

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 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

Meeting for Worship each First Day (Sunday) in Person & via Zoom, 10:00 am. Details page 4.

QUERY FOR AUGUST

Do all aspects of your life bear the same witness? Do you center your life in the awareness of the presence of God so that all things take their rightful place?

Source: Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association *Faith and Practice*

INVITING FRIENDS TO TELL THEIR STORIES

by Mary Ann Downey from February's Friends Journal (<https://www.friendsjournal.org/>)

If you'd like to share your Spiritual Journey or to hear past Spiritual Journeys, contact Mary Ann

Only a few Friends sat in worship when I took my seat before 10:00 a.m. By the time I stood to close the worship, it looked like the room held the same number of Friends as there had been on a typical Sunday before the pandemic. I felt great joy and relief that we've not only survived but grown in strength and numbers. After a welcome and introduction, I said:

"I sat and watched the room fill up this morning, reflecting on the many different paths and challenges we've experienced to be here. [I am not speaking of] just our travel here today but the turning points on our spiritual journeys that bring us to this community, this Quaker faith. And I am grateful that we can be together helping each other grow in faith and love."

On this Sunday last November I noticed that many were young adults, college students, and families with young children among the first-time attenders introducing themselves. Several longtime members were back for the first time since before the pandemic. Our introductions always include time for those who are attending online to introduce themselves, and we've discovered these introductions help those new to Friends have an easy way to see and hear who we are.

I saw this Sunday as another step on our path as a meeting to recover and become who we are now. Even as I celebrate our recovery, I recall those who are no longer with us. I look around the room, picture them in their usual seats, and remember how the gifts they brought laid the foundation for the meeting we are today. We recorded memorial minutes for six Friends in 2020, five in 2021, and eight in 2022.

All our meetings for worship and meetings with attention to business are hybrid now, occurring both online and in-person, and we are clear as a meeting that we will continue to welcome Friends in person and online. This makes us accessible to those at a distance and physically unable to attend, as well as to visitors seeking community.

Beyond initial introductions and a chat during post-worship coffee hour or in chat rooms online, how do we discover who we are as individuals of faith in a meeting community as we grow and change? One of the ways we do this is through sharing the story of the path we traveled to be here now.

Since 2007, on the first Sunday of each month (including online during the pandemic), I've invited a Friend to speak, and we've enjoyed hearing the story of what brought the person to Friends and to this meeting. I send them a link to the article I wrote in 2013 for *Friends Journal*, "[Telling Stories of Our Spiritual Journey](#)," which describes the history of this project and proposes the following questions to guide the speaker's story:

- What were your early experiences with religion and lessons about God?
- How did that concept of God and religion change and grow as you began to understand these early lessons?
- What special life turning points brought you closer to or away from God?
- What influence did education, career, marriage, or children have on your faith and practice?
- How did you learn about Friends? What led you to this meeting?
- How has this meeting supported your spiritual journey?
- What do you believe now?

Each story adds to our oral history and is an affirmation that we are a home for seekers who are questioning what we've been taught.

These stories build upon the book *As Way Opened: A History of Atlanta Friends Meeting, 1943–1997*, which includes a Friend's comment about the group's early diversity and their wondering what they had in common, other than a desire not to be preached at. This early history was developed from a series of interviews with Friends who were our founding members; the interviews were conducted by a member who was a journalist, and another who was a historian who wrote about our place in Atlanta, Georgia, where we struggled to make a home that was open to all in the midst of segregation. The book helps me to see how we've stayed the same and yet grown. When we hear individual stories, we hear about our differences and similarities as we create an oral history for our meeting now.

The benefits of hearing and recording these stories go beyond creating an archive and history: every story tells me how much it helps speakers to see and tell others what has brought them here and what keeps them in this community.

It is a process of remembering and evaluating life events and their meaning, which sometimes provides new insights. I'm told by many that this is hard to do and needs time to season. This life review was hard for me, and I also see how this introspection is a lifelong process. Even once I'm clear, how do I describe the process to others, and what do I choose not to talk about? Some Friends decide not to speak; some decide to wait. Other Friends use this review to prepare their letter requesting membership, and some explain why they are not members.

Inviting Friends to share their stories is a ministry that I am called to because I know that when I tell my story, it not only helps me grow but builds our community of faith. And I love to listen. There is a child in all of us that likes to hear stories. When we sit together listening in reverent silence, we become one in the Spirit. Parker Palmer writes about creating a circle of trust, a safe space for the soul to show up. When we come ready to listen, we not only learn new things about the person speaking—even when we've known them for many years—but we also learn new things about ourselves and what we share.

