

# ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

## JULY 2023



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

The most recent announcement sheet is always at [http://atlantaquakers.org/announcements/Announcement\\_Sheet.pdf](http://atlantaquakers.org/announcements/Announcement_Sheet.pdf)

Meeting for Worship each First Day (Sunday) in Person & via Zoom, 10:00 am. Details page 6.

### QUERY FOR JULY

In what ways do we respond, as individuals and as a community, to prejudice and injustice?

Source: AFM Ministry and Worship Committee

WHERE IS AFM ON THE CONTINUUM ON BECOMING AN ANTI-RACIST MULTICULTURAL INSTITUTION ? WHAT STEPS CAN WE TAKE TO MOVE FORWARD?

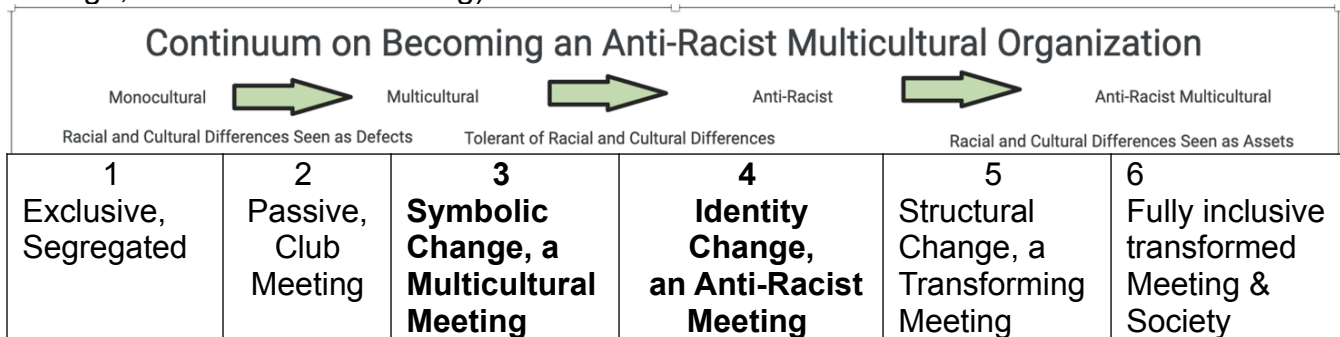
*This was shared by the Committee On Undoing Racism In Atlanta Friends Meeting (CURAFM) at Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on June 18, 2023. CURAFM invites your input, and asks for your help in planning more action steps as AFM Friends do the spiritual work of becoming a truly welcoming anti-racist faith community for all. Please give your feedback to Lissa Place ([lissaplace@yahoo.com](mailto:lissaplace@yahoo.com) or 678-793-9260) AND Susan Firestone ([susanfires@gmail.com](mailto:susanfires@gmail.com) or 404-268-6480).*

For our 6/6/2023 meeting, the Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting (CURAFM) invited AFM Friends who have participated in the SAYMA [Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association) racial justice training affinity groups to **discuss where AFM falls on the [Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist, Multicultural Institution](#)**. [Editor's Note: full chart found at <https://tinyurl.com/2swhk32v>.] One task in the SAYMA white/ European descent affinity groups has been to determine where our Monthly Meetings and SAYMA are on the continuum and to recommend ways to advance toward the goal of being anti-racist multicultural faith communities. Five AFM Friends who are in both CURAFM and in the SAYMA affinity groups shared perceptions and examples at the June meeting: Jennifer Dickie, Karen Morris, Alison Mawle, Susan Firestone, and Lissa Place. AFM has periodically used the continuum to chart our progress over the years, starting in 2000 with the Minute on becoming a safer and more welcoming spiritual home for all. We'd like to reopen the conversation with the whole meeting, invite your input, and ask for your help in planning more action steps.

It is difficult to generalize in a large Quaker meeting like ours. We are also aware that no Friends of Color were present at the June CURAFM meeting, and that white people tend to overestimate progress made on anti-racism. In addition, we realize that backsliding is a concern. So we offer this analysis with awareness of its limitations.

We have highlighted levels 3 (symbolic change, a multicultural Meeting) and level 4 (Identity

Change, and Anti-Racist Meeting) in the chart below as focus areas for AFM.



In our CURAFM discussion, we mentioned many examples to show that AFM has reached the level 3 “multicultural Meeting” stage. We also see that AFM has made progress along the continuum from past years toward level 4 “identity change–Anti-Racist Meeting.” But there are fewer examples in the 4 range, which is still aspirational for us and will take hard work to reach and sustain.

Atlanta Friends Meeting (AFM) has made commitments to being anti-racist and multicultural Examples:

- Minutes such as the Minute on Reparative Justice and Reconciliation approved by AFM
- Friends of Color serve on most committees including Naming, Nominating, Ministry & Worship, and Care & Counsel among others.
- Friends of Color have control over the FOC portion of the Social Concerns budget.
- Ongoing groups such as Quakers for Racial Equality and the Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting offer regular forums and workshops on racism and becoming a multicultural anti-racist Meeting. CURAFM offers an additional “Let’s Talk about Race” group
- Scholarship assistance for anti-racism training with groups such as People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond and others.
- AFM is exploring our responsibility for making amends to Muscogee Creek people.
- About 30% of the Social Concerns Committee budget is specifically listed in the “Justice for Black Indigenous, and other People of Color” category, which includes separate lines for each of the following: Reparative Justice for African Americans, Making Amends to Indigenous Peoples, Friends of Color, and Quakers for Racial Equality. Other Social Concerns budget categories such as voting rights and restorative justice are also related to racial justice.
- Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting has its own budget, separate from Social Concerns.
- AFM has had opportunities to become more multicultural through relationships with Burundian Friends in AFM for many years– especially through the bilingual hymnal in Kirundi and English, and friendships with families.
- Another multicultural opportunity has been through connections with Casa Alterna’s ministry of hospitality for asylum seekers under the guidance of Friend in Residence, Anton Flores and his spouse Charlotte Flores.
- Since 2012, AFM has been counting the number of adults at AFM Meeting for Worship and kept figures on the number of Black and/or African American and other People of Color. Figures from 2022 indicate about 15% Friends of Color out of an average attendance of 88 people. (Bert’s notes)
- Ad Hoc Reparations and Right Relations committee under the care of Ministry and Worship has offered several forums in conjunction with Friends School on reparative justice and making amends.
- The book group discussing books By and About People of Color meets monthly.

