants about AFM.

Finance Committee: On behalf of the Finance Committee Lynn Leuszler shared the Income and Expense report through September 1, 2014, pointing out that contributions to the general fund are still below where they historically are at this time of year. There have been many contributions to off-budget items. Responding to a request made last month, the committee provided a report showing contributions to non-budgeted special funds for the past few years. Lynn also reported that some funds are no longer needed, while others are somewhat controversial. The Finance Committee will present a forum the last Sunday in October to discuss these and other items of interest regarding the finances of the Meeting. Please send questions and suggestions to Lynn of items you would like to have discussed at the forum.

Lynn reported that the Meeting will soon be able to accept credit card payments. It was requested that separate Income and Expense reports be provided for each special fund as well as the one for the general fund at the next business meeting.

Ministry and Worship Committee: On behalf of the Ministry and Worship Committee Bill Holland reported that several months ago Ministry and Worship shared their work on a proposal to recognize the moment when children leave the meeting for worship. The committee has laid down that proposal for the time being.

Care and Counsel Committee: On behalf of the Care and Counsel Committee Clive Gordon reported on discussions that are currently at the committee level regarding a request by the Refugee Support Group. In the past the Refugee Support Group has met and made recommendations, then sought approval from Care and Council by email with little further discussion. The Refugee Support Group has realized that it is time to bring the process through which they respond to requests for assistance from the refugee fund under the administration of the Care and Council Committee in order that the process be brought more in line with Meeting norms. Susan Firestone and Dieudonne Ntibayazi have volunteered to come on as members of Care and Council, sharing their experience and knowledge of our Burundian Friends' situations. Care and Counsel feels it needs more time to thoughtfully consider moving the Refugee Fund and other support work under its administration. It was agreed that, in the short term, a small group consisting of Betsy Eggers, Carol Gray and Jennifer Foster from the Refugee Support Group and new Care and Council members Susan Firestone and Dieudonne Ntibayazi would continue to make decisions on requests made by refugee families, and that they include Clive Gordon, clerk of Care and Counsel, on all communications. This group will also work on a plan to clarify the relationship of the Meeting with the families, the expectations and limitations on both sides, and guidelines which allow for an appropriate approval process. The group will consult with the treasurer on implications of transferring the fund. Once the small group, then Care and Counsel, have seasoned the matter and feel clear about the process, Care and Counsel will bring the matter to Business Meeting for approval.

Administration Committee: On behalf of the Administration Committee Steve Collins reported that a potentially dangerous tree near the property line beyond the parking lot has been removed. The mulch is on the grounds and a work day will be scheduled in October to spread it around.

Nominating Committee: Carol Gray brought forward Elizabeth Tolmach to be a teacher in the Lower Grades (3 year old – 1st grade). Her name will be brought forward next month for approval.

SAYMA Representative: Bill Holland reported that Forty Six (46) Friends from Atlanta attended the SAYMA Annual Gathering in June 2014, including 2 from Macon Worship Group. Two were JYM and 16 in SAYF. Three were Young Adult Friends. Nine attended for the first time. Atlanta Meeting Friends led 6 workshops including Transformation and Healing Creation (Roy Taylor), Reinventing the Workplace (Free Polazzo), Cultivating Compassion in an Interfaith World (Julie Hliboki), Cracking the Code: the System of Racial Identity (Susan Firestone and Bert Skellie), Reflections on QVS Service (Volunteers and QVS Atlanta), and Healing and Healing Light (Fred Stevens). Michael Kramer and Jennifer Dickie coordinated Junior Yearly Meeting, the program serving young friends from ages 4 to rising 6th graders.

Yearly Meeting 2015 is scheduled for June 11-14, 2015 at Warren Wilson College. The theme is still being identified.

Larry Ingle from Chattanooga is the new Clerk of SAYMA.

The Fall Representative meeting was held on Saturday September 20, 2014 in Knoxville. The FY 2015 Budget of \$88,467 was approved. Slightly less than half of SAYMA budget is devoted to the annual meeting, the remainder to operational expenses, and contributions to wider Quaker organizations.