While this project began with a focus on stories of the elders, it now includes all ages. Many are younger and new to Friends, with at least one young adult Quaker Volunteer Service fellow from

each class from 2012 to 2022. A young mother of a five- and a seven-year-old, who began attending in the summer of 2021, offered to tell her spiritual journey this past November. Her story is the most recent example of people finding their way to our meeting and who are willing to be recorded while telling us about their path. She was surprised to find that having 50 minutes without interruptions or questions helped her feel safe and welcomed.

An unexpected benefit of audio recordings of more than 100 stories over 15 years is our ability to listen again to the voice of a Friend who has passed. Hearing their recorded voices telling their spiritual journey helps us to hold them in our hearts, mourn their passing, and celebrate their gifts. We often include their own words in memorial minutes.

The recording is also shared with families who may not have heard the original telling, who often report that they learn things they hadn't known. The most recent example is the recording of our Friend Muireann Brennan, who died unexpectedly at home in November. Muireann was due to retire in January 2023 from a long and extraordinary career as a doctor supporting emergency responses abroad with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The purpose of this work was to improve the medical and living conditions of refugees affected by war and famine. Muireann was planning to move back to Dublin, Ireland, where she was born and her family still lives. She spoke to Atlanta Meeting in 2010 and in 2012 about her journey from Irish Catholic to Atlanta Quaker and the intersection of her faith and work. One of her sisters in Dublin told me how much the family appreciated hearing her story and sharing it across generations.

There is an abundance of gifts these stories offer to our meeting community, and we are grateful. We experience and celebrate continuing revelation as individuals when we tell Friends of our spiritual journey; when we listen to these stories as a meeting community; when we honor the lives of those who've passed; and when we share their stories within our meeting, and with friends and family outside the meeting.

**PLEASE HOLD
IN THE LIGHT:**

Jennifer Thompson
Lynn Leuzsler 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
Office Coordinator: Nina Gooch, atlantaquakers@gmail.com
Treasurer: Lynn Leuzsler, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com
Ministry & Worship: Bill Hooson, bhooson@aol.com
Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280
Social Concerns: Kevin Moran, moran.kevinmoran.kevin@gmail.com
Administration: Steve Collins, shcollins75@gmail.com
Care & Counsel: Jennifer Crumpley, afm.care.counsel@gmail.com
Quakers for Racial Equality: Susan Firestone, susanfires@gmail.com
Committee on Undoing Racism in AFM: Lissa Place, lissaplace@yahoo.com
Religious Education: Amanda Gendreau, AmandaGendreau5@gmail.com
Young Friends Program Coordinator, Asa Kramer-Dickie,
afm.young.friends@gmail.com
Library: Cal Gough, calgough@bellsouth.net
Nominating: Lissa Place, lissaplace@yahoo.com
Newsletter Editor: Nina Gooch, atlquakerltr@gmail.com
Webmaster: Aaron Ruscetta, arxaaron@gmail.com
Bookkeeper: Jonah McDonald, 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.

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.

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.

WEDNESDAY OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORSHIP EACH WEEK

IN-PERSON AT THE MEETINGHOUSE AND VIA ZOOM AT 8:30 AM

In the meeting room. For more information, contact Bert Skellie at 404-680-4799 .

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

Meeting ID: 92038862952

Password: 726229

IN PERSON AT THE MEETINGHOUSE AT 7:00 PM

In the library. All are welcome to attend. For more information, contact Alex Zinnes, azinnes@gmail.com and Clive Gordon, cmgord28@gmail.com.

VIA ZOOM WITH MACON WORSHIP GROUP AT 7:00 PM

The Macon Worship Group, which is under the care of Atlanta Friends Meeting, invites us to join them for this ongoing meeting for worship via Zoom! For more information, contact Bill Holland and Mary Ann Downey.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85017745787?pwd=RUQ3OGJPenMrYktXemlxL1d2R3Q2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 850 1774 5787

Passcode: 22Light

EPISTLE FROM FRIENDS FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, AND QUEER CONCERNS 2023 MIDWINTER GATHERING

20th Day of Second Month, 2023

To all Friends everywhere,

Members of Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns [FLGBTQC] gathered online for our Midwinter Gathering from Friday, February 17th, through Monday, February 20th, 2023. More than 150 people registered from all over North America and from Honduras, Australia, Sweden, Costa Rica, and England. Some Friends were attending their first FLGBTQC gathering; some had been involved for 40 years or more. Though age is difficult to discern over Zoom, we felt blessed to have attendance by Friends at many parts of the life spectrum and to have the children of some Friends join us at times.

Our theme was **“Queer Hearts: Relationships, Non-monogamy and More.”** In two keynote panels, Friends put their non-traditional relationships at the center, addressing the themes *“Queer Hearts: More than Two ‘Bi’ Two”*, and *“Queer Hearts: Our Sacred Stories”*. Panel members shared deeply from their spiritual journeys and their leadings to live authentically. Similarly, in worship sharing breakout rooms, Friends shared their experiences in relationships that don’t align with dominant cultural norms and examined their own values, needs, and leadings.