- ORAIIAH (predecessor to Quakers for Racial Equality), QRE, and CURAFM have periodically asked every committee and group to review its work for aspects of racism.
- Approval of AFM Interpersonal Racist Incident Policy and recent approval of funding for related anti-racism and restorative justice practices training.

Our group saw evidence of some improvement due to intentionality and broader consciousness raising within the Meeting. For example, the list of questions developed by Our Role as Individuals in America's Racial History (ORAIIARH) and later used by CURAFM for all committees asking them to examine their practices for racism has resulted in specific changes. A couple of examples:

- "Oversight committee" changed its name to "Administration committee."
- The Religious Education committee, recognizing that most of their teachers are white, has increased its materials with representation of children of all races, diverse families, positive role models, and racial justice messages.

Our CURAFM group also noticed a shift in AFM since the 2017 contentious decision process over the Black Lives Matter sign and the smoother discernment process and approval of the Reparative Justice and Reconciliation Minute, the Interpersonal Racist Incident Policy, and of the funding for the anti-racist / restorative justice practices training. Some key elements for reaching approval recently may be...

- the use of Ad Hoc groups with representatives from several different committees including Friends of Color
- the provision of multiple feedback opportunities
- Committee commitment to hearing all voices

However, we see barriers keeping AFM from being a level 4 anti-racist identity institution.

We think that to be an anti-racist institution at level 4, AFM would need to..

- be more wholeheartedly welcoming of diverse groups of people, not expecting assimilation to dominant white cultural norms
- make changes in policies, decision making, or practices to be proactively anti-racist
- be accountable to racially oppressed communities
- follow up racism education with more action steps

One Friend stated that the difference between level 3 and 4 may be compared to the difference between being inclusive and being anti-racist. AFM already has many aspects that make it inclusive and welcoming in general, such as welcome table and pamphlet, explanation of Quaker terms, microphones, and signage welcoming everyone to use the restroom that most closely matches their gender identity. But with being inclusive, we are including people into the structures that already exist. Jennifer gave the example of making sure that people can understand English, but not providing space for people to speak their own language. Being anti-racist is the next step. It means making a shift from simply including people into structures that already exist to being fully accepting so that people already present feel changed by those who come into the group and both groups contribute equally. Casa Alterna ministry of hospitality is a good example of walking with people and being wholeheartedly welcoming.

Despite Atlanta Friends Meeting work on anti-racism over the years, the overall culture of AFM as an institution has not changed significantly yet. Some people are working on an analysis of systemic racism or anti-racist identity, but that may not be true for the whole group or carry over into consistent efforts at policy change. In AFM, the main decisions are made through Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. The number of people participating in Meeting for Business is relatively small and is mostly the same people over many years. M4B participants also tend to be mostly of European descent and older. We could be more intentional about inviting younger friends and more

Friends of Color to come. Changes in policy or practice also happen through committees, such as the Administration Committee practice of seeking out Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color employees, contractors, and service providers. But last we checked, both the Administration Committee list of contractors and the Black Owned Businesses list that Quakers for Racial Equality had worked on were out of date. Cathy Amanti is updating the list, and we hope that others will join her in this effort.

Although many Friends of Color are active in Atlanta Friends Meeting, white Friends still overgeneralize Quakers as being of European descent. For example, in an early draft of the Reparative Justice minute, white writers used “we” in a statement acknowledging benefiting from slavery when that does not include Friends of African descent. A Friend of Color needed to point out that they were not included in that “we,” and the phrase about benefiting from slavery was changed to “Friends of European descent.” This overgeneralization erases contributions from Friends of Color. Friends of Color in AFM have sought racial justice, encouraged Friends of European descent to educate themselves and take action against racism, and advised Friends of European descent on workshops, the Reparative Justice Minute, and on anti-racist policy when asked. Other FOC prefer to focus on spiritual community or social connections with other FOC rather than racism because of it being omnipresent in their lives. White/ European descent Friends have also tended to be more welcoming to Friends of Color who use styles of speech and methods of social change that white Friends find more acceptable. This limits how Friends of Color can bring their whole selves into a safe, welcoming spiritual community.

In relation to being accountable to racially oppressed communities, there is some accountability within AFM, but not a strong connection to racially oppressed groups in the wider community. The percentage of attendance of Friends of Color at AFM (15%) is good for an unprogrammed Quaker meeting in the U.S, but not reflective of the city of Atlanta or DeKalb County demographics (or of Quakers worldwide). Lack of outreach perpetuates a predominantly white middle class group with similar interests or connections and misses diverse groups interested in Quaker worship and testimonies. Social Concerns committee members and others have connections to Black-led or multiracial social change or community organizations, but it may be at the level of donations or individual participation, not a whole Meeting priority.

In our opinion, AFM needs to take more action steps to follow up on the Reparative Justice and Reconciliation Minute and on the working statement toward land acknowledgement and making amends. We have had a lot of forums on these topics, and have made some relevant donations. But the amount and scope have been small compared to reparations projects such as the one by Green Street Friends in Philadelphia. For following up on our commitments in the working statement, we need to collaborate with Muscogee people.

