

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

JULY 2020

UPDATES TO THE LIFE OF THE MEETING DURING COVID-19

Out of an abundance of caution and a deep and prayerful concern for the health of our entire community, Sunday meeting for worship at the meetinghouse continues to be suspended and the meetinghouse mostly closed. However, in July, we are experimenting with a small, in-person worship group on Thursdays at 2 pm at the meetinghouse. Please stay tuned for more details. Also see the minutes from Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business below.

Our main worship will continue to be via Zoom on Sundays at 10:00 am. See below for details for this meeting for worship and other meeting activities via Zoom as well as other resources, including ways to connect to the meeting if you need help or if you can help others.

The newsletter and the announcement sheet will continue to be posted on the meeting's website. If you would like to be notified when the newsletter is posted online or to receive the announcement sheet via email, please see the final page of the newsletter for instructions. To join the meeting's Facebook page, search for Atlanta Friends Meeting and click the **+ Join Group** button.

The Office Coordinator continues to work from home and check email and voicemail each weekday.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS AND ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL

Each first Sunday of the month, in adult First Day School we listen to how a Friend in our meeting answers questions of God's leadings as well as questions about what brings them to this meeting, what led them to become a member or not, and what they believe now. We call these stories of spiritual journeys, stories where Friends describe their understanding of God and religion in their life. On July 5, three of our current Quaker Voluntary Service fellows will tell us about the joys and challenges they have experienced this year and will reflect on a question that they answered when they applied for the QVS program: *What's a spiritual question that intrigues you? What draws you to this particular question? What might it look like for you to deepen spirituality over the coming year?* Come hear Jillian Eller, Linnea Halsten and Erin Hazlitt-Norman as they share their spiritual journeys. All are welcome.

On other Sundays, we are discussing *Order of the Sacred Earth*, a collection of writings about how we care for our souls and the Earth at the same time. We will meet via Zoom and close the class in time to be in meeting for worship in the separate zoom link. See below for Zoom details.

To hear David Small's spiritual journey, heard June 7, you can visit: <https://tinyurl.com/yd2orn25>



Atlanta Meeting of the Religious
Society of Friends (Quakers)

All are welcome

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

QUERY FOR JULY

How have suffering and grief helped in my own spiritual formation? Where do I feel God at work in me during these times?

-- Southeastern Yearly Meeting

ONE QUAKER'S VIEW FROM "THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT"

submitted by Peter Lang

As a member of the Religious Society of Friends, I am convinced that God's love is the center of my life. Divine Love touches everything we do and is the heart of our Quaker faith. This Gracious Love begins in the center of our spiritual being and radiates out into the world. As Quakers we believe in the words of our founder, George Fox: "that there is that of God in every person." This spiritual truth radiates out of our Quaker Meeting Houses into our local communities and out into the world.

Thomas R. Kelly, a Twentieth Century Quaker mystic wrote, "Deep within us all is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine center, a speaking Voice to which we may continuously return." As Quakers we are taught to seek within the stillness of our hearts, both in our personal prayers and in our community worship, for the Divine Light that guides our lives. This sacred Inner Light needs to be cherished, nourished and followed as we search for meaning and purpose in our lives. As a Christocentric Friend, I have been guided by the Light Within to the teachings of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. It is especially the teachings of Jesus from "The Sermon on the Mount" that have revealed to me the truth that the Kingdom of God is spiritual and is within each one of us. The essence of Jesus' teaching is to love God and to love each other as He has loved us.

The "Sermon on the Mount" shows us how to follow the teachings of Divine Love, which is both a command and a promise. The "Sermon" includes the teachings of eight Beattitudes that reveal the enlightenment of God's love through Jesus. The Beatitudes are actually a prose poem in eight verses which is complete in itself and is a general summary of the whole Christian teaching. In addition, all of the Beatitudes have reference to spiritual conditions and each Beatitude leads us to the next one. Now let us begin with the First Beatitude.

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"And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and from Judea and from Jordan." (Matthew 4:25)

"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth and taught them saying," Matt.(5:1-2.)

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:3)

In the first Beatitude, what does it mean to be poor in spirit? Could it mean that those who are poor in spirit lack the sincere desire to have a deep relationship with God? Therefore they are separated from the connection of God's love and are distracted from the spiritual life. Perhaps it is when we are first awakened to the Presence of God's Love in our heart, that we begin to realize that it is our own separation from God that has caused our poverty of spirit. With this first spiritual awakening or subsequent awakenings, we may also recognize the possibility that God's love can change our lives. This loving transformation can bring about an inner change in our attitude toward life that opens the door of our spiritual consciousness to a loving relationship with God and life!