“I have been called to live in community.”

Although connecting virtually once again, due to the continued pandemic, the web of light was palpable as it flowed between us, from one heart to another, like mist between the distances.

“We will go wherever Spirit guides us, even if that’s apart.”

This Midwinter, we used storytelling to speak truth to power, to name harms within and against our community, and to deepen the connection to allow the Light to grow stronger. In 1999, FLGBTQC Friends wrote, “We are learning that radical inclusion and radical love bring further light to Quaker testimony and life.” This remains true to this day. Storytelling is the language of human experience, and this weekend we heard stories of Friends’ most tender experiences, pulled from the place where curiosity and compassion are born. Friends were invited to notice where in their bodies messages were landing and encouraged to offer compassion toward the person bringing the message; toward themselves; and to everyone else witnessing. More than once in our community, we harmed one another. We continue to practice naming, addressing, and owning harm that has occurred. We know we will never be perfect on our own. We lean on spirit and community as we grow. We are human. We are learning. We are unlearning. We are listening.

“I am neither the biggest nor the smallest thing in my life.”

Creative terms came to light such as “neurospicy” and “genderspicy” as we expanded our knowledge of identity and sense of self.

As always, we enjoyed a range of talents in the cabaret. Gentle persuasion by our wonderful treasurer helped the group collect \$73 toward the purchase of a lovely gown displayed and modeled for us by a Friend.

“I want to feel like a ripple in a trans world.”

Coming together for the first Business Meeting since the restructuring of our group, we learned about past and future activities of the newly created Heart Team, Tech Team, Treasurers Team, and Worship Team. These teams offer Friends a way to hold the community in a way that is flexible and responsive to their needs. Friends were reminded that if they are present, they are community, they are wanted here, and we will hold them in this Glorious Light.

"I knew I could be something, but I couldn't be everything."

The Heart Team invited guests to Midwinter Gathering in light of significant current events across the US, including the introduction of 599 anti-LGBTQ bills (278 in 2022, and already 321 in 2023), most of which directly target trans folks. Friends held space at one of the breakout room "lunch tables" and also led an interest group on the following day. The Heart Team encourages everyone to consider their rightful place in relation to this effort.

Those interested were asked to reach out further to the heart team via email to heart@flgbtqc.org.

The Midwinter Gathering Committee and the The Heart Team worked hard to create a joyful, affirming environment where people could connect through shared identities and interests in breakout rooms with names like, "Flirty & Fun," "People of Color Affinity Space," and "Nonbinary & GNC Affinity Space." There was also virtual space for Friends to connect more intimately, one-on-one.

Friends came together bearing wounds, joys, and concerns. For some the gathering was painful. For others it was a time of self exploration, unearthing privileges previously unacknowledged, strengthening identities or new comings-out, and bringing light to the harm of privilege.

We were all gathered together; and in doing so we were called to learn how to better love each other. We are glad we could widen the embrace of our community this year to make more space for Friends with non-traditional relationships. We strive to seek justice and care collectively as we move forward. We continue to listen for how Spirit is moving among us.

Our affection for each other is palpable and we are so grateful to have had this gathering. On Zoom or in person we celebrate our relationships with each other, and we look forward to the future.

Signed, *Peg Bernstein*, FLGBTQC Clerk

[Editor's Note: for more information on the national FLGBTQC, visit <https://www.flgbtqc.org/>]

A GREEN FRIEND'S TIP TO PONDER ON GAS LEAF BLOWERS

shared by Beth Muller

As we are concerned with the current and future of our environment, let us consider the impact of gas leaf blowers and the detriment to our health and environment. They not only destroy habitats of essential insects, they break down essential top soil. We know they are obnoxiously loud and cause hearing loss, but they are also harmful to our respiratory health. As leaf blowers propel the air, potentially hazardous substances such as mold, pesticides, pollen and animal feces are propelled which have serious respiratory health effects.

Most gas leaf blowers do not have emission control technologies so consequently emit hydrocarbons, nitrous oxide, carbon monoxide and particulate matter in their exhaust, all of which harm people's health. Nitrous oxide is an extraordinarily potent heat trapping gas and as such contributes to climate change. According to the California Air Resource Board, one hour of leaf blowing is the equivalent of driving 1,100 mile in a car.

Alternatives:

- The best choice is to let your leaves be and compost naturally to promote healthy soil and ecosystems.
- Rake leaves into piles for compost. Consider not bagging them for a landfill.
- Use an electric or battery powered blower.

DONATE SOCKS TO THE HOMELESS AT THE ODD SOCK

Donate clean socks with no holes (new or used, paired or un-paired) to the organization The Odd Sock. Collection box under the greeting table by the front door before the end of August. Socks will be sized, paired, and delivered to homeless shelters or other non-profit organizations. More info at www.theoddssock.org or contact John W (info in directory).

