

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2020

LIFE AT ATLANTA FRIENDS 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. Our main worship continues 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.

For those who prefer to worship in person, we are holding small, in-person worship groups at the meetinghouse on Mondays at 7 pm and Thursdays at 2 pm. Please stay tuned each week for more details or contact the office.

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.

If you are used to bringing your contribution to the meetinghouse, you can instead mail a check (see address on last page) or pay securely with Paypal or credit / debit card on our website. Visit <http://www.atlantaquakers.org/contact.htm> and scroll down to the DONATE button.

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

REMEMBERING CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS JOHN LEWIS AND C.T. VIVIAN

Karen Morris on John Lewis, February 2, 2020 to July 17, 2020

Through a parent who had connections to him and his office, the Friends School of Atlanta invited him to speak to parents and students one evening. (It was 2008 or earlier because it was in our building on Sams Street.) His topic was about his life as he'd written in *Walking in the Wind*. The students were as enthralled as the adults. We were a small audience – may 75 but he answered all of the students' questions, he spoke about his connection to Quakers from the training in nonviolent social action before the Nashville student sit-in movement at lunch counters, and he warmly hugged and greeted children and parents afterwards.

read ["Together, You can Redeem the Soul of Our Nation,"](#) written by Lewis to be published the day of his funeral in the New York Times



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

QUERY FOR OCTOBER

How does fear restrict my heart and spirit? What has worked for me to move through this?

-- Southeastern Yearly Meeting

Sue May, a member of the Friends Committee on National Legislation's Atlanta Advocacy Team:

One of the best lobby visits our Team ever had in Washington was with John Lewis in 2017. After he finished up with another meeting, he came by and ushered us into the large room where he held meetings. The walls were covered with memorabilia of his activities in the civil rights movement and his numerous awards, including quilts. What a warm welcome! We talked for half an hour, experiencing first-hand his warmth and intelligence. He gave us frank and smart pointers on how he could help our bill. And as we were leaving he insisted we go out on his balcony to see the stunning view of the Capitol. Later, we went out on the lawn to take a photo of our delegation: FCNL's reputation is excellent on the Hill, and it added to our impact to have senior lobbyist Jose Woss join us too. No one there will ever forget this experience.



(Top picture: Spelman College senior Nyla Williams, on the FCNL Advocacy Corps, team members Sara Patenaude, Sue May, John Lewis, Ellen Slack, Jose Woss of FCNL, teamquaker member Rebecca Sullivan and Connor Rohwer, QVS fellow).

Personal reflection: I met him in 1976 when his son John Miles was in my son's class at the Atlanta Co-op Pre-school. Next thing I knew, he was our Congressman waving to everyone from a convertible in the Inman Park parade. And just lately, our neighborhood and Inman park had a 5K in his honor and I got a tee shirt for helping.

Don Bender on John Lewis, written July 18:

When we [the FCNL Advocacy team] were making calls to his office yesterday, I hadn't realized that the end was so near. I was remembering him this morning and thought of the time when he was a City Council Member. Back in the 80's, he and his fellow council member Mary Davis came down to the City Jail to bail out those of us who were arrested for sitting in front of road building equipment when they were trying to build a road through our neighborhood. What an honor to be bailed out of jail by John Lewis. [The road referred to is the current Freedom Parkway, originally a much longer multi-lane limited-access, much-longer expressway: [Flashback Photos from the AJC: Atlantans fight the Presidential Parkway](#) has pictures and more background.]

Nina Gooch on John Lewis:

John Lewis has been a hero to the LGBTQ community for years. We remember his passionate 1996 speech ([video](#) and [highlights of text](#)) opposing the "Defense of Marriage Act," the federal ban on same-sex marriage, as well as his presence in the Pride Parade every year. Or as my friend Scott Turner Schofield said on Facebook the day after Lewis' death: "He used to not only march at every Atlanta Pride parade, he would RUN the parade route, full out running ahead of all of us, 'to get to our collective liberation,' as was his outspoken commitment to us." And Leigh Craigmyle responded with a memory of how the rain in 2008 "couldn't stop him either! His crew was kind of huddled up with their banner and he was running everywhere giving high fives!" Reading this, I was struck by Lewis' sense of joy, because that was the year I remember everyone I saw trying to smile because it was Pride and instead looking cold and wet and miserable – except a kid in a yellow slicker and rubber boots jumping joyfully in the puddles at the edge of Peachtree and, apparently, John Lewis.

