

# ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

## JANUARY 2024



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

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

Meeting for Worship each First Day (Sunday) in Person & via Zoom, 10:00 am.  
Details for Sunday worship and for our Wednesday small meetings for worship, in person and zoom, are in the announcement sheet (link just above).

### QUERY FOR JANUARY

What makes it hard to ask for help and how do we learn to balance giving and receiving help?  
How do we create a community where we all give the gifts we have, as we are able, and know that when we need help, we can ask and receive it?

### LESSONS IN GIVING AND RECEIVING

*by Mary Ann Downey; originally appeared in the November 2023 Friends Journal*  
<https://www.friendsjournal.org/lessons-in-giving-and-receiving/>

Health challenges the last few months reminded me of a conversation I had with my sister, Carolyn, after my [first] husband, Dave, died of a heart attack at 47. She said, “You and I were taught the Bible verse ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive,’ and we thought that it meant there’s something wrong with receiving. That’s not what it says or means. You need to get over it and learn to receive now.”

Slowly over the years, I have been learning to receive. Still, when Friends ask if I need anything, I usually say no. Then some of them, knowing me well, say, “I’ll bring you some soup.” Who can turn down soup, especially from people who I know can cook? And while the soup is always good, I realize that the real gift is the comfort that comes from being cared for: the visit and conversation that comes with a bowl of soup.

What makes it hard for me to ask for help when I need it? How do I learn to balance giving and receiving help? How do we create a community where we all give the gifts we have, as we are able, and know that when we need help, we can ask and receive it?

I remember a friend in meeting many years ago who said, “We’re a meeting with a bunch of martyrs and moochers!” She was exasperated at the lack of help from some people which created extra work for others. At first, I agreed and felt superior as a martyr before realizing I don’t want to be a martyr, nor do I want anyone else to see themselves at either extreme. I think that we all move along a continuum of ability to contribute to any community. Life challenges, the birth of a child, career changes, illness, or death in the family often mean we need help and have little time for other commitments.

My own life in Atlanta (Ga.) Meeting is an example. When I was grieving my husband's death, I felt that all I could do was go to meeting for worship, and even then, I often sat crying for most of the hour. I'm grateful that it was a safe space for me to grieve. Gradually I realized that meeting for worship is a weekly lesson in receiving, a time to wait with an open heart for healing. Advice from Britain Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice* helped:

Come regularly to meeting for worship even when you are angry, depressed, tired, or spiritually cold. In the silence ask for and accept the prayerful support of others joined with you in worship . . . Let meeting for worship nourish your whole life.

Several years later, I agreed to be clerk of the meeting and was ready for this greater commitment. Being clerk helped me realize again the danger of martyrdom and how easy it is to create and foster unhealthy dependency. It is often hard to work with and through others, leading me to believe it would be easier to do it myself. When I teach workshops on clerking, I also hear this challenge voiced by others. At a symphony concert performance, I realized how much better our meeting would be if, as clerk, I could be like the orchestra conductor keeping each member on the same sheet of music, playing their part and creating the harmony we all want.

Friend Jan Hoffman's writing was also helpful when she described the role of meeting elder as a "midwife to the ministry of others." I discovered that the role of midwife, recognizing and calling on the gifts of others, is essential to the life of the meeting and has helped me offer my gifts when asked. Even though I had taken workshops on clerking and had been asked by the Nominating Committee, I still hesitated at first to make the commitment. The prompt I needed came from my friend Sandy who said, "Mary Ann, you have to be clerk, and I'll help you." Her recognition and confidence in my ability gave me the clarity to feel called to the work.

More recently I led a retreat on building the beloved community, and decided to begin the first session with an image: a sculpture of an open hand holding a small bird. I invited Friends to think of themselves as sometimes the bird and sometimes the hand. Like the bird, we come to meeting for worship and retreats looking for a safe place to rest, be fed, and renew. And we are also the hands in the community of those gathered with us. I initially saw myself as just the bird, with faith that I am in God's hands. Later I realized that resting in God's hands allows me to be God's hands when I am ready, like when I eventually answered the call to be clerk following the death of my husband. Now I often come to Sunday worship like the small bird, and resting for the hour renews me so that I leave ready to be the hand.

Perhaps my earliest lesson in finding the right balance to give and receive help in a faith community came from a childhood of memorizing verses in the King James Bible. In Paul's letter to the Romans, he reminds us that we are members of one body with differing gifts, and we are called to use them "according to the grace that is given to us" (Rom. 12:6). Moving toward a better balance of giving and receiving in my community is a lifelong journey, and I'm grateful to still be learning.

