

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 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 NOVEMBER

How can we increase our awareness of the local history of colonization and reconciliation efforts in our faith community?

Source: Canadian Friends Service Committee, Queries for Canadian Friends on Reconciliation
<https://quakerservice.ca/news/quaker-queries-to-boost-your-insight-and-clarity-about-reconciliation/>
link has additional queries

FROM THE ARCHIVES: GLEANINGS FROM THE [1993] FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE READINGS ON MEETING FOR WORSHIP

by Courtney Siceloff, originally published in the August 1993 AFM newsletter

Twenty of us from Atlanta were among the 1300 attendants at the Friends General Conference Gathering in Stillwater, Oklahoma the week of July 3-10 [1993]. I would like to share from my workshop on "Listening Spirituality," facilitated by Patricia Loring. We were given readings to prepare for each morning session. Several of the readings which related to Meeting for Worship seemed particularly appropriate.

"There is what might be called the etiquette of the meeting for worship. One should come neither prepared to speak or to remain silent, but open to the possibilities and obedient to the leadings that come . . . I have been a public speaker most of my life and am not afflicted with stage fright, but there are times that I felt my heart pounding and blood rushing to my face . . . If I speak without that inner trembling, I often regret it. But when it comes, I know I am called to speak . . . Silence should frame each message, giving it time to be assimilated, before the next message comes. Friends need to speak clearly; not everyone is blessed with good hearing. This may mean standing up. False humility makes some talk softly. If a message is truly from God, it must be heard . . ."

– Elizabeth Watson

"It is no light matter to break the living silence. This should be done only with a sense of humility. Spoken words should not come as an interruption of the silence but rather as a component part of it . . . There is no sure, no single, test of guidance. The sensitive person learns to recognize the call as clearly as he/[she/they] recognizes the voice of a friend . . . Though a message may seem intellectually fitting, it should not be given unless it glows with life. To use a figure of Jeremiah, our religion should arise from a spring, not be drawn out of a reservoir . . ." – Howard Brinton

"It has to be said . . . that there are meetings in which there is little sense of divine leading in the spoken ministry, but a lot of reliance on what Friends used to call 'the creature'. These flights of imaginative fancy, intellectual preoccupation, and emotional difficulties provide much information about the ministers but not a great deal about God . . . " -- *John Punshon*

In the workshop, there was a suggestion that where there is some doubt about the appropriateness of a message during a Meeting for Worship, the message might be given at the conclusion of the meeting, during the time of holding others in the light. Always the pioneers, Atlanta Friends decided to try this plan several years ago. Perhaps it is time to be reminded.

Editor's note [from 1993]: Atlanta Friends were well-represented at the 1993 FGC Gathering. For more first-hand reports, talk to: Mary Ann Doe [now Downing]; Julia and Priscilla Ewen; Tom, Suzan and Lauren Kenworthy; Free and Justin Polazzo; Jay Roache; Courtney and Elizabeth Sicheloff; Elizabeth Stanwyck; Dave Thurman; Perry Treadwell; David Tsao; or Steve, Emily, and Sarah Woodall!

Editor's note from 2023: *Patricia Loring's books* *Listening Spirituality - Volume 1: Personal Spiritual Practices Among Friends* and *Listening Spirituality - Volume 2: Corporate Spiritual Practices Among Friends* can be found online, including at <https://quakerbooks.org/search?q=patricia+loring>. Copies are also in the AFM library.

(HANDWRITTEN) LETTER FROM QUAKER VOLUNTARY SERVICE postmarked August 28, 2023

Dear Friends at Atlanta Friends Meeting,

Thank you from the bottom of my heart, for your ongoing support of Quaker Voluntary Service. As a community, you have helped to QVS what we are today! We've learned immensely through partnering with you over the years.

As you likely know, we've put the Twin Cities program on pause for this upcoming year. The staff and board are doing a "deep dive" into analyzing our program offerings, and we'll discern this upcoming fall about if there are changes we'd make. We know that our mission is at that exciting place where spirituality, justice, and community come together, and we'll be considering if there are more of different ways of inviting young adults to join us for a part of their journeys.