Judy Lumb on Rev. C.T. Vivian, July 30, 1924 to July 17, 2020

I was at the Racism Workshop at Quaker House in the early 1980s. (Bethann said 1982, which sounds about right.) A small group of us had been meeting on racial issues. I remember one of the things we did was write our racial autobiographies. (I just looked up mine in the midst of current events.) Somehow, Bill Withers got CT Vivian to come and give us a workshop. I cried all the way through it. He started with one of those stories about ridiculous awful things happening to a black man. The way he described the man made me think of a friend of mine. That story set me off crying and then everything did. He pushed some people pretty hard. It was very intense, life-changing! At the end he went around to reconcile with each one of us. When he came to me, he said, "I see this affects you deeply. But you can cry at home, pull yourself together and do the work! There is lots to be done."

for more about C.T. Vivian's life: <https://tinyurl.com/y6h9ef65>

Althea Sumpter on both:

"John Lewis and C.T. Vivian left us with a mandate to do what is right; to not stop and grieve, but to keep moving forward."

FALL UPDATE AND INVITATIONS FROM THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

from Laura MacNorlin, Clerk of AFM Religious Education (RE) Committee:

Our committee recently held an update / worship sharing meeting for those interested in our First Day School programming in this unprecedented time. We had a great visit over zoom with those who could join and want to to share what we covered and our next steps!

RE Committee is a wonderful group of people, including myself, Jennifer Dickie, David Kano and Lisa Kruse. Several Friends have confirmed interest in teaching or being doorkeeper visitors this year. Please contact me asap if you'd like to volunteer- email Laura at laura.norlin@gmail.com.

From RE Committee meetings and teacher's heartfelt messages, we've discerned it helpful to name a theme and select lesson plans from this year's focus on the Old Testament, from our three year-rotation scope and sequence. We will begin our formal program in October.

First Day School class will be held on a zoom call on Sundays from 9:30 to 9:55 am (Teens and YAF are meeting separately for a 12pm Zoom call.) Families are encouraged by the Ministry and Worship and RE Committees to join Meeting For Worship Zoom at 10am, *for at least the first 15 minutes*.

Themes for first Day School: The October theme is ***Trusting and Listening for God***; November, ***Becoming Community***; and December, ***From Darkness to Light***. Future plans will be discerned January 2021!

Family-Intergenerational Meetings on 4th Sundays. This time is a special invitation for families, AFM attenders and members to join for our intergenerational worship through a lesson.

Format for the classes is based on the [Sparkling Still](#) literature based curriculum, as well as [Godly Play/Faith and Play](#). To experience the spirit of these methods, watch this video on *reflective attentiveness* in Godly Play/Faith & Play: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1-vzmFfruo>

Again, if you are interested in volunteering, please contact Laura MacNorlin at laura.norlin@gmail.com.

MAKING 2020 A BANNER YEAR

by Mark Yates

17th century England was a time of the English Civil War, the Great Fire of London and the Plague. It was those tumultuous times that gave birth to the Children of the Light, otherwise known as the Quakers. We are in equally perilous times with ideological warfare, wildfires and COVID-19. How are Quakers reacting today? Are we hunkering down, hoping it will all go away? No, the Atlanta Friends Meeting is responding with an outpouring of activism.



The Green Friends are holding an upcoming climate change workshop. Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) is advocating for Friends legislative concerns. The Undoing Racism committee hosted a voter information forum, and the Social Concerns committee is addressing women's rights and providing support to AFM's pro-immigrant activities. Much of this has been facilitated by adapting to the new reality of Zoom. Other actions have taken place outdoors. One is reminded of the 1600's Friends who, when their meeting houses were forcibly shut down, continued to worship out in the street!

One goal that Atlanta Friends are working toward is voter empowerment. In the past decade, Georgia has undergone a repressive purge of voters that has disproportionately affected communities of color. Using materials funded through Social Concerns, Atlanta Friends have been making banners with non-partisan messages that community groups use in their voter registration and voter turnout efforts. The professional-looking banners messages include "Register To Vote," "Vote Now." etc. NAACP and Latinx groups in metro Atlanta and as far away as Liberty County and Houston County have used the banners in their voter empowerment activities. The Clayton County NAACP youth group had a march in August and held one of the banners that said "Black Lives Matter: Vote!"