When we recognize that we are poor in spirit we will be able, with the grace of God, to empty our human consciousness and let the Holy Spirit flow into us. Jesus teaches us from the Sermon on the Mount to raise our vision of life to a higher level of spiritual consciousness where we will receive the blessings of Christ in the inner Kingdom of Heaven. It is a place of light, a place of peace, a place of joy, a place where we can always radiate God's Love.

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Let us picture the scene: Jesus on the mountain, the multitudes, and the disciples. The people see Jesus with his disciples who have gathered around him. Until quite recently these men had been completely identified with the multitude, they were just like the rest. Then came the call of Jesus, and at once they left all and followed him.

“And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,” (Matt. 5:2)

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”(Matt. 5:4)

It is the human condition to mourn or express sorrow when we experience a personal loss in our lives. The loss of a loved one, the loss of part of our physical or mental being, a broken relationship or the loss of a job that was meaningful to us can cause deep sorrow to us. From a spiritual point of view, I often mourn when I discern the quality of my spiritual life. I can feel my separation from God that brings alienation and loneliness that grows within me. When I find that I am mourning because of my sins and misdeeds to others or because of the sins and misdeeds that others have done to me, I become aware of my separation from God’s Love. I believe that it is this spiritual mourning for God and a prayer for forgiveness that opens our hearts to God’s Love. The act of mourning leads to repentance and to the inner experience of Divine comfort. Love is the greatest healer and the healing presence of God’s Love is the end of all mourning, both human and spiritual.

It is when we experience God’s unconditional love, that His Love radiates through us into the lives of others. Love is the call. Divine Love is the transforming power in our lives. Let us rejoice with gratitude and always radiate love!

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How do we learn to love as Jesus does? Let us raise our vision to “The Sermon on the Mount” and listen to God, the Voice of Love in our hearts.

“And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,” (Matt. 5:2)

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matt. 5:5)

In today’s culture the word “meek” has many negative connotations. One must seek within the heart of Christ to discern the meaning of this Beatitude, just as we must do with all Scripture. To some, to be meek implies a lack of confidence, low self esteem and a negative attitude. When I consider the word “meek” in a Christian sense, I believe that a clearer meaning for today’s culture is to be humble. Meekness is true humility, patience and long-suffering. Meekness is the absence of pride and being open to the Spirit, When we are humble and open to the Holy Spirit, we are free of our self-centered ego and are willing to follow God’s will in our life. We must surrender to the Holy Spirit and open our hearts to the Presence of God’s Love in our lives.

To inherit the earth means to have dominion over our outer or worldly experiences. Jesus teaches us that the Kingdom of God is within. When we live from the Divine Center of love, we inherit and own that loving presence within us. The nurture of this love, through prayer and good works, helps us to grow in faith and trust in God to show us the way in our journey in life. We must surrender our self-centered will to God and have faith that His Love will give us the strength to radiate this Great Love wherever we go. Although we may not be able to control all of the outer circumstances in life that confront us, God’s perfect love overcomes the fear and doubts that we may experience. It is through God’s radiating love that we can experience peace, joy and healing in all conditions.

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“Be still, and know that I am God.” (Ps. 46:10) Let us be still and listen to the voice of Jesus as he speaks from the mountain. Let us be still and listen for the heart-beat of God.

“And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,” (Matt. 5:2)

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” (Matt. 5:6)

This Beatitude is the most demanding and promising of all. To hunger and thirst from a human perspective is to have a deep desire to survive a lack of food and water to sustain one's physical body. Spiritually, to hunger and thirst after righteousness is a deep desire to sustain one's life in the Presence of God. The desire for righteousness means to be free from sin, which separates us from God. Righteousness means not only right conduct, but also right thinking in all areas of our life. We must learn and make the effort to direct all of our thoughts and energy toward God.

As Quakers, we seek within the silence of our hearts for the Presence of God's Light and Love. It is our faith that this Inner Light is in everyone and is just waiting to be discovered. It is this amazing discovery of God's unconditional love that brings true fulfillment into our lives. It is in the deep desire to live in the abundance of God's Love that brings meaning and purpose into our lives. We then realize that "the joy in living is giving." Yes, the radiant Love of God is a gentle, but strong force within us that moves us to reach out to others in need. As Mother Teresa said, "It does not matter how large or small these acts of kindness are, as long as they are done with great love." The presence of God's Light within us can only be fulfilled when we let our light shine into the world and always radiate love.

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What is the wonder of God that brings gratitude and mercy into our lives? The command to love God with every shred of our being is the first and greatest commandment from Jesus. It stands, not only as the core of faithfulness, but at the center of life itself. The heart must throb for God.

"And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying," (Matt. 5:2)

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (Matt. 5:7)

To be merciful is to care deeply about others by being understanding, compassionate and forgiving. God is merciful to all and it is through the grace of God that we may obtain mercy. To be merciful to someone who has offended us, we need to begin with prayer in order to free ourselves from any judgemental thoughts. To be merciful in our actions of compassion and forgiveness we must first be merciful in our thoughts. We must also be aware and sensitive to the feelings of others in order to be caring and merciful to them.