Please be in touch if you want to connect! You can reach out to me, Hilary, at hilary@quakervoluntaryservice.org.

With love, Hilary [Burgin, Executive Director]

FREE POLAZZO'S DEATH

AFM member Free Polazzo died Wednesday, October 11, 2023 in the early afternoon with people who loved him nearby. Free served the Meeting as Treasurer and SAYMA Representative and worked for many years on SAYMA's [Faith and Practice](#), which can be found at [\[https://www.sayma.org/online_documents/faith_and_practice/F&P2021final.pdf\]](https://www.sayma.org/online_documents/faith_and_practice/F&P2021final.pdf) Condolences can be sent to Janet Minshall at 1781 McLendon Avenue NE, Atlanta 30307 and to Chad & Lori Polazzo at 990 Carmel Avenue NE, Atlanta 30307. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Free's passion project, Uplifting People (<https://upliftingpeople.org/>). A memorial service was held at the meetinghouse on October 21 at 2 pm.



Birmingham Friends Meeting

Dear Atlanta Friends Meeting,
We are thinking of you, and holding
all of you in the light!
Lovingly,
Birmingham Friends

(with love from virtual attendees)

Nancy Day Emily Jane W.
Tina Jane W. Kayla Trevor
Cole Casey Colin *Colin full*

DEAR-ALTA MIA
STAY IN TOUCH
WITH THE
LIGHT ~~THE~~
FROM EMMYLOU.

I LOVE
JESUS



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.

There are also morning and evening worship opportunities each Wednesday, both zoom and in person. See announcement sheet for details (link above.)

PLEASE HOLD IN THE LIGHT:

Julia Ewen

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: 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.

RESOURCES & VIDEO FROM QRE 8/27 FORUM ON RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ADVOCACY PROGRAMS IN ATLANTA on August 27

Quakers for Racial Equality thank Bert Skellie and Erin Donohue-Koehler for their presentations on “Restorative Justice Advocacy and Programs in Metro Atlanta” at the August QRE meeting.

Video of the presentation and Q&A:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WiSsAhQxSpm4cR2ZNnZYhSFct1Y5GEXb/view?usp=sharing>

Summary of Bert Skellie’s presentation about Restorative Justice programs in Atlanta:

Restorative Justice Advocates of Georgia (RJAG) <https://rjag.org/> often has speakers on Restorative Justice in educational, criminal legal, and community settings.

Restorative Conferencing Atlanta <https://www.restorativeconferencing.org/> is a program under the umbrella of Atlanta Victim Assistance., whose work supports AVA’s mission to advocate for the fundamental rights of victims of crime

Georgia Conflict Center program in Athens with conferencing & restorative practice

<https://www.gaconflict.org/>

Other programs:

City of Decatur Restorative practices in Decatur schools (Dr. Mari Ann Banks)

Gwinnett Schools (has had push back)

DeKalb has some restorative practices in schools & in juvenile court

Ways this progress can lessen racial bias in these institutions?

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/reforming-school-discipline-what-works-to-reduce-racial-inequalities/>

Erin Donahue-Koehler’s slides (pdf) on Restorative Justice Georgia, a program of the Georgia Justice Project

<https://drive.google.com/file>

[/d/1_zXfJwQyu9nVVa-JdlxBdsSPsRd1YwYc/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_zXfJwQyu9nVVa-JdlxBdsSPsRd1YwYc/view?usp=sharing)

LINK TO LIST OF LOCAL BUSINESSES OWNED BY BLACK ENTREPRENEURS

In the belief that gathering knowledge is not enough to undo centuries of systemic racism and that anti-racist work must include actions to address material inequalities resulting from systemic and institutional racism, an ad hoc group of members of Quakers for Racial Equality committee, with input from Friends of Color, has updated Meeting’s [list of local businesses owned by Black entrepreneurs](https://tinyurl.com/yc6fpbrd) (<https://tinyurl.com/yc6fpbrd>). We encourage members of meeting to support these businesses as well as efforts to provide reparations to all those harmed by the egregious injustices of slavery and its aftermath. If you have additional suggestions for this list, please contact Cathy Amanti (cbamanti@gmail.com).