At first, there was a learning curve as Friends struggled with the art of banner making; but persistence paid off as Beatriz, David, Jackie, Michelle, Martha, Nan and others became quite adept. When the group first began, it took over 4 hours to make a single banner. Now the group can do 3 or 4 nice-looking banners in that amount of time.

The banner making group is now seeking out organizations and businesses that will agree to put up banners that can be seen by MARTA rail line passengers. Recently, the Inman Park Methodist Church, Pete's Imports, the Lake Claire Land Trust, A Cappella Books and the Atlanta Furniture Bank have all agreed to put up our 12 foot banners that say "VOTE NOW" visible from MARTA trains.

As mentioned before, voter empowerment is just one activity going on at Meeting. If you want to help out, check the list of committee clerks below or look in the Meeting directory for contact information for the Meeting groups previously mentioned. If you're interested in becoming a member of the Atlanta Advocacy Team of Friends Committee on National Legislation, contact Sue May or Don Bender. If you want to help the voter empowerment group, email yates77@bellsouth.net. **(Opportunities to help from home available!)** Despite the challenges of these times we can make 2020 a banner year!

(If you need a directory, contact the office at 404-377-2474 or atlantafriends@gmail.com.)

READING BOOKS BY AND ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR – Thursday, October 1

The book group reading works by and about people of color continues to meet at 1:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month via Zoom. On October 1, the book for discussion is *Another Country* by James Baldwin, and for November 5, *Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng. For questions or the Zoom link, contact Susan Cole (cole2544@bellsouth.net).

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS AND ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL – Sunday, October 4

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 October 4, Charlotte Flores will share her spiritual journey. Charlotte has been attending Atlanta Friends Meeting for the past year. She and Anton, our Friend-in-Residence, have been married 26 years. Charlotte teaches English language learners at the International Community School. Raised in the United Methodist Church, Charlotte's adult journey has involved diverse expressions of the Christian faith, including co-founding Alterna, an intentional community devoted to faithful acts of hospitality, justice, and mercy. Charlotte is excited to share how Spirit has and is still guiding her on her spiritual journey. All are welcome. See below for Zoom details.

On third Sundays, Adult First Day School will have worship sharing, usually on that month's query, and on other Sundays, will be discussing Parker Palmer's *On the Brink of Everything*. We will meet via Zoom and close the class in time to be in meeting for worship in the separate zoom link.

To hear the spiritual journey of Rachael Carter from September 6: <https://tinyurl.com/y3km3nw9>

(Note Date Change!)

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR WOODY WOODALL – Saturday, October 10

(Please Read Details Carefully!)

Service of Celebration and Remembrance for Steven "Woody" Woodall (10/2/50 – 6/1/20):

On Saturday, October 10, 2020 at 2:00 pm (*note date change!*), friends and family of Woody Woodall will gather to celebrate his life. All are welcome to participate virtually. In addition, a small group will gather in person at the Atlanta Friends Meeting House, 701 W Howard Ave, Decatur, GA 30030. Safety considerations related to the COVID pandemic require that the number of people permitted to gather in person at the Meeting House must be strictly limited.

– To ensure that there is sufficient space for all of Woody's family members who wish to attend in person, friends are asked to participate virtually unless they have been invited by the Memorial Committee to attend in person. Friends who wish to be invited to attend in person should send their request to Karen Skellie (kskellie@gmail.com), in advance.

– Sadly, for the present, safety requires that the following additional rules apply: Anyone who comes to the Meeting House grounds is required to wear a mask for the entire time they are there. Anyone who has a fever or other symptoms indicating they may have COVID cannot come to the Meeting House, and anyone who has been exposed to COVID within the prior 10 days cannot come to the Meeting House – but please do attend virtually. A link for virtual attendance will be sent later.

– Instead of flowers, Woody's family would love to receive notes describing your experiences with Woody and your reflections about his life! Notes can be sent to 1133 Mannbrook Drive, Stone Mountain, GA 30083.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE FOR FCNL ANNUAL MEETING – deadline Monday, October 16

Friends Committee on National Legislation's Annual Meeting will be Friday, November 13 through Tuesday, November 17 and will be virtual. It will include plenary speakers and programs, along with small-group experiences in break-out groups and opportunities for worship. Those attending **will be able to lobby virtually in small groups** as well as to engage with the FCNL Legislative Priorities-setting process for the next Congress..