Another way of caring for others is to listen deeply to what they are saying. What do their words reveal about them and what does the silence reveal to you? We are encouraged to pray for understanding for others and for discernment for ourselves. Let us listen to the Voice of Love in our hearts and then respond with mercy to others in need with God's radiant love.

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Can I say quite honestly and truly that I desire above everything else in this world to know God and to be like our Lord Jesus Christ: to live only in His Love?

"And he Opened his mouth and taught them saying," (Matt. 5:2)

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8)

This is one of the greatest statements in the Holy Scriptures. To see or to "know" God in your heart is the whole purpose of religion. What is the heart of our spiritual search? Do you have a passion for God? Once we become aware of our hunger and thirst for God, we know that our purpose in life is to see God and find unity with His Love.

As a Quaker my search for God begins with loving God with all my heart and soul and mind and strength. This Great Love can be recognized in moments of deep prayer and in our love for our family and neighbors. To love purely, we must rise above our self-centered egos and open our hearts and minds to the spiritual consciousness within us.

To love God and our neighbors as ourselves is the whole center of the teachings of Jesus. It starts with the heart. How do we purify our hearts so that we may see like Jesus, so that we may feel like Jesus and that we may love like Jesus? Jesus teaches us that the Kingdom of God is within us and that we must rise above our human consciousness with its negative thoughts and emotional patterns to our spiritual consciousness, which is our true self. Jesus encourages us to practice the Presence of God with deep prayer and by doing loving acts of kindness for others. To be certain, to become pure in heart will take the grace of God, as well as the daily practice of His radiant Love. Perhaps that is why we are given a lifetime to continue this practise of love and devotion to God and each other.

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*“Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.
Let this be the moment now, with every step we take.
Let this be our solemn vow.
To take each moment, and live each moment
With peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.”*

By Jill Jackson Miller and Sy Miller

Jesus teaches us the power of Divine Love.

“And he opened his mouth and taught them saying,” (Matt. 5:2)

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” (Matt. 5:9)

The peacemakers are those who through prayer and faithfulness to God have found a deep level of peace within themselves. This inner peace, which is called serenity, is the objective that Jesus gives to us in all of his teachings. The Prince of Peace shows us the way to live from the Divine Center of Love in all aspects of our lives. It is the revelation of God’s Love in our hearts that enables us to radiate His Love to others. In essence, it is Divine Love that transforms our lives from human self-centeredness to our true spiritual being, which can bring peace to others we encounter.

As a Quaker, our Peace Testimony is a living example of our faith in the power of God’s Love. It is our faith that “there is that of God in everyone.” Therefore, when we love our neighbors, with no exception, we are responding to the presence of Divine Love in each one of us. The reality is that we all have the potential to be the children of God and it is through His radiant love that we can bring His peace throughout the world.

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“And he opened his mouth, and taught them saying,” (Matt. 5:2)

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:10)

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.” (Matt. 5:11)

“Rejoice and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you.” (Matt. 5:12)

The teachings of Jesus reveal to us that the will of God for us is harmony, peace and joy, and that these things are to be attained by cultivating right thoughts or righteousness. It is through serenity or peace of soul that we may obtain spiritual growth that opens the way for us to live in God’s love. From my view on “The Sermon on the Mount,” I see two different but converging paths of thought that can explain the blessings for those who are persecuted for righteousness sake. First, in the culture of the times of the historical Jesus, the caste system was well in place. There was a big economic and social gap between the ruling class and the peasants. When Jesus came upon the

scene of this deeply ingrained caste system, he began teaching that all people are equal because the Kingdom of God is in everyone. It was clear that the established spiritual leaders were threatened and angered by Jesus's revolutionary teachings. The ruling class could not rise above their own selfish, fearful and angry thoughts to embrace the God of Love that Jesus spoke about. Therefore, to protect their own standing in society, the ruling class had Jesus arrested, persecuted, tortured and finally crucified by Roman soldiers. During this painful and humiliating ordeal Jesus kept his faith in the power of God's Love and overcame death with the resurrection, Jesus taught and encouraged his disciples to follow his path to living in God's Love and promised us all that we would be rewarded by the Glory of God.

The second path that I view from "The Sermon on the Mount" that can reveal and explain the blessings of those who are persecuted for righteousness sake is hidden within us. Within ourselves we carry unhealthy thoughts and negative emotional patterns that we had learned as children and still exist in our subconscious. When we receive the call or awakening from Jesus to follow him and live the life of God's Love, we must let go of those old negative thoughts. For it is these sinful, selfish desires that can persecute the new person in Christ that we have become. Even Jesus felt torn or self persecuted when he was in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the Cross.