ISRAEL/GAZA ACTION ALERT FROM FCNL

From Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), our Quaker lobby on Capitol Hill: As new tragedy unfolds daily in Israel and Gaza, it is urgent that members of Congress call for an immediate cease-fire, de-escalation, and restraint to prevent more harm to the people of this region. Please go to <http://fcnl.org/deescalate> to send an email to your members of Congress. Personalize the sample letter to express how you feel, enter your address and FCNL will forward your email to your Congressperson and both Georgia Senators. For more information: Sue May, 404-775-5958. susanmay1@icloud.com.

ONE QUESTION SURVEY -- SAYMA SESSIONS & RETREAT LENGTH

The SAYMA (Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association) Yearly Meeting Planning Committee is happy to announce that we will once again be at the beautiful Berea College campus in Berea, KY in June for SAYMA Sessions & Retreat in 2024. The Yearly Meeting Planning Committee is considering 2 options for hosting the sessions and retreat this year:

- 5-day event (as in 2023) starting Wednesday, June 19, 1:00pm through -Sunday, June 23, 1:00pm
- 4-day event (as in prior years) starting Thursday, June 20, 1:00pm through Sunday, June 23, 1:00pm

Please take a moment to share your preference in this one question survey at <https://forms.gle/cH8Dmf7xfV4UWExf8>.

HELP PROVIDE BAGGED MEALS FOR THE UNHOUSED IN DEKALB

Susan Firestone shared this request from A Home for Everyone in Dekalb (AHFEID).

“As we head into the colder months, we are contacting you to ask for your help . . . Unfortunately, we will not be able to host a cold weather shelter this winter as we have in the past, however, we have been meeting with county and City of Decatur officials as well as other organizations in order to expand and improve cold weather services to our unhoused neighbors.

“One of the things AHFEID will be doing is providing meals to people who gather at the Decatur Rec Center in order to go to Frontline's shelter or one of the county's warming centers. At this time, Frontline and the warming centers do not have the capacity to offer meals, so AHFEID will provide bagged meals and, as we are able, soup.

“Here are some details:

- We anticipate needing a total of 40 bagged meals to be delivered to the Decatur Rec Center between 6:30-7pm on nights when the temperature triggers the opening of shelters and warming centers. (An alternative drop off time can be arranged.)
- About 48 hours before we need the meals, a Sign Up Genius will be sent to volunteers with two slots for volunteers to make 20 meals each.
- Meals could include a sandwich, crackers, fruit, and a protein bar...enough for a satisfying dinner and light breakfast. More details to come.

“Would you be willing to make 20 meals from time to time (or, a little down the road, some soup)? If so, please email ahomeforeveryoneindekalb@gmail.com we can put you on our list to receive the Sign Up Genius.”

QUAKER QUOTE

"There's an understanding that we do have the opportunity to create something that resembles the Kingdom of Heaven here on Earth and striving to create that by acting as true disciples of Christ, which is acting not out of greed but out of solidarity with every other human based on an understanding of the inherent sanctity of every human life."

Olivia Chalkey, former Atlanta QVS Fellow, on the inspiration she draws from liberation theology, a Christian tradition started by radical Catholics in Latin America that directly addresses political oppression and economic inequality.

From a 2020 QuakerSpeak found at <https://quakerspeak.com/video/liberation-theology/>

NEW BENCH FOR THE MEDITATION GARDEN IN THE RAVINE

The landscape committee would like to thank Bob Lough for making this beautiful bench, now in the meditation garden in the ravine. To visit it there, go the right end of the patio and down the stairs, then take a sharp right at the end of the stairs.



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. On November 5, Jamie Lockard will offer his spiritual journey. (To hear Mary Place's Spiritual Journey, shared October 1, visit <https://tinyurl.com/3twkkkd4>. To listen to other past Spiritual Journeys, 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.