Minutes of August 2014:

Minute 9-21-2014-07: *The Minutes of the August 2014 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business were approved as submitted.*

Meeting closed with Silent Worship.

Respectfully submitted by: Elizabeth Lamb, Recording Clerk; and Nan O'Connor, Clerk.



Please Hold in The Light:

Obede Nzigimana and family
Faye Walser Yarbrough and
Ester Michael, relatives of John Michael
Bianka Kucelin and Nora Poling, friends
of Eric and Kate Swett

*Those who wish to have requests for
Holding included in this monthly
newsletter may give the names to any
member of Care & Counsel.*



Atlanta Friends Meeting Contacts

Clerk of the Meeting: Nan O'Connor, afmclerk1@gmail.com
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Treasurer: Peter Sederberg, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com
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Calendar for Tenth Month (October) 2014

Area Meetings for Worship

Every First Day (Sunday)	10:00 a.m. – Meetinghouse, with a smaller group in the Library.
Every Third First Day	12:30 p.m. – Carrollton Friends Worship Group. St. Andrew's UMC Youth Center, 1106 Maple St.; contact Jean Hudson, judson30116@yahoo.com or 678-378-3368; carrolltonfriends.org .
Every Second and Fourth First Day	10:00 a.m. – Canton Friends Worship Group. 360 E. Marietta St.; 779-720-4669 or wrlldpeas@mindspring.com .
Every Second First Day	10:30 a.m. – Macon Friends Worship Group. Contact Diana Day, 478-227-8892; maconquakers.org
Every Fifth Day (Thursday)	12:10 p.m. – East Lake Commons, Decatur. Contact Bert Skellie at bertskellie@gmail.com or 404-680-4799.
Sixth Day (Friday)	(Mid-August through May), 9:00 a.m. – Friends School of Atlanta. Community Meeting Room, 862 Columbia Dr., Decatur, 404-373-8746.

Weekly Events at the Meetinghouse

Every First Day (Sunday)	9:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education, Library 9:15 a.m. Singing, Classroom A/B 10:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship
Every Second-Fifth Day (Monday-Thursday)	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Smart Toddlers, Nursery playground
Every Third Day (Tuesday)	7:00 p.m. Silent Meditation, Library
Every Fourth Day (Wednesday)	7:00 p.m. Mid-Week Worship, Library
Every Fifth Day (Thursday)	7:30 p.m. Bible Study, Library

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING
701 W. Howard Ave.
Decatur, GA 30030-2902

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

Office: MWF 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; 404-377-2474

Web: atlanta.quaker.org atlantaquakers@gmail.com

Clerk: Nan O'Connor, afmclerk1@gmail.com

Treasurer: Lynn Leuszler, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com

If you would like to have a permanent nametag made, leave a request in one of the baskets on the front table. Indicate whether you prefer one that hangs around the neck or that pins. When Carol Gray has made one for you, it will be placed in the black file box on the greeting table.

If you would like to be included in the AFM database and receive the Newsletter by mail and/or appear in future AFM Directories, please send your name and contact information to Emily Lawson at elawson7@gmail.com or 404-200-8479. Please indicate if you want to be in the directory, receive the newsletter by mail, or both.

Contributions to the Atlanta Friends Meeting may be placed in the slot marked "Contributions" in the greeting area of the Meetinghouse or mailed to the Treasurer at the above address. Thank you!

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

Readers are encouraged to submit letters, articles, notices and anything else of interest to Friends. Items should be sent directly to atlquakerltr@gmail.com in plain text (Word, not PDF). Pictures should be in .jpg format. Submissions may be edited for length and format.

THE DEADLINE FOR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS IS THE 20TH DAY OF EACH PRECEDING MONTH.

To receive the Newsletter via e-mail, send a blank e-mail to afmnewsletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com from the address where you want to receive the newsletter. You will receive a note back from Yahoo asking you to confirm your subscription; hit reply and you will be added to the list at no charge. To receive general announcements and to participate in discussion, follow the same instructions, but address the note to afmdiscussion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To receive announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting, send the same note to afmannouncements-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.