The biggest step forward on policy change and addressing racial harm within AFM has been the approval of the AFM Interpersonal Racist Policy in September, 2022, and recent approval of funding for the Restore More training on anti-racism and restorative justice circles. Implementing the policy will require training for people beyond just those who are already most active in anti-racism work. We will be reaching out to AFM Friends to take the Restore More training and participate in future training opportunities.

Due to the pandemic, we haven’t had any workshops on becoming a multicultural anti-racist Meeting for 3 years. In workshops held in 2019 and early 2020, we identified patterns of dominant white culture that we still see present in AFM. At those workshops, we got lots of ideas from a large group of participants on positive steps to move the Meeting forward on the continuum. We’d like to have another workshop with the whole Meeting and invite you to share your ideas for where we go from here.

**We invite Friends to send any comments/ perspectives/ analysis to us by email or engage us in conversation. The committee welcomes your feedback as AFM Friends do the spiritual work of becoming a truly welcoming anti-racist faith community for all.**

Contacts for CURAFM (if contacting by email, please copy both)

- Lissa Place (678-793-9260) lissaplace@yahoo.com
- Susan Firestone (404-268-6480) susanfires@gmail.com

[Editor's Note: This chart may also be found online at <https://tinyurl.com/2swhk32v>.]

### Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist, Multicultural Institution

MONOCULTURAL	MULTICULTURAL	ANTI-RACIST	ANTI-RACIST MULTICULTURAL		
Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Defects		Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Assets			
<p><b>1. Exclusive</b> A Segregated Institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intentionally and publicly excludes or segregates African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans</li> <li>• Intentionally and publicly enforces the racist status quo throughout institution</li> <li>• Institutionalization of racism includes formal policies and practices, teachings and decision-making on all levels</li> <li>• Usually has similar intentional policies and practices toward other socially oppressed groups, such as women, disabled, elderly and children, lesbians and gays, Third World citizens, etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Passive</b> A "Club" Institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tolerant of a limited number of People of Color with "proper" perspective and credentials</li> <li>• May still secretly limit or exclude People of Color in contradiction to public policies</li> <li>• Continues to intentionally maintain white power and privilege through its formal policies and practices, teachings and decision-making on all levels of institutional life</li> <li>• Often declares, "We don't have a problem."</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. Symbolic Change</b> A Multicultural Institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes official policy pronouncements regarding multicultural diversity</li> <li>• Sees itself as "non-racist" institution with open doors to People of Color</li> <li>• Carries out intentional inclusiveness efforts, recruiting "someone of color" on committees or office staff</li> <li>• Expanding view of diversity includes other socially oppressed groups, such as women, disabled, elderly and children, lesbians and gays, Third World citizens, etc.</li> </ul> <p>But . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Not those who make waves"</li> <li>• Little or no contextual change in culture, policies and decision-making</li> <li>• Is still relatively unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Identity Change</b> An Anti-Racist Institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing understanding of racism as barrier to effective diversity</li> <li>• Develops analysis of systemic racism</li> <li>• Sponsors programs of anti-racism training</li> <li>• New consciousness of institutionalized white power and privilege</li> <li>• Develops intentional identity as an "anti-racist" institution</li> <li>• Begins to develop accountability to racially oppressed communities</li> <li>• Increasing commitment to dismantle racism and eliminate inherent white advantage</li> </ul> <p>But . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege still intact and relatively untouched</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. Structural Change</b> A Transforming Institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commits to process of intentional institutional restructuring, based on anti-racist analysis and identity</li> <li>• Audits and restructures all aspects of institutional life to ensure full participation of People of Color, including their worldview, culture and lifestyles</li> <li>• Implements structures, policies and practices with inclusive decision-making and other forms of power sharing on all levels of the institution's life and work</li> <li>• Commits to struggle to dismantle racism in the wider community, and builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities</li> <li>• Anti-racist multicultural diversity becomes an institutionalized asset</li> <li>• Redefines and rebuilds all relationships and activities in society, based on anti-racist commitments</li> </ul>	<p><b>6. Fully Inclusive</b> A Transformed Institution in a Transformed Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future vision of an institution and wider community that has overcome systemic racism</li> <li>• Institution's life reflects full participation and shared power with diverse racial, cultural and economic groups in determining its mission, structure, constituency, policies and practices</li> <li>• Full participation in decisions that shape the institution, and inclusion of diverse cultures, lifestyles and interests</li> <li>• A sense of restored community and mutual caring</li> <li>• Allies with others in combating all forms of social oppression</li> </ul> <p style="font-size: small; text-align: right;">© By Crossroads Ministry: Adapted from original concept by Baily Jackson and Rita Hardiman, and further developed by Andrea Avazian and Ronice Branding.</p>

PLEASE JOIN ATLANTA FRIENDS ON SUNDAYS FOR WORSHIP AND FIRST DAY SCHOOL



We continue to worship on Sunday at 10:00 am in person at the meeting house in combination with worship via Zoom for the indefinite future. Please choose the option that is best for you. Masks are optional at the meetinghouse, but if you test positive for COVID or are ill for any reason, please stay home and join us for worship and other events via Zoom. Any updates to Zoom info will be in the current announcement sheet at [www.atlantaquakers.org/\\_announcements/Announcement\\_Sheet.pdf](http://www.atlantaquakers.org/_announcements/Announcement_Sheet.pdf).

**MEETING FOR WORSHIP**

10 am Sundays, combined in person and Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89686276751?pwd=M29EYlIFWEhSQUtZRVVPalFFYmVDQT09>

Meeting ID: 896 8627 6751

Passcode: 789456

**ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL**

(see more details for each Sunday below)

9:00 to 9:50 am Sundays, combined in person and Zoom

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

Meeting ID: 860 6366 5797

Passcode: 013191

**FIRST DAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS**

10:15 am Sundays, in-person

Children and teens can continue to join Meeting for Worship for the first 15 minutes or can go directly to Religious Education, as they and their parents / guardians prefer.