On second, third, and fourth Sundays in November, Adult First Day School will continue to study the Israel/Palestine situation using the books *The Shortest History of Israel and Palestine* by Michael Scott-Baumann and *Occupied with Nonviolence* by Jean Zaru. All are welcome whether you have read the books or not. (The recording of David Small's presentation on his recent trip to Israel and Palestine shared with Adult First Day on August 27 is at <https://tinyurl.com/2s3um93c>)

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. (Zoom details above.) For questions, please contact Elizabeth Lamb.

VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON DOCUMENTARY NIGHTS – November 5, 10, 19

For virtual documentary nights, participants watch the film online in advance, then meet online to discuss the film. For in-person documentary nights, participants watch the film together in person and then discuss it. Reservations are required for both. For reservations and links to watch the films for virtual documentary nights, check the announcement sheet or visit <https://documentarynight.wordpress.com/events/>. You can also contact attendee Adam Hicks with questions at CommunityDocumentaryNight@gmail.com or 404-414-8917.

Virtual: Sunday, November 5 from 7 to 9 pm. *The Warrior Tradition* tells the astonishing, heartbreaking, inspiring, and largely-untold story of Native Americans in the United States military.

In-Person: Friday, November 10 from 6:45 to 10:00 pm. *Period. End of Sentence.* Women in a rural village outside Delhi, India fight the stigma surrounding menstruation when they learn to manufacture sanitary pads.

Virtual: Sunday, November 19 from 7 to 9 pm. *Be Water* chronicles the life and complex journey of martial artist and actor Bruce Lee.

POTLUCK – Sunday, November 5

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.

Atlanta's FLGBTQC (Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender – and genderqueer, nonbinary and genderfluid – Concerns) will gather at potluck, and Green Friends will meet afterwards. See announcement sheet for details.

If you can, please bring not only enough food for your family, but also extra for newcomers and guests.

COMMITTEE ON UNDOING RACISM IN AFM – Tuesday, November 7

The Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting (CURAFM) will have their regular first Tuesday Zoom meeting on November 7 at 7:30 pm ET. Everyone is welcome! Agenda topics include follow up from debriefing “Anti-Bias/ Restorative Practice Circles” training sessions with AFM participants and with Restore More trainers, and possible next steps. For more info, please contact Lissa Place (lissaplace@yahoo.com or 678-793-9260) or Susan Firestone (susanfires@gmail.com or 404-268-6480). Recurring Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88572920986?pwd=Q0FHc0Jzb3Y0RmpTZk5FdnAxaCtHUT09>

Meeting ID: 885 7292 0986

Passcode: 238191

SEWING CIRCLE -- Thursday, November 9

Join us for a Sewing Circle, meeting in the library, on November 9 at 7 pm. All art / craft mediums (that are easily cleanable!) welcome as we create deeper community around shared interests. For more information, see announcement sheets or contact Lisa Magee, Lisamagee@gmail.com.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION VOLUNTEER MEETING AND TRAINING -- Sunday, November 12

Annual meeting and training at 11:45 pm for anyone currently volunteering or interested in volunteering with our First Day School classes. This includes doorkeepers and nursery volunteers. Annual updates and training for new and returning volunteers. If you've been considering volunteering with our younger Friends, this is the perfect opportunity to find out more. For more information, contact Amanda Gendreau, AmandaGendreau5@, 678-978-5212.

ATLANTA CHILDREN'S CHOIR CONCERT -- Friday, November 17

The Atlanta Children's Choir (which rehearses weekly at the meetinghouse) is excited to present a fall choral concert with the theme "Our Voices United in Song." The concert will be held on November 17th at 6pm. There is no charge for attending but donations are welcome.

WELCOME DINNER -- Saturday, November 18

Newcomers to Atlanta Friends Meeting are invited to dinner at the home of Bill and Teri Hooson on Saturday, November 18. You will have a chance to meet other new attenders as well as long-time Quakers in a casual setting. (If you are interested in hosting a later Welcome Dinner, held on the 18th of each month, please also contact Jim Tolmach at 404-294-5194 or jimtolmach@icloud.com.)

MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – Sunday, November 19

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.

SCHOOL OF THE SPIRIT YEARLONG SPIRITUAL DEEPENING PROGRAM – apply by Dec 1

How do we go deeper in our spiritual lives and serve more profoundly in a world that is daily moving towards violence, division, and the unraveling of the web of life?

The School of the Spirit's program Participating in God's Power welcomes Friends who seek to develop or deepen in spiritual practice, and to live that learning and growth out in every aspect of their lives. It is a year-long program consisting of five residencies, the first four on long holiday weekends. The residencies involve spiritual practice, experiential learning, teaching, and learning through two different small groups. All are welcome. For more information or to register, visit <https://www.schoolofthespirit.org/participating-in-gods-power/>. If you have questions or want info beyond what is on the website please email Christopher Sammond (sammondc@gmail.com).

APPLY FOR FCNL PROGRAM ASSISTANT FELLOWSHIP by January 2, 2024

Successful applicants to the Friends Committee on National Legislation's (FCNL's) [Program Assistant Fellowship](#) for 2024-2025 will work as paid full-time staff members for 11 months with an outreach or a policy team. Applications are due Jan. 2, 2024. As a young advocate working with FCNL, you will be given the training and tools to use your passion for the social change we all hope to see. Apply at <https://apply.workable.com/friendscommittee/j/D421C3F078/>.

Attendance: Richard Allen, Micheal Allison, Cathy Amanti, Guthrie Armstrong, Rebecca Cole Sullivan, Steve Collins, Jennifer Crumpley, Mary Ann Downey, Julia Ewen, Sally Ferguson, Eric Glenn, Clive Gordon, Bill Holland, Bill Hooson, Teri Key-Hooson, Elizabeth Lamb, Georgia Lord, Becky Lough, Judy Lumb, Paul Mangelsdorf, Alison Mawle, Sue May, Ellen McQueen, Ron Nuse, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, David Small, Jim Tolmach, Myrna Trapp, Ian "bigSofty" Wells, Jennifer Dickie (Clerk), Emma Bingham (Recording Clerk)

Worship

Query for 10th month: Do you find time for meditation, prayer, and worship?
Do you seek spiritual guidance in making decisions and in times of stress?

Source: Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association's Faith and Practice
https://www.sayma.org/online_documents/faith_and_practice/F&P2021final.pdf

Discernment:

Report on World Day Against the Death Penalty —

Bill Holland reported about the World Day Against the Death Penalty.

Tuesday, Oct. 10 was the World Day Against the Death Penalty, and an event was held at the State Capitol. Bill was invited to attend and share a statement as a Quaker, and he also brought back a request for Meeting for Business. David Small, Mary Ann Downey and Anton Flores-Maison (representing both AFM Friend in Residence and Atlanta Mennonite Church) also attended the event.

The local event was hosted by Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. They held an interfaith prayer service with 13 people presenting 4-5 minute statements from their faith traditions. The faiths represented included Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim and Hindu. Bill joked that the speakers were maybe rank ordered by size of their faith in the world... the Catholic bishop presented first and Bill presented last.

Bill was unable to find any past AFM statement about the death penalty, so he wrote one to represent the spiritual basis of Friends' opposition to the death penalty. This is the statement he shared:

"My Name is William Holland, I am a member and former clerk of the Atlanta Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, known as the Quakers.

The central message of Friends is that there is that of God in every person. Every life is sacred and valuable. Every person has the capacity to respond to God's light and love. We believe this capacity means no person is beyond redemption.

Our deep belief in the sacredness of each life has led us for over 400 years to reject the right to take another life for any reason, whether in war or as punishment. As we do not support violence against each other, we cannot support the violence of the death penalty by the state acting on our behalf.

- The death penalty denies the sacredness of each life.
- The death penalty denies the possibility of repentance, reformation, and transformation.

- The death penalty makes murderers of us all, increasing the violence in society rather than healing it.