<https://www.fcnl.org/updates/annual-meeting-and-quaker-public-policy-institute-2020-27>

DAVID FOSTER IN ATLANTA CELEBRATES PHOTOGRAPHY. – Meet and Greet, October 17

Atlanta Friends Meeting will not be hosting an in-person exhibit in the Atlanta Celebrates Photography festival this year, but former AFM member David Foster has a virtual-gallery, *Lifting Our Spirits: Light Emanating from Hawai'i Flora*, at <https://acpfest.exposure.co/david-foster>. For more about the festival as a whole, visit <https://festivalguide2020.acpinfo.org/featured/>. David says, "I will be hosting a Zoom "Meet and Greet" event on Saturday, October 17, from 2:00 to 4:00pm Eastern. I will also be doing a short "Artist Talk" at 2:30pm, during which I will share thoughts about the exhibit, about my experiences photographing in Hawai'i, and about my continuing interest in the healing power of nature-based art." See announcement sheet for Zoom details as we get closer.

MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – Sunday, October 18

Meeting for business will be online again this month. Simply stay in the Zoom Meeting for Worship after worship ends. Zoom details below. Minutes from September, including items to be considered in October, are below.

MACON QUAKERS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING – Tuesday, October 20

Please join Macon attenders Mac Newell and Rachael Cundey as they share more about the good work they are doing at their colleges (Mercer and Georgia College) with and for their LGBTQ communities. They will also be helping us develop greater cultural awareness and will be glad to answer questions. Tuesday, October 20 at 8:00 P.M. on Zoom. Free and open to all.

The Macon Worship Group is under the care of our meeting, and we are invited to join them on:

2nd Tuesdays, 8:00 P.M. for Meeting for Worship, followed by discussion

3rd Tuesdays, 8:00 P.M. for Educational offering (details just above)

4th Tuesdays, 8:00 P.M. for Meeting for Worship, followed by business

*Everything is via Zoom right now: **Meeting ID:** 840 9589 9009 & **Passcode:** 542278*

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE – Tuesday, Oct 20

Please send articles, announcements, information about October events, and other submissions to atlquakerltr@gmail.com by October 20. Word or other text format please.

INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP IN FIRST DAY SCHOOL – Sunday, October 25

Each fourth Sunday of the month, families as well as all members and attenders are invited to join First Day School at 9:30 to 9:55 am for intergenerational worship through a lesson. There will be time to join Meeting for Worship via Zoom, and families and children are invited, as always, to join at least the first 15 minutes of Meeting for Worship. Zoom details below.

LET'S TALK ABOUT RACE – Wednesday, October 28 and then monthly

This online, drop-in forum has become monthly, with the next meeting on October 28 at 7:30 pm. Sample topics include: "What is my Racial Identity?" and "How can I have meaningful conversations about race with others who do not look like me?" For more info or to suggest discussion topics, please email Alberta Guise (see directory or contact office). Normally the fourth Wednesday of the month, in November and December, it will be the third Wednesday. (Nov 18 and Dec 16.)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83032368656?pwd=M2J5Y3EyYWJWVG9iSzlXZHo4YlYydz09>

Meeting ID: 830 3236 8656

Passcode: 019469

DRAW BREATH a poem by Geoffrey Weeden

Breathe in the quiet purpose of this place;
Through outward stillness, seek a calm within.
Here we can find forgiveness and forgive;
Here feel the healing miracle begin.

Breathe out the busy world, the teeming mind,
The follies, fears and failures of the week;
Breathe out contention, pettiness and pride,
And wait in trust for that of God to speak.

Breathe in communion, friend with quiet friend,
Each drawing closer in this timeless hour;
As all our different needs and gifts are drawn
To the one source of comfort, love and power.

Breathe out at last, to God, the heart's full thanks
That we have seen this vision, known this grace;
Renewed through love, let us that love extend
Through all our daily life beyond this place.