Whether the persecution for righteousness sake comes from without or within, Jesus gives us the strength to do all things in his name. To be blessed by Jesus is all we need. The Light of Christ always overcomes the darkness that occurs in our lives.

And Jesus said, "*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.*" (Matt. 5:14) "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*" (Matt. 5:16)

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS: Summer Zoom Course – starts July 9

Taught by Althea Sumpter, researcher, ethnographer, and member of Atlanta Friends Meeting (altheasumpter.com) thru Emory's Oscher Lifelong Learning Institute. Small fee.

About: What questions do you want to ask someone of another ethnicity but you are too afraid to ask? This 7-week course provides an opportunity for a diverse group of people to undertake difficult conversations to help us move forward with tools in hand to forge a common future. This could be a starting point for those willing to tell stories and hear of their own role in perpetuating a legacy that makes people uncomfortable, no matter their ethnic background. The more comfortable we become exploring diversity, the more easily we can become allies for the sake of our shared humanity.

Times: Thursday, 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

NOTE: This course is divided into two distinct sections. Section one is July 9 through July 30 and section two is August 6 through August 20. Please sign up for each section separately.

To register : oli.emory.edu or call 404-727-6000.

WEEKLY ZOOM FORUM: *Let's Talk About Race* – begins July 15

Let's Talk About Race: A weekly open forum via zoom will start Wednesday, July 15 at 7:30 pm. This will be the first of an ongoing discussion to reflect and express our thoughts and feelings about race. All are welcome. Look for a zoom link in an upcoming announcement sheet. Questions? Contact Lissa Place, Alberta Guise or Alicia McGill.

MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – July 19

Meeting for business will be online again this month. Simply stay in the Zoom Meeting for Worship after worship ends.

There are several important minutes to be considered at July's Meeting for Business, and they are included in the minutes from June's Meetings for Business below. Please take the time to read them ahead of time and if led, provide feedback to the committee involved. Feedback is especially requested for the anti-racism minute.

QUAKERS FOR RACIAL EQUALITY – July 26

On July 26 at 1:00 pm, Althea Sumpter will speak about Reconstruction as well as the Gullah Geechee culture. Check the announcement sheet for more information and Zoom details.

READING BOOKS BY AND ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR – August 6 and beyond

The book group reading works by and about people of color will not meet in July. The group meets on the first Thursday of every month but July, and the next meeting will be August 6 at 1:30 p.m., presumably by Zoom again. The book for discussion will be *The Hidden Light of Northern Fires*, by Daren Wang. At the August meeting, the group will also discuss books for late 2020 and early 2021. On September 3, we will share poems brought by those attending. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Susan Cole (cole2544@bellsouth.net)

MEETING VIRTUALLY THIS MONTH: WORSHIP AND FIRST DAY SCHOOL

*See announcement sheet in your email inbox or on our website for the most up to date information and for more detailed instructions for connecting using Zoom. To call in using your phone, dial 1-253-215-8782 or 1-301-715-8592 and enter the meeting ID and password, if needed, when prompted. This may be a toll call from your landline. **If you have a mute button on your phone, mute it when you enter the meeting and unmute to speak.***

Sundays:

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

Meeting ID: 862 3546 3217

Password: Quaker

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

On the first Sunday of each month, we will listen to the Spiritual Journey of one of our members/attenders. (July 5 will be Jillian Eller, Linnea Halsten and Erin Hazlitt-Norman, three of our current QVS fellows.) On other Sundays, we will be discussing *Order of the Sacred Earth*, a collection of writings about how we care for our souls and the Earth at the same time. We will close the class each week in time to be in meeting for worship.

FIRST DAY MEETING FOR WORSHIP will meet at 10 am

Meeting ID: 908-004-190 and Password: 842962.

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

(closing by Ministry & Worship Committee and organized by Steve Collins)

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

FIRST DAY SCHOOL for Families and Friends at 10:15 am with Laura MacNorlin.

Meeting ID: 727 996 1727.

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

YOUNG FRIENDS/HIGH SCHOOL GROUP usually meets at noon

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

Contact Emily Weyrauch at emily.weyrauch@gmail.com for more information and Zoom details

Wednesdays:

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

Meeting ID: 920 3886 2952 and Password: 726229. Link: <https://zoom.us/j/92038862952>

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

CARING CONNECTIONS AT ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

If you need help during this time, or if you can help, Care and Counsel Committee has set up an online way to connect people, using something Gordon Shippey set up earlier in the year to create a general list of those willing to deliver meals, drive people to appointments, run errands, or visit people at home or in hospital. In response to social distancing, we've also added an option to connect people via email or phone. To request help or to volunteer, go to:

<http://www.atlantaquakers.org/members.htm#CARINGCONNECT> (under Members and Attenders) or contact Karen Skellie at 404-680-4524 or kskellie@gmail.com or Nina Gooch at 404-377-2474 (leave a message) or atlantaquakers@gmail.com.