As an alternative, we should emphasize methods that respect that of God in each person. We should work to prevent crime, support victims of crime and their families, and adopt methods of restitution that emphasize redemption and reconciliation. Let us make love the first motion in all our actions.”

At the end of the prayer service, an opportunity for further action was offered. Bill asked the meeting to authorize the clerk to support this action by signing a letter to the Georgia General Assembly. Here is some background for the action:

“Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.

One way to measure intellectual functioning is an IQ test. Generally, an IQ test score of around 70 or as high as 75 indicates a limitation in intellectual functioning.

In 2002, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Atkins v. Virginia* that the execution of individuals with intellectual disabilities was a violation of the Eighth Amendment’s protection against cruel and unusual punishment.

The *Atkins* decision left it up to individual states to decide on the standard of proof they would use to determine intellectual disability.

- Under the current process in Georgia, a defendant with an intellectual disability must persuade the jury of their innocence and their intellectual disability simultaneously beyond a reasonable doubt.
- Juries trying these cases have the option of returning a verdict of guilty, innocent, or guilty but with intellectual disability.
- Georgia is the only state that requires the jury to make an ID determination at the same time as they are deciding guilt.
- If found guilty but with an intellectual disability, the death penalty is automatically off the table.
- In Georgia post-*Atkins*, no defendant has been able to prove their intellectual disability “beyond a reasonable doubt.”
- Several bills have failed in an attempt to change this standard of proof from “beyond a reasonable doubt” to “preponderance of the evidence.”
- Through this change in the standard of proof, we can prevent the wrongful execution of a person with an intellectual disability from occurring.”

Bill then read the letter to the Georgia General Assembly that he was asking the meeting to approve the clerk signing. Below is the letter:

“We, as faith leaders from every corner of the state of Georgia, come together to bring to your attention an injustice occurring in our state and urge you to take action to stop it.

In 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that executing those with intellectual disabilities was a violation of the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendment’s protection against cruel and unusual punishment. The court left it up to individual states to develop standards for determining intellectual disability. Sadly, Georgia stands alone among all the states in requiring the highest standard of proof – beyond a reasonable doubt. As a result, individuals with intellectual disabilities have been executed, and are at risk of being executed again.

Although our sacred texts and traditions differ, all our faith traditions call us to protect the dignity of all people, especially the most vulnerable among us. We cannot stand by while our state laws, though designed to protect people with intellectual disabilities, ensure that they have no chance of proving their disability in a court of law. Therefore, we urge you to support legislation that would change this standard of proof from “beyond a reasonable doubt” to “preponderance of the evidence.” Only through this change in the standard of proof can we prevent the wrongful execution of a person with an intellectual disability from occurring.

This issue has come before our state legislature many times before. Let this be the year that we say no more to this injustice, and pass legislation that will protect the constitutional rights of people with intellectual disabilities.

Together, we represent millions of faithful Georgians, united in a common commitment to protecting human life and dignity. We ask you to respect the values of Georgia’s people of faith, as well as the supreme law of the land, and take action to prevent any more executions of our most vulnerable from occurring.”

Minute-10-15-23:01: Atlanta Friends Meeting supports the letter to the Georgia Legislature urging a change to Georgia laws to change the standard of proof to protect people with intellectual disabilities from wrongful execution and asks the Clerk to sign as a faith leader representing our meeting. We reaffirm our historic witness to end the death penalty.

Reports:

Administration Committee — Steve Collins reported for Administration Committee.

The ad hoc kitchen committee’s general recommendations (or wish list) of kitchen improvements were presented at a recent Meeting for Business. Administration discussed next steps at its most recent meeting in mid-September. Below is a summary of where the committee stands.

- They would consider hiring a kitchen design person/firm/project manager before beginning the project
- Gutting much of the space could leave the kitchen unusable for at least two weeks. (The clerk added that she thought this might be longer (3 months?) based on her experience in construction)
- They would ask for bids from contractors once they have Meeting approval to proceed. If anyone knows of contractors they like, let Steve know.
- Before the actual work begins, they’d like to have Meeting approval of the projected cost(s). The costs are expected to be substantial. They’ve not estimated prices yet

A Friend asked whether we would have gas in the kitchen. Steve said getting rid of the gas is a priority. However, this will require significant work because you can’t just turn off the gas, you have to cap it.