INVITATION TO JOIN LIMERICK MEETING FOR WORSHIP VIA ZOOM

From Meg Harper, former member of AFM:

Rick [Stoops] and I have loved attending AFM again by Zoom, and it occurred to us that some Friends there might want to join our Meeting for Worship here in Limerick, Ireland. Friends will need to be early risers, given that we are five hours ahead of Eastern Time, but anyone who would like to come will be welcome. Time: 6 am Eastern Time, 11 am Limerick time.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83890916914?pwd=c01qR3A5Wk1yTFp6K01sZFJZbHBvUT09>

Meeting ID: 838 9091 6914

Password: 692619

MEETING VIRTUALLY THIS MONTH: WORSHIP AND FIRST DAY SCHOOL

An excellent overview of meeting for worship over Zoom is “Can You Gather With God Over Zoom?” at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/arts/quaker-meeting-zoom.html>

See the most recent announcement sheet in your email inbox or on our website at http://www.atlantaquakers.org/_announcements/Announcement_Sheet.pdf 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 am to 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 or attenders. (October 4 will be Charlotte Flores) On the third Sunday of each month, we will have worship sharing, usually on that month's query, and on other Sundays, we will be discussing Parker Palmer's new book *On the Brink of Everything*. We will close the class each week in time to be in meeting for worship.

FIRST DAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN

Sundays 9:30 am to 9:55 am

First Day Class for Families and Friends

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

Meeting ID: 727 996 1727

Passcode: 679898

October's theme: Trusting and Listening for God

Fourth Sunday is intergenerational/family worship and all members and attenders are invited to join. Families are invited / will have time to join meeting for worship after this ends.

FIRST DAY MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Meeting ID: 908 004 190 and Password: 842962.

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

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.

Calling All Families:

We would like to issue a special invitation to all families with children to attend the first 15 minutes of worship, as usual. If your mike is muted, your children will not be distracting to others (even if we see them wiggle). And we really miss seeing you! Of course, if you wish to stay longer, that's fine too. But please join us. We miss you!

Suggestions for Meeting for Worship on Zoom:

“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.” (From Advices and Queries, Britain Yearly Meeting.) Some things to keep in mind as we adjust to “the new normal” of worshipping via zoom: *Even though it is*

different and may feel strange, remember that this is a worship service. To help create the kind of shared space that allows all of us to listen for the Divine within us, please keep your mic muted unless speaking to us. If you're eating or having a lengthy conversation with another member of your household, please also turn off your video temporarily or step away from the camera, to avoid distracting others. If your children are joining us for meeting for worship, please do not feel the need to turn off your video. We welcome their presence in meeting for worship.

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

Password: 726229.

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

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

COVID-19 UPDATES AND OTHER USEFUL AND FUN LINKS

For collected links for kids and adults ranging from the latest information about COVID-19 and how to prevent it to voting information to links to museums, digital performances and Quakerism, visit <https://tinyurl.com/afm-ftoti>. New links added weekly. Email Nina at atlantaquakers@gmail.com to share problems with any of the links or to suggest additional links.

ANTI-RACISM RESOURCES

The anti-racism resources shared in newsletters, in announcement sheets and on AFM's discussion email list have been compiled here: <https://tinyurl.com/afm-arr>. To share problems with any of the links or resources or to suggest additional resources, email atlantaquakers@gmail.com.

BYSTANDER INTERVENTION DO'S AND DON'TS

If you witness public instances of racist, anti-Black, anti-Muslim, anti-Trans, or any other form of oppressive interpersonal violence and harassment, use these tips on how to intervene while considering the safety of everyone involved: <https://www.afsc.org/bystanderintervention>

FRIEND IN RESIDENCE BLOG

Friend in Residence Anton Flores continues to blog at <https://antonsays.com/>. His most recent posts are reflections on his ministry of hosting at the meetinghouse individuals released from immigration detention or fleeing human trafficking. (See minutes from Meeting for Business below for more details of this ministry.)

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.

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 <http://www.atlantaquakers.org/contact.htm> and scroll down to the DONATE button.