There are three Wednesday opportunities for worship available each week, both in person and via Zoom. See the [announcement sheet](#) for more details.

**PLEASE HOLD  
IN THE LIGHT:**

Clive Gordon  
Lynn Leuszler and  
Georgia Lord  
Bill and Teri Hooson

*If you wish to have requests for holding in the light included in this monthly newsletter and in the announcement sheet, please give the names to a member of Care & Counsel.*

**Atlanta Friends Committees and Other Contacts**

Clerk of the Meeting: Jennifer Dickie, [afmclerk1@gmail.com](mailto:afmclerk1@gmail.com)  
Office Coordinator: Nina Gooch, [atlantaquakers@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaquakers@gmail.com)  
Treasurer: Lynn Leuszler, [afmtreasurer1@gmail.com](mailto:afmtreasurer1@gmail.com)  
Ministry & Worship: Bill Hooson, [bhooson@aol.com](mailto:bhooson@aol.com)  
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Social Concerns: Kevin Moran, [moran.kevinmoran.kevin@gmail.com](mailto:moran.kevinmoran.kevin@gmail.com)  
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Webmaster: Aaron Ruschetta, [arxaaron@gmail.com](mailto:arxaaron@gmail.com)  
Bookkeeper: Jonah McDonald, [afmbookkeeper1@gmail.com](mailto:afmbookkeeper1@gmail.com)

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

## RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE ABOUT JUNETEENTH

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*shared by HTI Catalysts and AFM member Folami Prescott-Adams*

Juneteenth Digital Toolkit: <https://nmaahc.si.edu/juneteenth-digital-toolkit>

Juneteenth: Teaching Outside the Textbook: <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/juneteenth/>

Anti-Racism Resources (Resources, Reading Materials, & Media):

[https://law.upenn.libguides.com/antiracism\\_resources/Juneteenth](https://law.upenn.libguides.com/antiracism_resources/Juneteenth)

## GREEN FRIENDS CORNER

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*from Judy Lumb for AFM Green Friends*

Environmental organizations often avoid talking about human population because they are afraid that they will lose financial support. But the greatest threat to the future of Earth is the rapidly expanding human population. The human population is now more than 8 billion and could reach 11 billion by the end of this century. How many humans can the Earth sustainably support? There have been several studies, and all conclude that the Earth can sustainably support about three billion humans.

The most impactful thing one human can do to avoid the catastrophic effects of Climate Change is to have one less child. But isn't that racist? Aren't we interfering with the reproductive decisions of others in expressing this concern? In the U.S., forty percent of pregnancies are unplanned. Reproductive healthcare that includes availability of contraception and abortion is increasingly threatened in the current political climate of the U.S. It is the lifestyle of the human population of the First World, that of developed countries, that is the most destructive.

In the Third World where much of the expansion of human population is occurring, there are two critical interventions. The first is access to modern contraception. There are over 200 million women and couples in developing countries who want to space or limit their births, but do not have access to modern contraception. Most contraceptive methods were invented in the developed world and are not inexpensive, so foreign assistance is often needed to make contraception available. (Guttmacher Institute <[guttmacher.org/report/adding-it-up-investing-in-sexual-reproductive-health-2019](http://guttmacher.org/report/adding-it-up-investing-in-sexual-reproductive-health-2019)>)

A second intervention involves the education of girls. If girls finish high school, they marry later, have children later, and have fewer children. So one of the most effective ways to reduce the expansion of the human population on Earth is to support education of girls. Friends United Meeting has a program for financial support of Girl Child Education in Kenya <[friendsunitedmeeting.org/what-we-do/gce](http://friendsunitedmeeting.org/what-we-do/gce)>.

## HOSTS NEEDED FOR WELCOME DINNERS BEGINNING JULY 18

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The Meeting has a tradition of hosting welcome potluck dinners for newcomers in one of our homes on the 18th of each month. We're now feeling comfortable about resuming this occasion for newcomers to get to know some of us in a smaller, less congested setting. We encourage newcomers as well as those who have been around for a while to attend and bring a dish to share. See later announcement sheets for details of July 18's Welcome Dinner.

If you would like to host a welcome dinner, please contact Jim Tolmach at [jimtolmach@icloud.com](mailto:jimtolmach@icloud.com) or 404-294-5194. The first dinner would be Tuesday, July 18. We need a volunteer to host in July. August is covered already, but we still need hosts for September and later months.

## SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS AND ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL – Sundays

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Each first Sunday of the month in Adult First Day School, we listen to how a Friend in our meeting answers questions of God's leadings as well as questions about what brings them to this meeting, what led them to become a member or not, and what they believe now. We call these stories Spiritual Journeys, stories where Friends describe their understanding of God and religion in their life. Kathy Johnson will share her story on July 2. (To listen to Bob Place's Spiritual Journey, shared June 4, visit <https://tinyurl.com/2s44yfhc>. To listen to other previous Spiritual Journey, contact Mary Ann Downey.)

We offer a standing invitation to all attenders and members, those new to meeting, transfers from other meetings, or longtime Atlanta members and attenders to share your answers to these questions. Some Friends find it helpful to do this as an interview. For more information and to schedule a time to tell your story, contact Mary Ann Downey at [madowney@mindspring.com](mailto:madowney@mindspring.com). You can also learn more about these stories at <https://www.friendsjournal.org/telling-stories-spiritual-journey/> and <https://www.friendsjournal.org/what-we-can-say-now/>.