HOSTS NEEDED FOR FALL AND WINTER WELCOME DINNERS

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 each other in a smaller, less congested setting. If you would like to host a welcome dinner, please contact Jim Tolmach at jimtolmach@icloud.com or 404-294-5194.

SHARE YOUR LAST WISHES WITH CARE AND COUNSEL

Care and Counsel Committee keeps the Last Wishes of members and attenders on file as a starting place when planning memorials. The fillable form is available for downloading and printing on the AFM website (Members and Attenders page, under Care and Counsel at <http://atlantaquakers.org/members.htm>.) Paper copies to be filled out can be found on the greeting table near the front door of the meetinghouse. The completed form can be delivered via email attachment to afm.care.counsel@gmail.com, or delivered to the AFM office in person or by mail. If you need assistance using the form, please contact the Office Coordinator at 404-377-2474 or email atlantaquakers@gmail.com.

WAYS TO SIGN UP TO HELP ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

As more and more people return to the meetinghouse and as new people join us, we need additional help on Sunday. We especially need additional help in the Nursery and First Day School, as many of our newcomers have children. We have returned to using ceramic mugs rather than paper mugs, so we also need to fill both slots for both coffee set up and coffee clean up.

<https://tinyurl.com/volunteerguide2023> has information about these positions, all of which are also excellent opportunities to get to know other Friends, including our youngest Friends.

- You can sign up online at <http://tinyurl.com/afmvolunteers>
- You can sign up at the meetinghouse. Look for the sign in sheet on the greeting table by the front door or sign up as the volunteer sign up sheet is passed during announcements after meeting for worship.
- You can call or email the Office Coordinator at atlantaquakers@gmail.com or 404-377-2474.
- You can sign up to greet or help in First Day School (etc!) on the same Sunday each month. Just let the Office Coordinator know.
- The Office Coordinator is compiling a list of people she can contact if there's an unfilled spot or if someone has to cancel at the last minute. Please contact the Office Coordinator at 404-4377-2474 or atlantaquakers@gmail.com if you're interested in this.

LOST SPORTS COATS

There are two sports coats in the coat closet next to the kitchen, one gold/tan and one black checked. Are either of these yours?

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS AND ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL – Sundays

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. Folami Prescott Adams will share her story on August 6. Folami told the story of creating L4J as a keynote speaker at the National Afterschool Association Conference at the beginning of April, which you can view at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AlcivJSRull&t=537s>, starting at 8:57. (To listen to Kathy Johnson's Spiritual Journey, shared July 9, visit <https://tinyurl.com/3dp4xsfm>. 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. You can also learn more about these stories at <https://www.friendsjournal.org/telling-stories-spiritual-journey/> (see pages 1 and 2 above) and <https://www.friendsjournal.org/what-we-can-say-now/>.

On second, third, and fourth Sundays in August, 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.

SYSTEMIC VIOLENCE & RETROSPECTIVE JUSTICE FROM THE BLACK QUAKER PROJECT

In a recent email (read online at <https://mailchi.mp/98c4b95f7f87/happy-nelson-mandela-day>), the Black Quaker Project quotes British Peace Studies founder, Friend Adam Curle, who defines structural violence as “the political and economic inequalities which are built into the social structure.” The email lists seven forms of structural violence: **economic, political, cultural, religious, environmental, health and educational**. For additional details and for information about retrospective justice work in South Africa and what Quakers can do, visit the link above.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE TRAINING AUGUST & SEPTEMBER – first registration deadline July 29

Restorative Justice Advocates of Georgia (rjag.org) invite you to join us for one or more Saturdays of training in August and September with training provided by Janice Jerome of The Restorative Justice Institute of Atlanta. The training is designed for people in all disciplines who are interested in enhancing their knowledge of restorative principles and practices. (A brief description from the rjag.org website: “Restorative Justice is an approach for responding to harm and conflict in a community that works to heal what is broken, respect the value and experiences of all involved, recognize the importance of relationships, and bring about accountability.”) Training includes information from the book *Simple Circles* (one free copy for each participant). Saturdays August 5, 19, 26, September 9 and 25 at the meetinghouse, 9 to 4 pm with lunch included. First two sessions required for later sessions. To register, go to <https://justicemovingtoday.com/contact>, by July 29 if possible, though registrations will be accepted for a few additional days. Questions about the training? Contact Janice.jerome2014@gmail.com. Questions about scholarships? Contact Bert Skellie at bertskellie@gmail.com or 404-680-4799.