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

NINTH MONTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS

September 20, 2020

Recorded Pending Approval

Attendance: Steve Collins, Georgia Lord, Mary Ann Downey, Ralph Forte, Alberta Guise, Alison Mawle, Anton Flores, Becky Lough, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Bill Hoosen, Teri Key-Hoosen, Cathy Amanti, Clive Gordon, David Small, Diane Rowley, Don Bender, Judy Bender, Elizabeth Lamb, Free Polazzo, Herb Edwards, Henry Slack, Jay Roache, Jennifer Dickie, Jennifer Thompson, Judy Lumb, Julia Ewen, Karen Morris, Myran Trapp, Nina Gooch, Richard Allen, Ronald Nuse, Susan Firestone, William Holland, Lissa Place (Clerk), Rebecca Cole Sullivan (Recording Clerk)

Friends gathered near the appointed hour with opening worship. A member of Ministry and Worship shared the Ninth Month Query out of the worship: "What is my understanding of grace working in my life? In what ways do I feel Held during times of trouble as well as times of joy or peace?" Friends responded out of worship.

Clerk's Item: The clerk opened with an introduction of the use of color to help get a sense of the meeting. Friends brought white objects when they wanted to ask clarifying questions, black objects for when they had an answer to the clarifying questions, red for when they had concerns and green

for when they agreed. This was the first experience with this new system to help read the virtual room.

Reports:

Working Group on the Use of the Meetinghouse: Alison Mawle reported on behalf of the committee for use of the meetinghouse and gave four quick updates about the use of the meetinghouse.

- They have changed their name from "Working Group on reopening the meeting house" to "Working Group on the use of the meeting house"
- They are now holding 2 in-person worship groups each week: one on Thursdays at 2pm, and one on Mondays at 7pm. The Monday group will start on September 21.
- There will be a memorial service for Woody Woodall on October 3rd. We expect it to be a mixture of in person and remote attendance. ***[Editor's note: This date has been changed to October 10.]***
- The meeting continues to support Anton's ministry of providing transitional housing for detainees released from ICE detention.

Friend in Residence Report:

Since approval in late July, the meetinghouse has served as a place of hospitality for nine individuals either released from immigration detention or fleeing human trafficking. Our most recent guest stayed with us for three weeks and as of business meeting is on their way home. Most of these guests are asylum seekers trying to settle into this country.

Below are some stats since beginning offering hospitality in late-July:

- # of guests - nine
- Average length of stay - five nights
- Regions represented - Caribbean (3), West Africa (2), Central America (2), Arabian Peninsula (1), East Asia (1)
- Households from the Meeting who have helped sustain this ministry with their gifts - close to 20 households

Anton continues to blog about these experiences. Below are links to his writings over this past month on his blog (<https://antonsays.com/>).

- [THE HAPPY ASYLUM SEEKER](#) (August 13)
- [THIS IS NOT A "FIRST-DAY-OF-SCHOOL" PHOTO](#) (August 15)
- [YES, PLEASE](#) (August 24)

Lastly, as a member of the steering committee of Georgia Detention Watch, I am actively working with local activists on exposing and demanding accountability for the inhumane treatment of those detained at Irwin County Detention Center (ICDC). I served as the [moderator for the press conference](#) of a whistleblower - a nurse employed at ICDC who is speaking out about many medical abuses and most horrifically of the mounting allegations of women being subjected to [hysterectomies without their informed consent](#).

Thanks, Atlanta Friends Meeting, for all your support and sustenance, especially during these times of change. Anton could use some help organizing the supplies offered by the community.

Facebook Ad Hoc Committee: Nina Gooch reported on behalf of the Facebook Ad Hoc Committee. This committee's charge was to come up with some guidelines for the Atlanta Friends Meeting Facebook Group.

The Meeting's Facebook page was created as a way to communicate for members and attenders of Atlanta Friends Meeting who were on Facebook. Recently, it has also become a way for those new to the meeting community to find us and to find out more about us. It has never had a real

description or guidelines for its use, and we are bringing a recommendation for these today at the end of this report. (They have been presented to the Facebook group for feedback.) Nina Gooch became an Admin because of her Office Coordinator role and has been serving as a moderator. She has added more information to the Facebook group's page so people finding us for the first time can more easily learn more about us. (Adding the description and guidelines will help further with this.) Although the guidelines have not yet been approved, she has been asking people to not share posts advocating for specific candidates or political parties, partly because we are a non-profit and partly because those posts seem to make it very difficult for people to really listen to each other.

In addition to the guidelines, we recommend that two moderators be selected by Nominating and approved by Meeting for Worship With Attention to Business.