On second, third, and fourth Sundays in July, Adult First Day School's book for discussion will be *Nelson Mandela: A Very Short Introduction* by Elleke Boehmer. All are welcome, whether you have read the book or not. On fifth Sundays, Adult First Day School will have worship sharing based on a query, either that month's query or another query.

Adult First Day School meets in person at the meetinghouse, and people can also join via Zoom. (See above for Zoom details.)

## GROUPS NOT MEETING IN JULY

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Next CURAFM (Committee on Undoing Racism in AFM) meeting, Tuesday, August 1  
Next book group reading works by and about people of color, Thursday, August 3  
Next Green Friends meeting, Sunday, August 6  
Next Social Concerns meeting, Sunday, August 13

## POTLUCK – Sunday, July 2

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Please join us for a potluck lunch following the rise of Meeting on the first Sunday of the month. Weather permitting, we have tables outside for you to enjoy. If you can, please bring not only enough food for your family, but also extra for newcomers and guests.

## MACON QUAKERS IN-PERSON GATHERING -- Saturday, July 15

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On Saturday, July 15, at 2:00 pm, the Macon Friends Worship Group, which is under the care of Atlanta Friends Meeting, will gather in person at the Fernando La Rosa Memorial Garden at Wesleyan College in Macon and invites Atlanta Friends Meeting to join them. The garden is just to the left behind the Murphey Fine Art Building as you turn in the entrance on Tucker Road. Parking is nearby across the street from the art building.

<https://www.wesleyancollege.edu/about/campus/memorial-garden.cfm> has more information about the garden. After about 30 minutes of silent worship, there will be an opportunity for fellowship and wandering the garden. The garden is shaded. You may wish to prepare for insects and consider bringing a cushion for the stone benches (or bring a folding chair, etc.) and a water bottle. Wednesday evening worship via Zoom continues (see details in [announcement sheet](#).)



## MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – Sunday, July 16

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Stay after meeting for worship, whether in person or via Zoom. Meeting for Business will be held in a combined format about 11:45, using the Zoom coordinates for Meeting for Worship. The minutes for last month's meeting are below.

### MINUTES FOR SIXTH MONTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS

June 18, 2023, held in person and via Zoom in a blended meeting

Minutes Recorded Pending Approval

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**Attendance:** Mike Aland, Richard Allen, Cathy Amanti, Carolyn Coburn-Allen, Steve Collins, Jennifer Crumpley, Mary Ann Downey, Betsy Eggers, Julia Ewen, Sally Ferguson, Susan Firestone, Anton Flores-Maisonet, Nina Gooch, Clive Gordon, Bill Holland, Jack Honderd, Bill Hooson, Teri Key-Hooson, Elizabeth Lamb, Jamie Lockard, Judy Lumb, Sue May, Ellen McQueen, Kevin Moran, Karen terHorst Morris, Caroline Morris, Beth Ruddiman, Aaron Ruschetta, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Jim Tolmach, Myrna Trapp, Brent Wolff, Jennifer Dickie (Clerk), Emma Bingham (Recording Clerk)

#### **Worship**

**Query for Sixth Month:** "Do I look into the nature and meaning of peace? How does it affect my daily life?" Source: Atlanta Friends Meeting Ministry and Worship Committee

Source: Atlanta Friends Meeting Ministry & Worship Committee

#### **Discernment**

##### **Ministry and Worship —**

Bill Hooson reported for Ministry and Worship

**Minute 6-18-23:01:** Atlanta Friends Meeting agrees to take under its care the marriage of Sara Patenaude and Stacey Sharer.

**Minute 6-18-23:02:** Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the Marriage Committee for Sara Patenaude and Stacey Sharer (Mary Ann Downey—Clerk, Bill Holland, Bill Hooson, Teri Key-Hooson, Suzie Lippold, Jennifer Crumpley.)

**Nominating—** Ellen McQueen reported for Nominating Committee.

**Minute-6-18-23:03:** On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves [the changes to the handbook description](#) for the Newsletter Editor position.

**Minute-6-18-23:04:** On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves [the changes to the handbook description](#) for Database Manager.

#### **Reports**

**Report from Mary Ann Downey about her ministry that is held in care by Ministry and Worship.** *Mary Ann spoke extemporaneously about her ministry, and below is a transcript of her words.*

Thank you, friends, for supporting my ministry under the care of this meeting. And that has been true since 2000. In August of 2000, at the recommendation of the Traveling Ministries Program of Friends General Conference, I was asked to be available in the Traveling Ministries program to go to other meetings who had various concerns. In order to be part of

that program, I had to have the support of my meeting, my monthly meeting, and my yearly meeting. I brought that concern to this meeting and was happy that you were willing to take my ministry under your care. At that time, you also appointed an anchoring committee. I love the concept of anchoring committee, particularly for people like me who are apt to just run after whatever we're asked to do, as friends say, we often outrun our guide. The anchoring committee is holding me down to think about, is this my work? Is this what God is asking me to do now?

Today I want to briefly describe how over these 23 years this ministry has changed at times. The first phase, roughly 2000 to 2015, was focused on Traveling Ministries program of Friends General Conference and requests from other meetings. And overlapping this, I focused on Quaker Voluntary Service that I helped Christina begin 2010-2022. And 2018-2023, the focus was with AFM community.

The [FGC] Traveling Ministries program [is composed of] people who were workshop leaders annually at Friends General Conference. We were sometimes asked by people in the workshop if we could come and offer the workshop for their meeting, taking a weeklong class and doing a weekend version. I was one of many people who agreed to do that. Friends General Conference finally decided a staff person to coordinate those requests would be in order. And that's how the request came to this meeting. For the first 15 years of this ministry, I traveled to a lot to other meetings across the country. I can remember Sacramento, San Antonio, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Michigan, where I met Jennifer's parents, and many of the Philadelphia meetings. It was wonderful.