## QUERY FROM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE FOR THE MEETING

---

At December's Meeting for Worship with Attention for Business, the Religious Education Committee asked the meeting (those there and the meeting as a whole) to consider the following query: *Supporting the work of the Religious Education Committee to build a vibrant RE program can take many forms and is the work of the whole meeting. In what ways can Atlanta Friends Meeting generally or you personally support the Religious Education Committee and teachers to build the RE program AFM wants to have?* The full report from the committee is in the minutes below.

The earth is singing  
to us  
her voice rides  
the wings  
of blackbirds,  
cardinals,  
bluejays

Sparrow covered  
notes  
G and clef F  
trees  
wrapped in  
B flat  
holding the high  
C note  
just for us

Riding the waves  
of  
silence  
turning the heart  
of stone to flesh.

-----  
  
Afterlife?

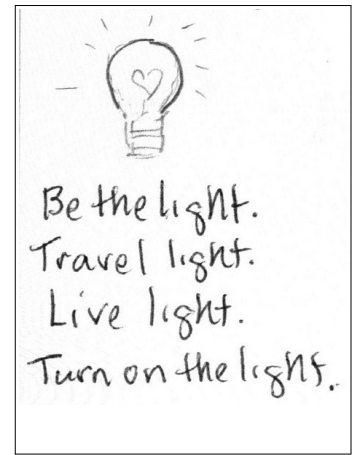
I think of an afterlife as a black hole.  
The black holes Astronomers have found that are  
dominant features of the architecture of the universe.  
There is one at the center of the Milky Way galaxy that is our backyard.  
Black holes spiral and drink the light of stars.

I think of it as the soul gatherer.  
Where our last breath goes absorbed in a violent spiral of dark matter  
plunging to a singularity of essential material of  
composed lives being dismantled and recycled by the universe,  
casting off again into the nothingness to continue without a past,  
without memory,  
with nothing left to forgive.

QUAKER QUOTE: "THE FIRST THAT ENTERS INTO  
THE PLACE OF YOUR MEETING . . ."

*Alexander Parker to Friends in 1660  
(printed in Letters, &c, of Early Friends, 1841)*

The first that enters into the place of your meeting . . . turn in thy mind to the light, and wait upon God singly, as if none were present but the Lord; and here thou art strong. Then the next that comes in, let them in simplicity of heart sit down and turn in to the same light, and wait in the spirit; and so all the rest coming in, in the fear the Lord, sit down in pure stillness and silence of all flesh and wait in the light . . . Those who are brought to a pure still waiting upon God in the spirit, are come nearer to the lord that words are; for God is a spirit, and in the spirit is [God] worshipped . . . In such a meeting . . . there will be an unwillingness to part asunder, being ready to say in yourselves, it is good to be here: and this is the end of all words and writings – to bring people to the eternal living word.



from card received  
by the editor

**PLEASE HOLD  
IN THE LIGHT:**

Helen Thompson  
the family of Paul Baker  
Peachtree Friends Meeting

*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: David Small, afmclerk1@gmail.com  
Office Coordinator: Nina Gooch, atlantaquakers@gmail.com  
Treasurer: Stacey Sharer, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com  
Ministry & Worship: via Office Coordinator  
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: Derek Harootune Otis, dharootuneotis@gmail.com  
Nominating: Lissa Place, lissaplace@yahoo.com  
Newsletter Editor: Nina Gooch, atlquakerltr@gmail.com  
Webmaster: Aaron Ruschetta, 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.**

Paul Baker died Thursday morning, December 14. He was a member of this meeting, but had recently worshipped with Peachtree Friends Meeting in Norcross. Memorial details will be announced as we receive them.

## LETTER FROM QUAKERS FOR RACIAL EQUALITY (QRE) TO CITY OF DECATUR

---

As we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the City of Decatur's founding, the Quakers for Racial Equality committee of Atlanta Friends Meeting stands with Beacon Hill Black Alliance for Human Rights and with local Christian faith leaders who asked the city to use this time for truth telling and making amends. We call for the City of Decatur to correct the city's history on its website, and to replace the cannon that stood on the courthouse square with a plaque that honors the Muscogee Creek people.

Including the "People's History of Decatur" on the city's website will provide readers with a truer narrative and a resource that helps repair past wrongs. We are grateful to the team of volunteer historians, academics, community organizers, members of faith communities, and students of Georgia State University Department of Africana Studies professor Akinyele Umoja, PhD. All these people worked for over a year to develop "The People's History of Decatur," which presents Decatur's history from Indigenous and African perspectives. The Decatur People's History can now be found on the People's History page of the Beacon Hill Black Alliance for Human Rights website, at <https://beaconhillblackalliance.org/peoples-history-decatur/>.