FORUM: HOW DO QUAKERS CELEBRATE HOLIDAYS -- Sunday, July 30

Have you wondered if and how Quakers celebrate holidays? You're not alone! Please join Ministry & Worship for a forum on Quaker views of holiday celebrations following rise of meeting on July 30. We will learn together about historic Quaker views and engage in worship sharing around our own leadings. The forum will be hybrid with both in-person and zoom options (using the Zoom coordinates for meeting for worship). We look forward to exploring with you! Please direct questions to Sara Patenaude, sdpatenaude@gmail.com or 859-640-7826.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89686276751?pwd=M29EYlIFWEhSQUtZRVVPaIFFYmVDQT09>

Meeting ID: 896 8627 6751

Passcode: 789456

PLANNING SURVEY FOR AFM RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CIRCLE TRAINING -- fill out by August 1

The Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting (CURAFM) needs your input for planning dates and times for the anti-racism / restorative justice circle training for Atlanta Friends Meeting with Restore More. The training is for **all** AFM members and attenders in order to better prepare us for addressing interpersonal racist incidents that may occur within our Meeting. The training is free for members and attenders, and tailored to AFM needs. It consists of two 60-minute virtual training sessions. CURAFM representatives will have a planning meeting with Restore More trainers on Aug. 4, 2023.

Please respond to the 2-minute survey below to help us choose the best times for maximum participation in the next few months. AFM Anti-Racism/ Restorative Justice Circle Training (Respond **by August 1, 2023**) <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P99PWLC>.

For questions / comments about the training or any problems with the survey link, email Susan Firestone at susanfires@gmail.com. For conversations about the training, you can talk with Susan Firestone, Karen Morris or Lissa Place.

BOOKS BY AND ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR -- Thursday, August 3

The book group reading works by and about people of color meets at 1:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month. On August 3, the group will be meeting in person in combination with Zoom and will be discussing *Master Slave Husband Wife* by Ilyon Woo. On September 7, the group will be reading and discussing poetry selected by individuals in the group, and on October 5, *Afterlives* by Abdulrazak Gurnah. For questions or the Zoom link, contact Susan Cole (cole2544@bellsouth.net).

POTLUCK -- Sunday, August 6

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.

VIRTUAL DOCUMENTARY NIGHTS: -- Sundays, August 6 and August 20

Watch each documentary online for free, then RSVP for a Zoom discussion of each.

On Sunday, August 6, from 7 to 9 pm, discussion of *Three Identical Strangers*: Identical triplets become separated at birth and adopted by three different families. Years later, their amazing reunion becomes a global sensation, but it also unearths an unimaginable secret that has radical repercussions.

On Sunday, August 20, from 7 to 9 pm, discussion of *It's Criminal*, in honor of Back To School Month: Two worlds collide when Dartmouth College students meet with incarcerated women in this documentary about privilege, poverty, and injustice. Signe Taylor, Pati Hernández, and Malika Mitchell will be joining us for a special guest Q&A.

For links to watch the films and to RSVP for the discussions, see the announcement sheet at http://atlantaquakers.org/_announcements/Announcement_Sheet.pdf or visit

<https://documentarynight.wordpress.com/> . You can also contact attender Adam Hicks at CommunityDocumentaryNight@gmail.com or 404-414-8917, if you have questions.

SEWING CIRCLE -- Thursday, August 17th

Join us for a Sewing Circle, meeting in the library, on August 17 at 7pm. All art/craft mediums (that are easily cleanable!) welcome as we create deeper community around shared interests. For more information, see Lisa Magee, Lisammagee@gmail.com and RSVP here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sewing-circle-tickets-676282267467>

WELCOME DINNER -- Friday, August 18

Are you new / newish to our Meeting? New to Quakers? Please join us at an in-home Newcomers Dinner (our first after a long break because of COVID)!

When: Friday, August 18, 2023

Time: 6:00 pm with supper at 6:30 pm

Location: Near the Brookhaven-Oglethorpe MARTA Station (contact host for details)

Format: Informal supper provided (not a potluck for newcomers); conversational; opportunity to meet other folks.

Contact: Betsy Eggers at BetsyEggers@gmail.com or 404-831-8856.

Co-hosts: Jack Honderd, Eric Glenn, and Steve Collins

Unable to attend August 18 but want to? No worries . . . there'll be monthly dinners on the 18th of each month, whenever hosts are available.

MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS -- Sunday, August 20

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 (see above). The minutes for last month's meeting are below.

MINUTES FOR SEVENTH MONTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS

July 16, 2023, held in person and via Zoom in a blended meeting

Minutes Recorded Pending Approval

Attendance: Steve Collins, Julie Foster, Mary Ann Downey, Julia Ewen, Richard Allen, Susan Firestone, Clive Gordon, Bill Holland, Bill Hooson, Teri Key-Hooson, Judy Lumb, Sue May, Kevin Moran, Jamie Lockard, Karen terHorst Morris, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Sally Ferguson, Jim Tolmach, Myrna Trapp, Brent Wolff, Kathy Johnson, Austin Wattles, Jeremiah Gold-Hopton, Eric Glenn, Becky Lough, Paul Mangelsdorf, Terri O'Neil, Charlotte Flores, Jennifer Dickie (Clerk), Rebecca Cole Sullivan (Acting Recording Clerk)

Business Meeting started near the appointed hour with a moment of worship.