The retreats focused primarily on two things. One was building the beloved community in the meeting, and the other was conflict and how to work in the spirit to discern the right answer to questions. Would you guess that the biggest conflicts among friends happened to be over property? Money. I was glad I had the experience in this meeting where we struggled over a period, I think it was about 20 years about selling the old meeting house and taking on a new meeting house. This is often a concern as meetings grow and change. How do we make use of our resources and how do we actually create a place where people can come together?

As the work of the Traveling Ministries program continued, a new opportunity arose. Christina Repoley was in the Candler School of Theology, getting her Master of Divinity, and she asked me to be the minister during her program. During her studies, she became clear and wrote her master's thesis on how a Quaker voluntary service program could be created. As you all know, that eventually led in 2012 to the very first Quaker Voluntary Service House here in Atlanta. I was with her on that journey and was particularly involved in creating the program that we have for spiritual nurturing each Fellow in the program. We find a person in the meeting that supports that group of fellows to be a spiritual guide, spiritual nurturer. There are now five locations across the country, Portland, Oregon, Minneapolis, Boston, and Philadelphia. And we continued those five through 2022. One of the problems has been a decrease in the number of people willing to commit to a year of service in Quaker Voluntary Service. This has been true for AmeriCorps and lots of these kinds of organizations recently. The decision was made last year to just have fellows in four locations and not to have them in Atlanta. We'll see what happens in the future with that.

By this time, I was called to do many other things in this meeting. I realized I enjoyed focusing on the calls that I was getting here, and there were enough to keep me busy. It was about that time Delta informed me that I had become a million miler. And I thought, well, there's another call from God to focus on this meeting. I was really tired of traveling as much as I

loved it. My work in the recent years has been focused on this meeting and building the spiritual life of our meeting. I have also served many Quaker organizations, the American Friends Service Committee, Executive Committee for the region, the Friends Journal Board, Friends General Conference, and Earlham School of Religion. Eventually, service on boards was another thing that I decided I could lay down and let other people do. I have continued to write for Friends Journal and published several articles recently. One of them, "Pandemic Discoveries" led to a retreat last year Memorial Day weekend here for our meeting, helping people talk about what have we learned from this challenge and where are we now spiritually with how we handle these challenges.

In another of my articles, "Walk by Faith, Keep Walking", I write about my discovery that any kind of ministry, any kind of work that we do, is an ongoing challenge to find the faith to do what we're called to do. Many of you know of my work focused on having people tell their spiritual journey related to that, and the most recent article in February this year was "What Can We Say Now", where we are in this process of telling our stories and helping each other understand literally where we're coming from. I think this is my work now. I sometimes refer to it as "standing by" ministry or "backup singer". I'm really grateful for the calls I get.

My current anchoring committee helps keep me anchored and straight and includes Dave Thurman, who has been on the committee since the beginning in 2000, Nan O'Connor, Lewis Fuller and Bill Holland. I really do appreciate meeting with them monthly to help me discern what is mine to do. I report annually and those reports are in the meeting newsletter. And one of the quotes that I offered this year for last year's work, was from Howard Thurman who said, "Don't ask what the world needs. Rather ask what makes you come alive and do that, because what the world needs are people who are alive."

#### **Ministry and Worship Committee —**

Bill Hooson reported for Ministry and Worship Committee.

- Ministry and Worship has received a certificate of release of membership from the Radnor Meeting on behalf of Jamie and Mary Ann Lockard. We encourage Friends to get to know them in the coming month. We will bring their membership transfer back for approval next month.

Background for the following report summarized by the clerk: Ministry and Worship has reflected on the meeting's policies and historic guidelines around dealing with interpersonal conflicts in the meeting. Considering the three policies, the Interpersonal Racist Incident Policy, the Sexual Harassment Policy, and the Abuse of Children Policy, the Committee believes they, in cooperation with Care and Counsel, will be able to address any concerns brought to them concerning status-based interpersonal conflicts. In their meeting, they minuted the following:

- We are generally in agreement that Care and Counsel and Ministry and Worship can receive and respond to status-based interpersonal conflicts in meeting not addressed by other policies. We are not led to recommend a new procedure at this point. We can call upon everyone in the meeting community to support us in addressing these issues.

Background for the following report summarized by the clerk: At 3rd month's Meeting for Business, Ministry & Worship was concerned that CURAFM's handbook revision did not accurately reflect their feedback regarding the Standing Response Group for the Interpersonal Racist Incident Policy being an independent committee. Upon the recommendation of the clerk, Ministry & Worship and CURAFM met to clarify the concerns. Following this meeting M&W further seasoned their request, which resulted in the following minute from M&W's meeting.

- Ministry and Worship withdraws our recommendation for a separate standing committee and trust that CURAFM and Nominating Committee will develop a seasoned recommendation for consideration by Meeting for Business. The meeting has final responsibility for ensuring the proposed structure meets our needs.

### **Social Concerns Committee —**

Kevin Moran reported for the Social Concerns Committee.