FINANCIAL HELP THROUGH THE AFM ASSISTANCE FUND

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

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

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

Through AFM website by PayPal or Credit Card, go to the "Contact /Donate" page and click on the "Donate" button:

https://www.paypal.com/donate/?token=ur8Kq8XGSLYyxJ2-3b3_vGEcv9H-GNrOG1ml23mSW76CjXqM82t88RoB0tXnVHIqGZqSG&country.x=US&locale.x=US

To designate an online donation for the Assistance Fund, please also send an email addressed to both the treasurer and the bookkeeper: afmtreasurer1@gmail.com and afmbookkeeper1@gmail.com

SIXTH MONTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS

June 21, 2020

Recorded Pending Approval

Attendance: Steve Collins, Elizabeth Lamb, Lissa Place, Julia Ewen, Alberta Guise, Alison Mawle, Aaron Ruscetta, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Bill Hooson, Teri Key-Hooson, Caroline Morris, Mike Aland, Richard Allen, Jennifer Thompson, Jennifer Dickie, Claire Hannapel, Clive Gordon, Diane Rowley, Elizabeth Valera, Henry Slack, Jay Roache, Karen Morris, Michael Chapman, Mike Allison, Myrna Trap, Nina Gooch, Paul Mangelsdorf, Ronald Nuse, Sam Pennington, Susan Firestone, Susan May, William Holland, Mary Ann Downey, Juan Allende, Anton Flores, Emily Weyrauch, Becky Lough, Laura MacNorlin, Waman French, Natalie McLaughlin, Rachael Carter, David Small, Julie Hliboki, Jillian Eller, Brent Wolff, Georgia Lord (Acting Clerk/Assistant Clerk), and Rebecca Cole Sullivan (Recording Clerk)

Friends gathered near the appointed hour with opening worship. A member of Ministry and Worship shared the Sixth Month Query out of the worship: "Do you cherish your friendships so that they grow in depth and understanding and mutual respect? In close relationship we may risk pain as well as finding joy."

Discernment Items:

Recommendations of Working Group on Reopening the Meeting House: Alison Mawle reported on behalf of the Working Group on Reopening the Meeting House. The Working Group has been meeting twice a week. The primary recommendation is that Atlanta Friends Meeting continue to worship on Sunday mornings in a virtual format for the foreseeable future. The Ferguson cabin is still open for those who wish to go. They also propose a small midweek meeting for worship for the month of July. They bring the following minutes.

Friends discussed the pros and cons of responsibly opening the meeting. The committee is proposing a way forward to support those who want to join a small in-person worship opportunity. There were some concerns that we don't want to become a hotspot of a new outbreak. We ask that the committee record who is in attendance each week so that if something were to happen we know we would be able to track and trace who was there. We are only allowing opening because we are following best practices. The meeting asks the committee to consider adding liability waivers and the question of opening up for renters. We must continue to have an ongoing discernment of this committee so they can make decisions on behalf of the Meeting.

After discussion friends approved the following two minutes.

Minute 06-21-2020-01: On the recommendation of the Working Group on Reopening the Meeting House, the Meeting authorizes AFM groups of 50 or less persons to meet in or near the Meeting House, upon the condition that each group carefully follows each of the following practices:

General

- Wear a mask for the entire time you are in the Meetinghouse (bring your own mask).
- Maintain physical distance (6') from others
- Do not come if you do not feel well.
- Entry doors will be propped open for entry and exit.
- The greeter will open and close main doors.

- The greeter will sanitize the entry and bathroom door handles upon arrival and departure.
- The greeter will ensure guidelines are clear and maintained.
- The greeter will record each person in attendance to increase track and trace ability if needed.

Arrival

- No touch greetings
- Upon entering, use hand sanitizer immediately and before picking up your nametag.
- Proceed directly to worship space
- Sit physically distant from those not in your immediate group/family
- If you enter the worship space and feel uncomfortable with the number of people, you may find a smaller worship group in a different room.

Worship - sharing messages

- If you are moved to speak during Meeting, rise and speak from your seated location.
- Keep your mask on and speak loudly and clearly

Socializing after Worship

- Use the patio and physical distancing.
- Kitchen and drinking fountain are closed. Bring your own beverage and container if desired.

Restrooms

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

Departure

- Clean hands with hand sanitizer, before replacing your nametag
- Maintain space as you exit the building.

Childcare

- At this time there is no childcare. Childcare rooms are closed
- If you wish to bring children, they should also follow the guidelines for physical distance and mask wearing.