Query for Seventh Month: In what ways do we respond, as individuals and as a community, to prejudice and injustice? Source: Atlanta Friends Meeting Ministry and Worship Committee

Discernment:

Ministry and Worship: Ministry and Worship brings three separate discernment items with a number of minutes associated with them.

Atlanta Friends Meeting received a letter from Julie Hliboki thanking us for the care AFM has offered in holding her ministry in chaplaincy since 2014. In this letter, she asks us to transfer her membership to Santa Fe (NM) Monthly Meeting of Intermountain Yearly Meeting and lay down the care of her ministry at Atlanta Friends Meeting.

MINUTE 07-16-2023-01: On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship Atlanta Friends Meeting lays down the recognized ministry of Julie Hliboki under the care of Atlanta Meeting with thanks for her faithfulness.

MINUTE 07-16-2023-02: On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship Atlanta Friends Meeting lays down the anchoring committee supporting Julie Hliboki's ministry. We thank Mary Ann Downey, Ron Nuse, Caroline Morris and Bill Holland for their faithfulness and release their service.

MINUTE 07-16-2023-03: On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship Atlanta Friends Meeting releases the membership of Julie Hliboki to Santa Fe Monthly Meeting. We ask Santa Fe Monthly Meeting (Intermountain Yearly Meeting) to accept care of Julie's membership.

Atlanta Friends Meeting received a certificate of transfer for James and Mary Ann Lockard.

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSFER: June 16, 2023 To the Clerk of Atlanta Monthly Meeting, 701 West Howard Avenue, Decatur, Georgia 30030 Dear Friends: This CERTIFICATE OF TRANSFER has been requested by members of this monthly meeting who now reside in your area. We have given consideration to this request, and, no obstruction appearing, we recommend James and MaryAnn Lockard to your Christian care and remain with love your friends. Removal minutes recorded on June 4, 2023 by the Radnor Monthly Meeting, 610 Conestoga Rd., Villanova PA 19085. Sincerely, David Castro, Clerk Radnor Monthly Meeting

MINUTE 07-16-2023-04: On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship committee Atlanta Friends Meeting approves James Lockard and Mary Ann Lockard's request for membership in Atlanta Friends Meeting.

Ministry and Worship has received a request for membership from Greg Johnson.

MINUTE 07-16-2023-05: On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship Atlanta Friends Meeting approves of Greg Johnson's request for membership in Atlanta Friends Meeting.

Friends approved all of the minutes from the Ministry and Worship Committee with gratitude and joy.

Nominating Committee: Jim Tolmach reported on behalf of the Nominating Committee.

Nominating is bringing back for approval updates to the Landscape Committee. Since last month's reading, they would like to make one additional change. In the first duty, they will change the word "oversees" to "supervises". This change is one way Atlanta Friends Meeting is living into our commitment to become an anti-racist faith community because the word "oversee" is a derivative of "overseer", a part of slavery and plantation-related language. We are attempting to remove such language from our work to help reframe our thinking.

MINUTE 07-16-2023-05: On the recommendation of the Nominating committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the revised Landscape Committee handbook description.

MINUTE 07-16-2023-06: On the recommendation of the Nominating committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Lissa Place for SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee as one of our representatives.

Reports:

Finance Committee: Paul Mangelsdorf reported on behalf of the Finance Committee.

[Editor's Note: Financial Reports can be found online at <https://tinyurl.com/njpxhije>]

As of June 2023 (the first two quarters), the Meeting is running a \$22,996 deficit year to date. A deficit through this part of the year is usual, as contribution income is largely received in the 4th Quarter. The deficit this year is also driven by a change in timing for the recognition of Gifts & Affiliations. Prior year's Gifts and Affiliations payments were spread out across the year and costs were recognized quarterly. For ease of bookkeeping, we recognized the total yearly expense in the second quarter and paid all organizations except for the SAYMA assessment which we continue to pay quarterly. This change will have no impact on full year financials but increased the YTD deficit by \$12,975.

The deficit is \$7,988 more than the \$15,007 deficit that was budgeted through June. Absent the change in bookkeeping the deficit would have been \$10,021 or \$4,987 favorable to budget. Revenue YTD is \$3,077 higher than budget and reported expenses are \$11,067 higher than budget but would be \$1,908 less than budget without the change in bookkeeping.

Income YTD is \$20,459 worse than the same period in the prior year driven by the change in bookkeeping, higher employee expense and the unbudgeted \$2,500 training expense offset by significantly higher donations (\$4,250 more than 2022) and higher rental income (\$7,501 higher this year).