- The committee acknowledges that its work is a spiritual labor. We do address specifics and take action or recommend action.
- David Small has been in Palestine and has visited Ramallah Friends School, where a student there has been under house arrest. When David returns from Palestine, he will facilitate a Zoom meeting with the help of AFSC and the SCC Ad hoc Committee on Palestine. SCC will support this forum.
- There remains approximately \$1,200 in undesignated funds in the budget available to support the Social Concerns of Friends.
- The Interfaith Children's Movement requested the sponsorship & representation of AFM. I am delighted to report Friends Jennifer Crumpley and Elizabeth Muller will enthusiastically represent us. Their commitment and skills are welcomed by this Georgia-focused Children's Advocacy Group. Therefore, SCC has agreed to sponsor the Interfaith Children's Movement.
- AFSC Requested an SCC representative for the AFSC-led nonviolent Stop Cop City Movement. Three friends came forward to serve. AFM will be well represented by Rebecca Rubinstein, Julia Maxwell, and Asa Kramer-Dickie. They have been faithfully involved in the Movement to Stop Cop City.
- House Bill 5444 - Truth in Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act was unanimously passed by the House of Representatives. This bill sets forth the duties to investigate the impacts and ongoing effect of Federal Indian Boarding School Policies. Children were forcibly removed from their family homes and placed in boarding schools with the goal of being assimilated into white society. Judy Lumb is doing research for a book on the involvement of Quakers in this cultural genocide.
- We discussed the National Security Experts Call for Ukraine Diplomacy NYT 5/16/23. We agreed that Spirit-informed clarity was necessary before SCC considers presenting a minute to Meeting.
- The evaluation of the SCC meeting time change to 11:45 and hybrid format was positive. The change will make involvement in SCC more accessible.

### **QVS Support Committee update —**

Steve Collins reported for the QVS Support Committee.

Steve is the clerk of the QVS Support Committee (which has not yet been laid down). The below is an email he read from Hilary Burgin, QVS Executive Director, and Damon Motz-Storey, QVS Board Clerk.

The national Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS) board of directors discerned on June 15, 2023 that they will not have a house of QVS Fellows next year (2023-2024) in the Twin Cities. Although they have invested heavily in new and increased recruitment and outreach strategies in the past year, there are not enough incoming Fellows to run programs in four cities. For QVS to remain true to its mission and vision, which at its core includes intentional

community living, they need programs that have at least three Fellows at the beginning of the year. Right now, they have 11 incoming Fellows; by taking a year off in the Twin Cities, that leaves 3 or more Fellows in the remaining three cities – Boston, Philadelphia, and Portland, Oregon.

Last year, QVS made a similar hard decision to pause service in Atlanta. Now low numbers of applicants mean they are not in a position to reopen a program in Atlanta, and they need to pause the Twin Cities program this upcoming program year.

Other service year programs, both faith-based organizations (Jesuit Volunteer Corps and Avodah) and secular organizations (Americorps and City Year) are also struggling to recruit young adults in recent cycles. It does not appear to be a one-year blip, but rather an ongoing pattern. QuEST, a similar Quaker service program in Seattle, was forced to close due to lack of applicants.

The board has a lot of thoughts about why application numbers remain low. The shortest version: there's been a major culture shift in the last couple of years, and QVS (and indeed the entire volunteer service year field) is feeling the impacts of that.

Steve let Friends know that there would be a Supporter's Briefing via Zoom, on Wednesday, June 21, to hear more about the challenges QVS faces as well as the Spirit-led response they are taking. Although the Board discerned that the need to pause the Twin Cities program, they do feel hopeful about their next steps. He asked Friends to let him know if they were interested in attending the briefing, and he would forward the registration information.

#### **Website Committee —**

Aaron Ruscetta reported for the Website Committee.

Progress is being made on the new website. The Website Committee has set up a WordPress site and progress has been made on transferring some content.

#### **Nominating Committee —**

Ellen McQueen reported for the Nominating Committee.

Nominating brought forward the revised Landscape Committee handbook description, which will be brought back next month for approval. The changes can be seen [here](#).

Nominating also brought forward the name Lissa Place for SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee. If you don't know her, take the time to get to know her this month. They will bring her name back next month for approval.

The clerk noted that SAYMA has been trying to have two members from each monthly meeting on SAYMA Ministry and Nurture, so it's good news that this year two Friends from AFM, Kevin Moran and Lissa Place, have now stepped forward.

#### **Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting —**

Karen Morris reported for CURAFM.

Karen said that before she reads the report, she wanted to give some background: a number of people have been part of affinity groups in SAYMA this past year. SAYMA set up about eight affinity groups to bring people together from different meetings to talk more and learn about how to be anti-racist in terms of our work in our meetings, SAYMA, and the world. It takes practice, and as a white person, Karen said, she has to reflect on what our culture conditioned her to do, and how she can make changes and realize that something she has done has hurt someone who is not white. Lissa Place and Kit Potter (of Nashville Friends Meeting) are the two facilitators in her affinity group. Her

group has people from other monthly meetings including Celo, Chattanooga, Asheville, and Berea. They have been asked by their facilitators to reflect not only about themselves but also about SAYMA using the *Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist, Multicultural Institution* to help.

The Continuum, which can be seen [here](#), comes from Joseph Barndts' book, *Becoming an Anti-Racist Church: Journeying Toward Wholeness*. It's about looking at religious institutions and how we work towards becoming anti-racist and multicultural institutions. Some Friends in Quakers for Racial Equality used this Continuum a number of years ago in looking at AFM's culture. Currently, Friends participating in the SAYMA affinity groups have been using it to reflect on SAYMA. CURAFM thought it would be helpful if those participating in the SAYMA affinity groups came together to discuss where they perceive Atlanta Friends Meeting falls on the Continuum now.

Karen acknowledged the report was long, but felt the content was important enough to read the whole thing.

The report can be read in full [here](#) and will be included as an article in the July newsletter.