Minute 06-21-2020-02: On the recommendation of the Working Group on Reopening the Meeting House, the Meeting will convene weekly Midweek Worship at the Meeting House beginning on July 2nd, 2020, at 2:00 PM. The Working Group on Reopening the Meeting House shall initially be responsible for recruiting and training Greeters for this Midweek Worship. These Midweek Worship meetings shall continue until the Working Group on Reopening the Meeting House decides to discontinue them, or until the AFM decides to discontinue them, whichever shall first occur.

Membership Transfer Request:

The Clerk has received a request from Ellen Cooney to transfer her membership to the Monteverde (Costa Rica) Friends Meeting (<https://monteverdequakers.org/>).

Minute 06-21-2020-03: Atlanta Friends Meeting asks Monteverde Friends Meeting to accept transfer of the membership of Ellen Cooney to your meeting. Ellen Cooney was a faithful member of our meeting. We send our best wishes to Ellen for her continued spiritual growth among Monteverde Friends.

Reports

Suchitoto Fund: Bert Skellie, clerk of Suchitoto Fund, read the quarterly report for the Suchitoto Fund.

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

The pandemic has complicated the work of ABESUCHI, especially since not everyone has good internet connectivity. They are working on identifying and improving connectivity within their organization and among the scholarship students. They are improving the scholarship management with better communication. There are now 18 students, including the two new ones from AFM funding this year. They have better follow-up with these students, identifying any problems in funding or academic performance. They want to do fund-raising for needy communities.

They have spent a lot of time on project design and implementation. The proposal to FIAES (International Environmental Fund for El Salvador) was funded and they have hired some college graduates from surrounding communities. This is acting as a pilot project for ABESUCHI to support young professionals to get funding that they wouldn't get as an individual.

The Meeting's Suchitoto Fund has about \$15,000 remaining as of June 16, 2020. We plan to transfer these funds by the end of 2020.

Care and Counsel: Karen Skellie, clerk of Care and Counsel, reported on behalf of the committee. The committee is bringing forward modifications to the Guidelines for Assistance Fund for Members and Attenders. They propose adding the following sentence to the end of Section 1 Intentions and Process step 1: "At the discretion of the Care & Counsel Committee, assistance *may* be extended to people in the wider Friends community, for example, people who have previously attended AFM regularly or are part of a Friends group that has fewer resources than AFM." A concern was risen that we may want to add a statement about limiting it to those in the state of Georgia. The language as written right now seems a little too broad. The committee will bring this back next month for final approval.

Atlanta Friends Meeting Anti-Racism Minutes: The following minute is brought by Committee on Undoing Racism, Friends of Color and Quakers for Racial Equality. The recording clerk read the proposed minute on behalf of these groups. The minute will be brought back next month for continued discernment and possible approval.

Several expressed the view that the statement is both urgent and important. The process that went into creating the statement was described. Some shared concerns about the minute. This minute will be brought back next month for further consideration. In the meantime, we ask that Friends reach out to the committee who drafted the minute with any other concerns or thoughts. The committee consisted of: Diane Rowley, Lissa Place, Alicia McGill, Jennifer Dickie, and Susan Firestone.

Some of the concerns raised during business meeting included a question about why

police officers shouldn't be social workers and that we might need to make a stronger stance than just demilitarizing the police with a stronger statement of where the funding should go. Another concern was raised that if this is our call to action, it needs to be stronger. Currently nowhere do we state that Black Lives Matter.

Proposed Minute for next month:

Stand with Protesters, Hold Police Accountable, Work for Systemic Change

In the wake of recent killings of African Americans by police and White vigilantes, Atlanta Friends Meeting stands with protesters who are advocating for a life without fear and racism. As Quakers, we believe in the equality and worth of every person. We condemn police violence. We are deeply disturbed by the militarization of police and use of military troops. Black families rightly fear that their loved ones could be harmed by racist actions not only by police or extremist groups, but also by White people complicit with or in denial of racism. We recognize that the protests are not just about police actions but are the expression of concern that the voices and agency of People of Color are excluded, omitted, ignored, considered unimportant, silenced, or otherwise sidelined.

Lasting change requires a long-term commitment to undoing systemic racism, and the removal of unjust policies, practices, and laws.

We call on our local, state, and federal representatives to replace violent policing practices and policies with ones that promote police accountability, standard codes of policing behavior, and equitable treatment of all.

We urge local, state, and national leaders to demilitarize law enforcement, reduce police budgets, and to redirect portions of funds currently going to police departments and jails to promoting care and building communities.

We call for communities, institutions and government to work on systemic changes that prioritize investing in young people, health, education, housing, living wages, and transformative justice.

We call for all of us to dismantle the interlocking web of structurally racist policies, laws, practices, and norms among institutions such as law enforcement, the legal system, education, housing, and health that harm People of Color and maintain the system of White supremacy.