Purpose and Guidelines for Atlanta Friends Meeting's Facebook page:

Atlanta Friends Meeting is an unprogrammed, non-pastoral Quaker meeting. We believe we all can know the will of the Divine directly without a specific liturgy. In Meeting for Worship, whether in person or via Zoom, we reflect together in silence, listening for the Divine to speak to us. Sometimes, some one feels led by the Spirit to share a message aloud. Because Friends believe that there is that of God in everyone, we welcome each person, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and gender identity (to name only the most obvious).

The Atlanta Friends Meeting (AFM) Facebook group was created

- to provide a safe and friendly space to share information, ideas and reflections important to us as Quakers or people interested in Quakerism and as a part of Atlanta Friends Meeting community
- to provide a place where we can listen and learn from each other
- to share information about events and happenings within the Meeting and the wider community that would be of interest to those in the Meeting
- to strengthen our sense of community
- to allow people new to our community to learn more about who we are and what we believe and do
- to recognize and honor the wide diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, generation, sexuality, ability, background and theology within our group

Please make sure all your posts are related to Quakersim and to what is important to you as a Quaker and as a member of the AFM community. If it's not obvious, please explain why you have shared a post or how it is connected with the purpose of this group.

To encourage a multitude of voices, please do not consistently post every day or post more than once a day.

Quakers believe that there is that of God in everyone, and we ask that everyone in this group listen to and speak to that of God in each other. We are also committed to making this a safe space for everyone.

Our Peace Testimony states: "We recognize that violence can manifest itself in words as well as deeds." Therefore, please do not share posts or comments that include the following:

- Profanity or crass humor. This includes profane images or videos or links to them.
- Rude, insulting, condescending or belittling comments, direct or implied.
- Personal attacks against another member in the group, threats or encouragements of violence.
- White supremacist, sexist, ableist, homophobic and transphobic posts and comments.

In addition, please do not post:

- Copyrighted material without the prior approval of the author. Note that short quotes designated with quotation marks and attributed to the writer **are** welcome when sharing links to articles.
- Posts about political parties or specific candidates. (As a non-profit, AFM can advocate on issues, but not advocate for or against specific candidates or political parties. In addition, Quakers can hold a variety of political beliefs.)

Should moderators and/or admins recognize that posts do not fit within the purposes of the group or do not follow the guidelines listed above, they will decide on an appropriate response. Posts or comments may be removed. The person sharing the inappropriate post or comment may be warned, muted or, as a last resort, removed from the group, in any order. After 30 days, a member who has been removed may appeal to rejoin the group.

Moderators are members and attenders of Atlanta Friends Meeting and are volunteers, please respect their limited time and availability. They can't see everything. If you have a concern about a post, feel free to send a private message to one of the moderators or email the office at atlantaquakers@gmail.com.

If needed, moderators or admins can consult with the Clerk of the Atlanta Friends Meeting or with the Clerk of the Ministry and Worship committee. Members of the group who have concerns about the way an issue is being handled and who can not resolve these concerns with the moderators may also consult the Clerk of the meeting at afmclerk1@gmail.com or the Clerk of Ministry and Worship.

This forum is mostly or entirely in English, but we recognize that for some of us English is not our first language. If there are ways that moderators can help make the site more accessible for people with limited English, we are open to conversations.

We spent some time in worship hearing responses from the body. Friends struggled to agree about if political comments should be allowed on the Facebook group. For some it felt like being non-partial is important. While others stated that it is hard to moderate as well as keep the other group guidelines in line. The committee is open to input about how political posts could be accommodated on Facebook. Also, there is a way to flag a post asking the moderator to review so the group can help the moderators find posts others feel are breaking group guidelines. The committee will bring this topic back for approval next month.

Suchitoto Fund Quarterly Report: 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).

Since our last quarterly report, ABESUCHI has continued to have difficulties related to the pandemic, especially because of internet connectivity issues. One student, for example, who lives in Suchitoto, had to go to the ABESUCHI office for connectivity. But they have made some advances of note. All the legal and bank documentation has been accomplished for the organization. They have a checking account at a commercial bank and will have a savings account very soon. It appears that they can receive international funds with minimal documentation, just a letter. They have complied with the official requirements of state institutions and passed their first audit. They are moving ahead with some fieldwork for the FIAES environmental project.

Under normal circumstances the University Fair would have happened in May or June. There has been some delay, but they were able to make the fair happen in August. They have put together video promotions. They have gained the technical capability to do the promotion. They have done very well at their essential function of managing the scholarship group. There is no problem except for new fund-raising.