Questions from Friends after the report was read:

- Does the affinity group have people of color?
  - Karen responded that SAYMA set up a group specifically for Friends of Color, and there were 3 people from AFM in that group, though they weren't at the CURAFM meeting this month.
- Is there consistent identification terminology, between Blacks and African Americans because not all Black people are African Americans.
  - Karen replied that the writers would make that more clear.
- The bathrooms say "men" and "women", so are they gender neutral, as it says in the report?
  - Nina Gooch clarified that we don't have a gender neutral bathroom, instead we put up signs saying that people can use the bathrooms that most closely match their gender identity. These signs mean to say, "it's safe for you to go in whichever bathroom you feel comfortable with." The clerk said this language could be changed in the report from "gender neutral" to something that reflects the signs.
- Does the 15% number come from people who identified themselves as POC in a survey or were they looking at people in attendance at meeting?
  - Bert Skellie responded that he and a few others count members and attenders each week, identifying the number of people who they know to identify as Friends of Color and making a best guess for those they don't know, stating that we don't always know how people identify. Nina Gooch clarified that the number we send to SAYMA for the annual census is a different number (separate from the 15% number that Bert found) and is self-identified.

### **Naming Committee —**

Sally Ferguson reported for Naming Committee.

Last month Naming committee brought forward Blake Williamson's name for Nominating Committee. After some consideration, Blake has decided to use his gifts in other capacities in meeting. We are withdrawing his name. He looks forward to serving the meeting in other capacities.

A Friend said he has a concern that our Naming Committee appears to be a standing committee. It's intended to be a month long, but has ended up being six months long the past few years. The Friend suggested that the clerk set up a group of 2-3 people to look at this problem and identify advice and

wisdom on how the committee could function better. It was noted that Naming Committee is important since Nominating Committee is important.

The clerk recognized that the committee has done a lot of work, and reported that they asked more than 25 people to serve. The clerk said she wanted to be clear that it is the whole process that concerns her, not the current Committee's efforts.

Sally said she thought that two months, maybe three would be a good amount of time for Naming Committee, and one month is not enough.

### **Clerk's Items**

#### Laying Down Naming Committee for 2023

**Minute-06-18-23:05:** Atlanta Friends Meeting approves laying down the Naming Committee for 2023. We would like to thank Sally Ferguson, John Adams, and Gwen Davies for their work.

### **Announcements**

- Registration for virtual attendance at SAYMA Sessions and Retreat, June 23-27 is still open at [SAYMA.org](http://SAYMA.org)
- Friend Tom Baker has relocated from North Carolina to the Rome area and is a member of the New Garden Meeting in NC. Do you know if there is any interest in starting a group in the Rome/Cartersville area?
- Committees and individuals are encouraged to sign up to support the First Day School this summer. Contact Jennifer Dickie ([afmclerk1@gmail.com](mailto:afmclerk1@gmail.com), 404-313-8770) to sign up for an open date. Help with planning is available.

Ideally committees would also supply a doorkeeper, but we will also continue to ask for doorkeepers through the usual volunteer signup.

- The Care and Counsel Committee is planning on reviving welcome dinners for the meeting. They are expecting to start on the 18th of July, which is the date we used to have these dinners. They are looking for volunteers to host the dinners. Talk to Jim Tolmach or Karen Skellie if you want to volunteer.

### **Approval of Minutes from 5th month 2023**

[http://atlantaquakers.org/\\_afm\\_newsletters/AFM\\_Newsletter\\_2023-06.pdf](http://atlantaquakers.org/_afm_newsletters/AFM_Newsletter_2023-06.pdf)

Correction to 5th month minutes: in the SCC report, a story written by Althea Sumpter was mentioned, but her name was not, so it will be added to the minutes.

**Minute-06-18-23-06:** The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the 5th month 2023 minutes with the above correction.

### **Closing Worship**

#### QUAKER QUOTE

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“Don't ask what the world needs. Rather ask what makes you come alive and do that, because what the world needs are people who are alive.”

– *Howard Thurman*

Atlanta Friends Meeting  
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#### ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

Office Hours: Monday thru Thursday, 10 am to 1 pm and Friday, by appointment  
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<p><b>Ways to communicate and receive information:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You may receive the announcement sheets and other announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting. This is the announcement email list. (The announcement sheet is also posted online.)</li><li>• You may receive announcements AND posts about a broader range of topics relating to being a Quaker via email. This is the discussion email list.</li><li>• You may receive notification that the newsletter is online. This is the newsletter email list.</li><li>• You may receive weekly reminders about in person and Zoom worship and First Day School via an email list. This is the worship reminder list.</li></ul> <p><i>To join any of these email lists above, please email the office at <a href="mailto:atlantaquakers@gmail.com">atlantaquakers@gmail.com</a>.</i></p> <p><i>To join the meeting's Facebook group, search for Atlanta Friends Meeting &amp; click the + <b>Join Group</b> button.</i></p> <p><b>Do you need a directory, printed or electronic?</b> Email <a href="mailto:atlantaquakers@gmail.com">atlantaquakers@gmail.com</a> or call 404-377-2474</p>	<p><b>Do we have your (correct) contact information so we can reach you?</b> Please send your name and (updated) contact information to Brent Wolff at <a href="mailto:afmdirectory@gmail.com">afmdirectory@gmail.com</a>.</p> <p><b>What does investing in your spiritual community look like for you and your family?</b> Atlanta Friends Meeting accepts contributions of your time, resources, talents, and money! Place a financial contribution in the slot marked "Contributions" in the greeting area of the Meetinghouse or mail to our mailing address. Or donate online at <a href="http://atlantaquakers.org/contact.htm">atlantaquakers.org/contact.htm</a> with a credit card or paypal. Sign up to volunteer on Sunday morning, at <a href="http://tinyurl.com/afmvolunteers">http://tinyurl.com/afmvolunteers</a>. Contact the Nominating Committee to serve on a committee. <i>Thanks!</i></p> <p><b>Want to submit an announcement, letter, article, etc to the newsletter?</b> Email <a href="mailto:atlquakerltr@gmail.com">atlquakerltr@gmail.com</a>. Submissions may be edited for length and format. <b>THE DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS IS THE 20<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF EACH PRECEDING MONTH.</b></p>
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