Including the "People's History of Decatur" also helps Atlanta Friends Meeting as we explore the histories of the land and of the Indigenous people and people of African descent who have lived where our Quaker meetinghouse now stands in Decatur. Our exploration is part of the process of making amends to Muscogee Creek people and to African Americans for Quakers' role in colonization, for harms to Indigenous children and cultures through Quaker boarding schools, and for benefits that Friends of European descent derived from the oppression of Indigenous people and people of African descent.

In these cases, Friends, especially Friends of European descent, have not lived up to our testimony of equality and belief in that of God in everyone. The Atlanta Friends Meeting has made public statements calling for reparative justice to redress centuries-long oppression and to bring about equity and reconciliation. Decatur's 200th anniversary is a crucial time that gives us the opportunity to put remembrance and repair into action at the local level for our faith group as well as for the city.

We are pleased to see some recognition of the "People's History" in a proclamation that Mayor Patricia M. Garrett read during the Dec. 4, 2023, Decatur City Commission meeting. Mayor Garrett said, "WHEREAS, it is acknowledged that the land upon which the City was established was home to the Muscogee (Creek) Tribe of Native Americans and they were forced from their homeland; and, WHEREAS, it is further acknowledged that the City's early economy relied on slave labor, and enslaved Africans were sold at the current location of the historic DeKalb County Courthouse . . .

We urge the City of Decatur to follow up by correcting and expanding its website's historical information. The revised content should include sections that describe the early history of the Muscogee Creek people referred to in the proclamation, and that illustrate the continuing harmful effects of enslavement, Jim Crow, and urban removal on people of color in Decatur today. If the government and residents of Decatur are to take necessary actions on reparative justice for those most affected, it is essential that we know and understand these historical and ongoing harms.

In addition, we urge City of Decatur officials and DeKalb County residents to ask the DeKalb County Commission to place a plaque of remembrance of the forced removal of the Muscogee Creek people from their sacred, ancestral home. Replacing the cannon used against the Muscogee Creek people with a plaque honoring them will help ensure that their story is not erased.

We hope that other faith and community groups will join us in asking the City of Decatur to acknowledge its full history, to respect the diversity of its past and current residents, and to take steps for reparative justice and renewal.

## SOLAR PANELS: THE NUMBERS ARE IN AND IT'S A WIN!

---

After a year of rooftop solar at Atlanta Friends Meeting, we can now see the impact on the Meeting's fossil fuel use and electric bills.

### *The Numbers*

Using the electric bills for January thru October of 2023, members of the Meeting's Green Friends added up the numbers for the kilowatt hours used and then compared them to the bills from those months in 2022. Our usage for those 10 months in 2022 was 29,560 kwh. Our comparable usage was 17,700 kwh in 2023, which indicates a 40% reduction. This extrapolates into an approximate \$3,000 savings for the year. As electricity prices inevitably go up over time, the Meeting's savings from the solar panels will also increase year after year.

### *It's More Than Money*

There are two paths the world can take. One leads to an increase in carbon dioxide, which traps more heat, resulting in widespread species extinctions, increasing storms and droughts, extreme heat days, and a reduction in crop yields which will have the greatest impact on the poorest communities around the world. On the other path, the world turns away from fossil fuels by embracing energy conservation and renewable energy sources, electrifying everything. Atlanta Friends Meeting is choosing the second path.

### *You Can Help Too*

We can support the transition to a post-fossil fuel future. By using rooftop solar, electric heat pumps and hybrid and electric vehicles, we can cut our fossil fuel use. Recent legislation signed by the President provides financial incentives to help us pay for these. Here is a link for more information: <https://www.energy.gov/energys>.

We can also help by supporting groups of people that are pushing the government and corporations to do more. Some of these organizations are Third Act, Sierra Club, Citizens Climate Lobby and Sunrise Movement. Georgia Power has announced plans to burn more fossil fuel, too; we can speak up about this in early 2024.

### *All Together Now*

If we all band together, we can change the direction the world is heading toward. That is a win for human civilization today and in the future, as well as the millions of creatures who share the planet with us.

## INTERVIEW ABOUT PALESTINE WITH SA'ED ATSHAN

---

Sa'ed Atshan, who sojourned with AFM during 2022 and 2023 before returning to Swarthmore, was interviewed recently on NPR. Audio and transcript of interview ("This Palestinian American professor leans on his Quaker faith during conflict"): <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/1216138611>

## TALKING ABOUT THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE WAR: RESOURCES FROM FCNL

---

Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) has put together some guidelines for holding a conversation in meetings and other communities around the war in Israel and Palestine. It includes ideas on how to prepare, prompts to invite sharing, and reminders about the foundation of trust necessary for Spirit-led action. There are also links to other resources.