Expenses are running \$31,910 more than the prior year driven by the change in timing of Gift and Affiliations, higher Employee expense (we had two open positions last year), the previously mentioned unbudgeted training expense and higher Young Friends support. Although Employee expense is higher than last year it is below budget. One area where we are running favorable to budget and the prior year is Social Concerns which is purely a timing issue.

Compared to year-end, our balance sheet is \$30,627 smaller. This is the result of the YTD deficit of \$22,296 (offset by \$7,375 increase in the Gifts & affiliations fund as part of the bookkeeping adjustment), \$11,915 in expenditures from the Permanent Improvement fund and by minor changes in the balances of the other funds. On the asset side of the balance sheet Receivables (Undeposited funds and Due from Pay Pal) decreased by \$38,524 which resulted in higher Bank account balances. We have transferred some funds to the Savings Account with the intent of maintaining lower checking balances as that account is not interest bearing.

Ministry and Worship: Bill Hooson reported on the following items for the Ministry and Worship Committee.

1. Sara Patenaude and Stacey Sharer Marriage. Mary Ann reported that our recommendation to take the marriage under the care of the meeting was approved at 6th Month Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. The Marriage Committee was also approved. The Marriage Committee will hold its first meeting on July 29. All is in good order.
2. Forum on Quakers and Holiday Celebrations. Sara reported that a forum is scheduled for July 30 at the rise of meeting. The format will include a short presentation on the reasoning for past Quaker resistance to Holiday celebrations. There will be a period of worship sharing around queries and the opportunity to share.
3. Forum with Emily Flitter, October 29. Herb reported that the forum with Emily Flitter author of *The White Wall: How Big Finance Bankrupts Black America* has been confirmed for 5th Sunday in October. This will be a hybrid format with her giving a presentation during the forum time after meeting. She will sign books after her presentation. She has not asked for an honorarium, and we may purchase a collection of her books for the event.
[Info at <https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-White-Wall/Emily-Flitter/9781982183240>]
4. A care group continues to meet weekly with Georgia Lord to meet challenges for Lynn's care now that he is home.

Committee on Undoing Racism AFM: Susan Firestone reported on behalf of the committee.

The committee has continued to work on getting Atlanta Friends Meeting antiracism and restorative justice circle training. Atlanta Friends Meeting approved an increase in CURAFM's budget line for this activity in minute **5-21-23:01**. They are excited to announce that they have contracted and paid Restore More to do the training. Restore More trainers will be meeting with the committee members on August 4, 2023 to plan for dates of and logistics for the anti-racism and restorative justice circle practices training for Atlanta Friends Meeting. The committee is encouraging members and attenders to participate in the training and let them know of your general availability so that they can plan dates when the most people can attend the virtual trainings. A short survey will be sent out electronically soon for people to share their availability.

Key points about the training:

- Tailored to AFM needs
- **Free for AFM members and attenders** because the Meeting is investing in this training
- **Virtual** – access the training from anywhere
- No extra cost for more people to do the training – can have as many people as we want
- **Composed of two 60 minute sessions + supporting material + follow up**
 - **Session 1- Focus on Unpacking Biases to Promote Restorative Justice Practice:** importance of own mindset in the process, includes activities and circle prompts, identity/ self- work linked with being anti-racist.

- **Session 2 – Restorative Practice Circles:** Group members will be introduced to restorative practice circles, participate in them, discuss how restorative justice circles can be used to address racist incidents and repair racial harm within their congregation.
- **The training is for all of the following:**
 - AFM participants who are interested in being nominated and serving on the Standing Response Group to help resolve racist incidents within AFM
 - AFM participants who would be willing to help with a particular racist incident if needed
 - AFM participants who want to learn more restorative practices as part of a supportive AFM community

Administration Committee: Steve Collins reported on behalf of the committee.

Anton Flores, Friend-in-Residence (FiR) for AFM since July 27, 2019, has agreed at the request of the committee to serve another year. This will be brought back to next month's Meeting for Business for approval. As prescribed in the Meeting's Handbook, the Resident's term is for a "two-year minimum, with an option to extend the term for up to two extra years with approval of the Meeting for Business."

Four calendar years have passed since Anton's service began. However, the Administration Committee feels that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Meeting during much of 2020 and 2021 and the inability of the Friend in Residence to fully perform the role for which he was hired warrants an extension of his term through July 2024.

The Administration committee is also considering a proposed modification to the FiR job description that would give the committee the option to further extend the term of the FiR. Once this modification is approved by the committee, we will share it with the Nominating committee.

Web Manager Report: Aaron Ruscetta reported on the website update progress.