Undoing more than 400 years of racism is up to all of us. We acknowledge that Quakers have not done enough to live up to Friends beliefs in equality, integrity, and community. Atlanta Friends Meeting commits to addressing racism in ourselves and our predominantly White institutions through education and advocacy, and to working in multiracial coalitions for an equitable and racially just society for all.

AFM Website Statement of support for anti-racism protests: Jennifer Dickie brought forward the following minute for the Home page of the Atlanta Friends Meeting website. After a brief conversation, we approved the proposed minute with one addition. There was agreement to adopt this statement without waiting the traditional month after first presentation. The approved minute is as follows:

Minute 06-21-2020-04: Black Lives Matter. As Friends we are called to the outward expression of the inner workings of the Spirit. Our testimonies help to inform us about what is important in one's relation to God and with all of creation. At this time, we are called to outward action by the Friends testimonies of Peace, Integrity, Community and Equality. While each of us in the Atlanta Friends Meeting will find our outward expression of Spirit, the Atlanta Friends Meeting supports the calls of the current protests for an end to racism in all its forms and we continue to be guided by these testimonies in our work to uproot the effects of systemic racism in ourselves, our Meeting, and within the Religious Society of Friends.

"Within the tradition of Friends, testimonies are revelations of God's will, outward expressions of the inner workings of the Spirit that have been collectively accepted across time." (SAYMA. A Guide to Our Faith and Practice, p. 43.)

Quaker Voluntary Service: Mary Ann Downey brought a brief report about the closing of the 8th year of Quaker Voluntary Service. Three fellows will share their spiritual stories in July. The committee is coordinating virtual introductions with the new cohort when they arrive in Atlanta. The following minute in appreciation of the work Liz Nicholson has provided to QVS and Atlanta Friends Meeting.

Proposed Minute for approval next month: The Meeting expresses its appreciation to Liz Nicholson for her years of service to the national Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS) organization and the Atlanta QVS Fellows. She is moving to Richmond, Indiana to begin work on a master's degree at Earlham School of Religion. Liz has been a thoughtful, caring, loving, and tireless QVS presence in Atlanta. We wish her well in this next stage of her life and will hold her in the Light.

Social Concerns: Bert Skellie, clerk of Social Concerns, brought forward two minutes from Social Concerns. Social Concerns ask that Friends review the two minutes over the next two months and will bring them back for approval in July.

Proposed Minute for next month on COVID-19: These are challenging times. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in widespread devastation across our state and nation with the impact greater for some groups than for others. African Americans and Hispanics (Latinx) have experienced higher infection and death rates. These communities also tend to have less access to affordable healthcare. Much of the devastation could have been avoided if our state and federal leaders had more closely adhered to the scientific community's advisements on ways to contain the spread of the virus.

The Social Concerns Committee of the Atlanta Friends Meeting (Quakers) calls upon our leaders to do the following:

The Governor and State Legislature should increase healthcare access for all low-income Georgians through an expansion of Medicaid.

The U.S. President should open a special enrollment window to allow the uninsured to enroll in the Affordable Care Act's health insurance exchange.

When state and federal leaders deliberate which measures should be taken to reopen the economy along with the need for pandemic remediation, their decisions should rely heavily on advice from the scientific community.

As our nation moves forward during this crisis, let all our actions be tempered by compassion borne from an awareness that all life is precious.

Proposed Minute for next month on a Call for Ceasefire during COVID-19 : On May 24, 2020 the Social Concerns Committee of the Atlanta Friends Meeting (Quakers) united with the Germantown Monthly Meeting by approving the following Minute:

**MINUTE OF SUPPORT
GERMANTOWN MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
(issued May 10, 2020)**

The entire world is now in the throes of COVID-19, a pandemic that has close to four million confirmed cases and well more than 260,000 deaths across the world. These numbers increase by the hour, with no clear end in sight. The pandemic defies quick and easy solutions, but its eradication requires concerted international attention, increased resources, and public mobilization.

*Also **unrelenting is the scourge of continuing armed conflict**, engulfing long familiar places such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen as well as lesser-known locales such as Kashmir and the Central African Republic. Some of these are long-standing conflicts with deep roots. Others are of more recent vintage. All are destructive and wasteful in tragic degrees. The coronavirus pandemic with its global sweep and disregard for nationality and political boundaries has brought clarity to the stark choices about priorities and survival that confront the international community.*

*In the face of this moment of clarity, **Antonio Guterres, the Secretary General of the United Nations, issued a call on March 23 for a Global Ceasefire** in all theaters of armed conflict. The call is a direct effort to make eradication of the COVID-19 pandemic the major focus of the international community.*

***Germantown Monthly Meeting supports the appeal by UN Secretary General Guterres for the Global Ceasefire.** In doing so we join with 70 member nations of the United Nations, Pope Francis, the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, a broad range of religious leaders from all over the earth, and scores of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), including Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR). The list of supporters is still growing. It includes a number of parties to ongoing armed conflicts.*

As Friends we are committed to the peaceful resolution of national and international disputes. We believe that this unprecedented initiative by the UN Secretary General offers an opportunity to deal creatively and urgently with the pandemic threat posed to us as members of the human race, not as armed belligerents.