<https://www.fcnl.org/updates/2023-12/talking-about-israel-palestine-war-your-community>

## WORKING FOR PEACE THRU FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION

---

You, too, can be an advocate for peace! Our Atlanta Advocacy Team of FCNL (Friends Committee on National Legislation) meets monthly via Zoom on the second Monday of the month at 4 pm. If monthly meetings don't work for you, you can join our list of Allies who respond to periodic Action Alerts. Note: we're especially looking for folks who like to write letters to the editor and might develop media contacts. Info: Sue May, 404-775-5958, [susanmay1@icloud.com](mailto:susanmay1@icloud.com).

## TIPS FOR BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

---

Have you ever wondered what to do if you witness public instances of racist, anti-Black, anti-Asian, anti-Muslim, antisemitic, anti-trans, or other forms of harassment? Use these tips from AFSC (American Friends Service Committee) to assess how to intervene while considering the safety of everyone involved: <https://click.everyaction.com/k/67611992/420286385/1376102020>

## LINKS TO RESOURCES ON NONVIOLENCE TRAINING

---

*AFM member Althea Sumpter shared the following:*

Lili Baxter is a dear friend of mine and we spent years together at The King Center in the 1980s. I was the in-house producer and director for productions needed to support the work, along with helping to pull off major events. She was the director of The King Center's nonviolence training and education programs. Through her work and with the sanction of our boss, Coretta Scott King, Lili was able to create the Six Steps of Nonviolent Social Change and the Six Principles of Nonviolence from all of Dr. King's writings. She created the Scholars Internship Program, a six-week summer program for university students, to study Kingian Nonviolence, a term coined from her work, and held nonviolence training programs each summer and during King Week in January. There are a large number of nonviolence trainers around the country and elsewhere, thanks to her work endorsed by Coretta Scott King.

Lili continues to consult with The King Center today, updating and generating new materials on nonviolence education and training with Bernice King. Her work is never done.

Lili Baxter bio: <https://thekingcenter.org/nonviolence365-training/lilane-k-baxter/>

Lili and a few of the people she trained created a website to share nonviolence direct action materials. All documents are free to download. The website should go viral so that these documents spread far and wide: Center for Applied Nonviolence: <https://nonviolencetoolkit.com/>

## QUAKER TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES FROM CAROLINA FRIENDS SCHOOL

---

Carolina Friends School (Durham, North Carolina) invites Atlanta Friends members and attendees to join other thoughtful adult F/friends for two transformational travel learning experiences:

March 5-9, 2024: The Beloved Community Journey explores civil rights history and contemporary racial justice issues in Birmingham, Selma, Montgomery, Tuskegee, and Atlanta.

June 23-30, 2024: The Quaker Journey explores the early history of Quakerism, retracing the steps of George Fox and Margaret Fell, in the beautiful Lake District of northern England.

Please find details at [cfsnc.org/AdultEnrichment](https://cfsnc.org/AdultEnrichment), spread the word, and join us for adventure, learning, and reflection together in community.

FRIENDS SCHOOL OF ATLANTA SEEKS AUCTION ITEMS FOR ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

---

Friends School of Atlanta is again seeking donations for our annual online auction to take place March 1 to 16, 2024, culminating in our live event *Bites, Bingo & Bids* to be held on Saturday, March 16, 2024 from 6 to 9 pm at The Lost Druid in Avondale Estates. They need your help to make this is a success and support the school. Please consider donating services, skills, rental properties, gift certificates to local businesses, virtual coaching, etc to help fill their online auction and Bingo prizes. Please email Christina Repoley [christinarepoley@gmail.com](mailto:christinarepoley@gmail.com) if you can support the school.