Progress on the WordPress site has been slower than expected but the working committee does expect progress to accelerate in July and August. The domain transfer of our existing site is nearly complete. Aaron has set a target of September 24, 2023 to retire our existing web site and take our new CMS website live under the AtlantaQuakers.org domain name. Progress can be reviewed on the google document attached [here \[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ej50wtAJ9r-dyQDV4XzAXVfDOnWwUISD9CnHJ-yullQ/edit\]](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ej50wtAJ9r-dyQDV4XzAXVfDOnWwUISD9CnHJ-yullQ/edit).

Aaron also announced that he will not be available as the Web Manager from October to December so AFM will start seeking a temporary (or permanent) replacement for the Web Wizard role as soon as possible. Nominating committee or Aaron are open and willing to talk to friends interested in the temporary or permanent replacement of the Web Manager role.

Clerk's Items

Beth Ruddiman is laying down her role as the contact person for the Decatur Cooperative Ministry (DCM) and Decatur Emergency Assistance Ministry (DEAM).

MINUTE 07-16-2023-07: After 8 years, Beth Ruddiman is laying down her service as the AFM contact person to the Decatur Cooperative Ministry and Decatur Emergency Assistance Ministry. The Atlanta Friends Meeting thanks Beth for holding our relationships with these organizations in her care.

Currently Office Coordinator Nina Gooch is posting information from both organizations in the announcement sheet and is taking any collected food donations to DEAM food pantry as needed.

The position of contact person is not a nominated position and can be held by a member or attender of AFM. The meeting is looking for someone to do these two roles. They do not need to be the same person. Please see the clerk if you are interested. (See full descriptions in the handbook.)

The Decatur Emergency Assistance Ministry (DEAM) provides emergency food, help with utility and transportation costs, and other kinds of assistance for Decatur- area residents and families who find themselves at risk of homelessness or without means of support.

The Decatur Cooperative Ministry (DCM) partners with schools, government agencies, civic groups, and local businesses throughout Decatur and DeKalb County to serve those in need, especially the homeless. It is supported by over 35 congregations representing 12 different denominations.

The responsibility of the contact person is:

- **To share information with the Meeting** regarding opportunities to provide service and assistance to the community.
- **Coordinate** AFM members and attenders to provide service at least once a year to each organization
- **Encourage a spirit of cooperation**, especially in areas where action of a larger body is more significant.
- **Interpret** to non-Friends our religious principles and beliefs.

Announcements

- The Last Wishes form is now available on the AFM website. This is a way for you to tell the meeting your wishes in terms of a memorial meeting. It can be found under Members & Attenders and then the Care and Counsel section.
- Forum July 30: Quakers and Holiday Celebrations. The format will include a short presentation on the reasoning for past Quaker resistance to Holiday celebrations. There will be a period of worship sharing around queries and the opportunity to share.
- Forum October 29, 2024: Emily Flitter author of *The White Wall: How Big Finance Bankrupts Black America* will give a hybrid presentation during the forum time after meeting. She will sign books after her presentation.

Approval of Minutes from 6th month 2023

http://atlantaquakers.org/_afm_newsletters/AFM_Newsletter_2023-07.pdf

- Correction: Welcome Dinners Announcement, replace "They are expecting to start on the 18th of July, **which is the date we used to have these dinners.**" with "They are expecting to start on the 18th of July; **the 18th of each month being the date we used to have these dinners.**"
- Check Stacey Sharer's name spelling. *It was checked and it is spelled correctly.*

MINUTE 07-16-2023-07: The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the 6th month 2023 minutes with the above corrections.

Events in the life of the meeting

- Martha McGill and Leland McPhail and Felix welcomed new baby Hugo Ma McPhail born June 16, 2023.

Closing Worship: Friends closed with a moment of worship.

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

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

Office Hours: Monday thru Thursday, 10 am to 1 pm and Friday, by appointment

web and email: atlantaquakers.org, atlantaquakers@gmail.com

voicemail/phone: 404-377-2474

Clerk: Jennifer Dickie, afmclerk1@gmail.com

Treasurer: Lynn Leuszler, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com

Ways to communicate and receive information:

- 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.)
- 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.
- You may receive notification that the newsletter is online. This is the newsletter email list.
- 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.

To join any of these email lists above, please email the office at atlantaquakers@gmail.com.

To join the meeting's Facebook group, search for Atlanta Friends Meeting & click the + **Join Group** button.

Do you need a directory, printed or electronic?

Email atlantaquakers@gmail.com or call 404-377-2474

Do we have your (correct) contact information so we can reach you?

Please send your name and (updated) 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, 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 atlantaquakers.org/contact.htm with a credit card or paypal. Sign up to volunteer on Sunday morning, at <http://tinyurl.com/afmvolunteers>. Contact the Nominating Committee to serve on a committee. *Thanks!*

Want to submit an announcement, letter, article, etc to the newsletter? Email atquakerltr@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.*