Another Friend mentioned that Green Friends recommended that the gas stove be replaced specifically with an induction stove, and there is \$10,000 from the Kenworthy bequest to do this. Also, they want to put a dishwasher, and there will be a separate oven as well since you need a separate oven if you have an induction stove. The \$10,000 will cover those appliances but not getting the old stuff out. The considerations around these things are ongoing.

A Friend acknowledged that he was thankful to see Steve in person again, as Steve had been in the hospital and attending virtually.

Landscape Committee — Myrna Trapp reported for the Landscape Committee.

A limb fell on a car in the meeting's parking lot. It brought to our attention that the top of a large oak tree was largely dead. The Landscape Committee contacted Appleseed Tree Service. The removal of such a large tree will require a crane and blocking traffic as several large dead limbs extend over the street. The arborist will contact the city of Decatur for a permit to remove such a large tree.

The permit will require the meeting to plant new trees, but not necessarily in the same spot. They're waiting to hear whether trees that have already been planted on the Meeting House grounds will count.

The cost estimate is \$5,000 for the tree removal.

Nominating Committee — Ellen McQueen reported for Nominating Committee.

Nominating committee would like to bring forward the name David Small for Clerk of Meeting for a two year term starting in 2024.

Nominating committee would like to bring forward the name Brent Wolf as Assistant Clerk of Meeting, also for a 2 year term.

If you don't know either of them, take some time to get to know them this month before their names are brought back in November for approval.

The clerk asked about the possibility of staggered terms for the clerk and assistant clerk. Ellen invited anyone with thoughts about terms to speak to the Nominating Committee directly. Ellen said Nominating is currently asking assistant clerks to consider stepping into the clerk position after their two-year term. However, this is not a requirement to serve as assistant clerk, and Nominating is asking assistant clerks to let them know after the first year if they are interested in the clerk position, and if not, Nominating will begin the search for a new clerk.

A Friend asked whether Nominating is currently looking for another treasurer, especially because it is a legal requirement for us to have a treasurer. Ellen said Nominating has some names they are actively considering, but this month they were waiting while holding Lynn Leuszler (who was the former treasurer and passed away recently).

Ministry and Worship — Bill Hooson reported for Ministry and Worship Committee.

Membership Forum, October 22

- Sally Ferguson, John Adams, and Asa Kramer-Dickie will talk about their membership journey. Asa will speak to growing up in the meeting but not yet applying for membership.

Reparations and Reconciliation Forum on October 29 with Emily Flitter, author of [The White Wall: How Big Finance Bankrupts Black America](#),

- Charis books will be handling the book sales.
- Waiting to hear back from WRFG for a potential interview.

Ministry and Worship will continue to discern the appropriate response to recommend a Minute regarding Georgia's "Open Carry" gun law as it could impact Atlanta Friends Meeting.

- Bill Hooson reported he had researched the Open Carry Law in Georgia, and it is his understanding that as written the law does not permit carrying weapons in a church building.
- He also understands that signage has no legal weight and law enforcement are not willing to enforce signage restrictions.

A Friend said he was concerned that a sign saying weapons weren't welcome didn't feel like enough to keep weapons out. He also asked if the meeting had considered whether law enforcement would be allowed to bring weapons into the building. He is concerned about this especially from his involvement with the Defend the Forest movement.

Another Friend expressed that she thought that guns provide only an illusion of control and safety. Police officers get extensive training on how to use guns and they still make mistakes and cause harm, but people who go out and buy a gun don't usually get any training, so they are even more likely to hurt someone rather than help keep people safe. Additionally, a sign does not necessarily prevent harm from guns. If the meeting were to put up a sign, she would prefer it to say something along the lines of, "Friend, we ask you to respect our beliefs." She reflected that neither guns nor a sign protect us from losing loved ones in other ways. She suggested that even if we put up a sign against guns, the meeting may need to accept that some things are beyond our control.