Some conflicts have arisen around political campaigning that led ABESUCHI's governing body not to renew the contract of the Director. ABESUCHI has a diversity of political thinking. They are adamant that they will stay non-political. Volunteers and financial staff should be able to handle the work as long as they hire a new coordinator by the end of this year.

The Meeting's Suchitoto Fund has about \$10,948 remaining as of September 13, 2020. We plan to transfer these funds by the end of 2020.

Finance SAYMA Response: Atlanta Friends Meeting finance committee responded to SAYMA Finance Committee's questions asking Meetings to respond to the way the Yearly Meeting should spend their funds. The response was read to the body.

"The Finance Committee of the Atlanta Friends Meeting met to discuss your recent request for our views on the SAYMA budget.

We believe that SAYMA has reasonably allocated spending in recent years. Absent an increase in revenue, we do not see how SAYMA could, or should, change existing allocations. We do not see any room for savings in the core operations (Rows 38,39, 49 and 53 in your spreadsheet) nor do we see potential savings in Committee and Travel expenditure. We are loath to cut expenditures for SAYF, as we think this is a core responsibility of the yearly meeting. We also do not support cutting contributions to Quaker Organizations (both the membership organizations FGC and FWCC as well as all the other wider Quaker organizations). We support increased spending on both Racial Justice and the Spiritual Development Fund but recognize that to do so would require more revenue.

With respect to revenue, we encourage all meetings within the yearly meeting to step-up their contributions. We note that AFM will account for 28.3% of your proposed budget in FY2020 (we expect to contribute \$14,250 which is 28.3% of the proposed \$50,425 assessment budget) while we represent well less than 28% of SAYMA members. We also encourage you to consider sending out a contribution solicitation to all members of SAYMA meetings. Other Yearly Meetings have significant success directly soliciting contributions. The letters could emphasize the heretofore careful stewardship of limited resources and a desire to increase work on Youth, Racial Justice and Spiritual Development.

We encourage you to maintain your assessment rates at least consistent with inflation. We believe that a part of the recent financial difficulties the precipitated the recent sharp increases in the per capita assessment rates were driven in part by the fact that the assessment rate was unchanged for well more than 10 years. We also request that you reconsider our assessment proposal of several years ago where each meeting's assessment would be based on a percentage of their prior year's contribution income with all meetings charged the same percentage rate.

We also considered the need for a conflict of interest policy. While we believe that in general organizations (particularly larger ones) often benefit from a conflict of interest policy, we do not see the need for SAYMA to have one. We see little opportunity for conflict of interest in our current spending. Further, we believe the Quaker business process and our transparency generally eliminates the need for a Conflict of Interest Policy in smaller Quaker organizations.

Finally, we wonder if you shouldn't consider changing the fiscal year to begin July 1 and run to June 30. This would assure that at annual sessions in June the results from the prior year would be mostly complete and there would be less uncertainty around the proposed budget."

Following the report there was some time for commenting. Some Friends said they directly responded to this request stating that it is important to support Anti-Racism work of the Yearly Meeting. However, given the minutes from other Meetings, SAYMA URJ funding should stop because it is causing harm to the greater yearly meeting. Friends acknowledged that some of the problem in SAYMA is around transparency of the SAYMA URJ decision making. Other Friends appreciated the insight that AFM's Finance Committee gave through this response because it gave some of the nuances that comes from the expertise this committee brings.

Announcements

Macon Finance Donations: Finance committee is making progress in supporting Macon Worship Group donating through AFMs bank account. A request was made that people also send a note to the AFM bookkeeper letting them know the amount of their donation and that is was for.

SAYMA Representative Meeting being held on Zoom September 26, 2020.

Approval of Minutes August 2020

Edits for Eighth month minutes: The Query states it was sixth month It should state that we read eighth months query.

Minute 09-20-2020-01: Friends approved the minutes with a few corrections.

Events in the Life of the Meeting

Cathy Amanti's husband, Michael, died.

Closing Worship

Friends closed with a moment of worship.

HOLDING IN THE LIGHT:

family of Priscilla Padron
Cathy Amanti and family
Woody Woodall's family
Daniel Gold-Hopton
(recent kidney transplant)

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.

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ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

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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.