*We commit to build upon this minute. We support broader exposition and public actions that will flow out of this initiative. We will also encourage fellow Quakers and others to join with us in support of the **Global Ceasefire** by communicating with our Representatives, Senators, and other public officials in calling for support of the **Ceasefire**.*

Administration: Steve Collins, clerk of Administration, reported on behalf of the committee. Three dead or dying trees on Meetinghouse property near our neighbors' homes were removed by a professional tree service. The Landscape Committee's Myrna

Trapp and David Small continue to clear invasive plants and add mulch around the Meetinghouse. Kevin Wong, Property Coordinator, has received the Georgia Interfaith Power & Light (GIPL) water, energy, and solar assessments for the Meetinghouse and is sharing it with the Meeting's ad hoc committee.

Approval of Minutes from 5th Month

Minutes 06-21-2020-05: Friends approved the Fifth Month minutes with the following corrections. Note correction of the spellings of the names of Bill and Teri Hooson and Lorraine Janeczko

Announcements:

Naloxone Training: Bill Holland announced that Atlanta Friends Meeting will host a Naloxone Training by Zoom on June 24 @ 7pm.

Quaker Voluntary Service: If you are interested in hearing how Quaker Voluntary Service has a recording of their Supporter's briefing on their website, where they talked about programmatic and financial shifts made as a result of COVID-19. The recording can be found at the following link: <https://www.quakervoluntaryservice.org/supporters-briefing-2020>.

SAYMA: Representative Free Polazzo asked the Acting Clerk to report at this Meeting that our yearly meeting - the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association - will not hold its annual meeting this year, due to COVID infection concerns.

Forum "Let's Talk About Race": A new weekly open forum via Zoom is planned. The forum is titled "Let's Talk About Race." It will start Wednesday July 15 at 7:30 pm. This will be the first of an ongoing discussion to reflect and express our thoughts and feelings about race. All are welcome. Look for a Zoom link in a future announcement sheet. Contact Alberta Guise, Lissa Place and Alisha McGill for further information.

Events in the Life of the Meeting

Steven "Woody" Woodall died on June 1, 2020.

Closing Worship

Friends closed with a moment of worship.

HOLDING IN THE LIGHT:

Micheal Allison
Georgia Lord
Robin Fortuna
Susan Firestone's
brother-in-law Dave
Michael Amanti
Daniel Gold-Hopton

Those wishing to have requests for holding in the light included in this monthly newsletter may give the names to a member of Care & Counsel.

Atlanta Friends Meeting Contacts

Clerk of the Meeting: Lissa Place, afmclerk1@gmail.com
Office Coordinator: Nina Gooch, atlantaquakers@gmail.com
Treasurer: Judith Greenberg, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com
Ministry & Worship: Elizabeth Lamb, gelds@comcast.net
Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280
Social Concerns: Bert Skellie, bertskellie@gmail.com
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: Elaine Meyer-Lee, eemeyer87@earlham.edu
and Tina Bovermann, Bovermann@me.com
Library Clerk: Cal Gough, calgough@bellsouth.net
Nominating, Clive Gordon, afm.nominating@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor: Nina Gooch, atlquakerltr@gmail.com
Webmaster: Aaron Ruscetta, arxaaron@gmail.com
Bookkeeper: Jonah McDonald, afmbookkeeper1@gmail.com

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

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

Office Coordinator working from home while meeting house closed

voicemail/phone: 404-377-2474 – web and email: atlantaquakers.org, atlantaquakers@gmail.com
Clerk: Lissa Place, afmclerk1@gmail.com Treasurer: Judith Greenberg, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com

Are you a newcomer to the Atlanta Friends community and would like a nametag?

We would be happy to make you a permanent nametag. You can leave a request in one of the baskets on the front table. When Carol Gray has made one for you, it will be placed in the black file box on the greeting table.

Atlanta Friends Meeting has three email lists:

To receive the announcement sheets and other announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting, send a blank email to

afmannouncements-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

To receive announcements AND posts about a broader range of topics relating to being a Quaker, send a blank email to afmdiscussion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To receive the newsletter by email, send a blank email to afmnewsletter-subscribe@yahoo.groups.com. When asked to confirm, select the option to confirm by email.

Would you like to appear in future AFM Directories?

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 items 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.