Another Friend said her understanding of the law is that it applies to carrying guns in public, but we are not a public place. If we ask people to leave if they have a gun, and they don't, they are then trespassing. We are within our rights to say and post not to bring guns into the meetinghouse, but we don't want a confrontation either.

The clerk reminded Friends that Ministry and Worship is holding this concern and that any other thoughts about this issue should be brought directly to M&W as they continue to discern the way forward.

Finance 3rd Quarter Report — Paul Manglesdorf reported for the Finance Committee.

The third quarter financial statements can be viewed here at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kNBvQf4A76mPY4-t6mQBS4Xa9PDhmR7L/view?usp=sharing> . Below are the notes about the financial statements.

As of September 30, 2023, AFM is running a \$35,713 deficit YTD. 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 \$3,813.

The deficit is \$2,539 more than the \$33,174 deficit that was budgeted through September. Absent the change in bookkeeping the deficit would have been \$31,900 or 1,274 favorable to budget. Revenue YTD is \$5,060 higher than budget and reported expenses are \$7,599 higher than budget but would be only \$3,786 more than budget without the change in bookkeeping.

Income YTD is \$19,4751 worse than the same period in the prior year driven by higher employee expense, the change in bookkeeping, and an unbudgeted \$2,500 training expense offset by significantly higher donations (\$12,277 more than 2022) and higher rental income (\$5,826 higher this year).

Expenses are running \$37,414 more than the prior year driven by higher Employee expense (we had two open positions last year), the change in timing of Gift and Affiliation, 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 \$45,488 smaller. This is the result of the YTD deficit of \$35,713 (offset by \$3,813 increase in the Gifts & affiliations fund as part of the bookkeeping adjustment), \$19,947 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 \$38,068 which resulted in higher bank account balances. However, the deficit YTD has decreased our bank 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.

Paul added that tree removal expenses are covered out of our Permanent Capital Improvement fund which is not part of the budget. Finance Committee is not worried about that expense when it comes to the budget.

A Friend asked what percentage of giving to the meeting takes place online. Paul said about 20-25% (through the donation button online). About 10% comes from people who direct their bank to send it directly from their account to AFM each month. People also donate through their IRAs (which if you're over 70 you can use to reduce taxes on that money).

A Friend asked who our new renters will be. Paul referred this question to Steve Collins, who said Office Coordinator Nina Gooch is often in contact with potential renters, and she had shared a few names with the Administration Committee. Steve doesn't know exactly who they are or might start. Steve mentioned that we have one potential long term renters who is testing out a short-term rental with the idea that they might switch to long-term after the trial period. The rental rate for long-term renters is lower than for short-term rentals.

Clerk's Items:

Letter from Birmingham Friends Meeting: Atlanta Friends Meeting received a card from Birmingham Friends Meeting sending their greetings and holding us in the light. It also included messages from children in their meeting. Pictures of it will appear in the next newsletter. The clerk suggested we send a card back.

Ad hoc Naming Committee — the 3rd member is Derek Harootune Otis, joining Bill Holland as clerk and Lisa Magee.

The Ad hoc naming committee is complete with these members. The members will work over the next few months to find new members for Nominating Committee. The new members will start their terms in January 2024.

Announcements:

- **Memorial service for Free Polazzo** will be held at the meetinghouse at 2:00pm ET on Saturday, October 21, 2023.
- **A hybrid forum on membership in Atlanta Friends Meeting** will be held October 22 at 11:45am after meeting. Sally Ferguson, John Adams, and Asa Kramer-Dickie will talk about their membership journey.
- On Sunday, October 29 at 12pm, Atlanta Friends Meeting will host **a book event for Emily Flitter's The White Wall: How Big Finance Bankrupts Black America**. The event will also be broadcast on Zoom.
- **"Introduction to Quakerism" with Mary Ann Downey and Bill Holland** is being offered at Centenary United Methodist Church, Sunday, October 29, at 2 p.m. The church's address is 1290 College Street, Macon, Georgia 31201.