QUAKER VOLUNTEER SERVICE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR 2024 – 2025

Are you a young adult aged 21-30? Are you inspired by social justice activism but don't know how to live your values in everyday life? Are you at a crossroads and longing for community to help you discern your next steps? Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS) could be a great next step for you! QVS is an 11-month service program where young adults live in community, work at social justice oriented nonprofits, and engage in spiritual growth while being supported by community. Check them out at [www.quakervoluntaryservice.org](http://www.quakervoluntaryservice.org)

~\*

BOOKS BY AND ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR -- Thursday, January 4

---

The book group reading works by and about people of color meets at 1:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month in person in combination with Zoom. On January 4, they will discuss *Water Museum* by Luis Alberto Urrea. For questions or the Zoom link, contact Susan Cole ([cole2544@bellsouth.net](mailto:cole2544@bellsouth.net)).  
Future books include:  
February 1, *Firekeeper's Daughter* by Angeline Boulley  
March 7, *Autobiography of My Mother* by Jamaica Kincaid  
April 4, *This Other Eden* by Paul Harding  
May 2, *The Fraud* by Zadie Smith

MACON QUAKERS IN-PERSON WORSHIP – Saturday, January 6 plus Wednesday evenings

---

On January 6, 2024, the Macon Worship Group, which is under our care, meets for worship in-person, as they do every first Saturday, at Centenary United Methodist Church, 1290 College Street, Macon, GA, at 2:00 pm.

This is in addition to the weekly Wednesday evening meeting for worship via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85017745787?pwd=RUQ3OGJPenMrYktXemlxL1d2R3Q2Zz09>  
Meeting ID: 850 1774 5787  
Passcode: 22Light



## SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS, "QUAKERISM 101" & 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 January 7, Adam Hicks will offer his Spiritual Journey. (To hear MaryAnn Lockard's Spiritual Journey, shared December 3, visit <http://tinyurl.com/mr2mhfac>. 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](mailto:madowney@mindspring.com).

Every year the Adult First Day Class begins the year with a "Quakerism 101" class. This is an opportunity for those new to Quakerism to learn more and ask questions. It's also a great refresher class for those not so new. Our Quakerism 101 for 2024 will cover light, silence, and the SPICES (simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship). We will follow the book *Seeking the Light: A Quaker Journey for Quakers and Non-Quakers* by Linda Seger, ThD, but discussion will not be limited to the book. Whether you read the book or not you will enjoy the lively discussion and learn more about our practice. Please join us at 9 AM on Sundays beginning January 14 in the library. Quakerism 101 will be on second, third and fourth Sundays.

On fifth Sundays, Adult First Day School usually has 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 in the announcement sheet; see link at top of page 1.) For questions, please contact Elizabeth Lamb.

## POTLUCK – Sunday, January 7

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.

## MINDFULNESS-BASED STRESS REDUCTION COURSE -- begins Monday, January 8

Atlanta Mindfulness Institute will be offering an 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Course at the meetinghouse on Monday evenings beginning January 8. This evidence-based course offers intensive training in meditation with an emphasis on the application of mindfulness to the challenges of daily living. For more information: visit <https://www.atlantamindfulness.com/mbsr>.

## FGC MONTHLY VIRTUAL WORSHIP FOR NEWCOMERS -- Mondays, January 8, etc

---

Are you a newcomer or seeker interested in worshipping with Friends? Do you have questions about what happens in the Silence? Join Friends General Conference's (FGC 's) Spiritual Deepening for *monthly* worship and reflection about this unique spiritual practice (on the second Monday of each month)! This offering is free. Simply register to access the zoom link at <https://www.fgcquaker.org/event/newcomers-worship/>.

## WELCOME DINNER -- Thursday, January 18

---

If you are new to the Atlanta Friends' Meeting and would like to socialize and break bread in a smaller group, you are invited to a Newcomers' Dinner on Thursday, January 18, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm, at the Meeting House. There will also be some regular attenders and members to welcome you and answer questions. We look forward to getting to know you! Please RSVP by January 14 to Karen Morris, [karenth.1415@gmail.com](mailto:karenth.1415@gmail.com) or Carol Gray, [chezgray@mindspring.com](mailto:chezgray@mindspring.com). We'd especially like to know if you have any dietary preferences or restrictions.

*(If you are interested in hosting a 2024 Welcome Dinner, held on the 18th of each month, please contact Jim Tolmach at 404-294-5194 or [jimtolmach@icloud.com](mailto:jimtolmach@icloud.com).)*

## SEWING CIRCLE -- Saturday, January 20

---

Join us for a Sewing Circle, meeting in the library, on January 20 at 3 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](mailto:Lisamagee@gmail.com).

## MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS -- Sunday, January 21

---

Stay after meeting for worship, whether in person or via Zoom. Meeting for Business will be held in a combined format about 11:45, using the Zoom coordinates for Meeting for Worship.

The minutes for last month's meeting are below.

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

Meeting ID: 896 8627 6751

Passcode: 789456

## FLGBTQC RETREAT -- Friday to Monday, February 16 to 19

---

The national Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns (FLGBTQC) is working back towards an in-person Midwinter Gathering. Their 2024 Midwinter Gathering that is partly online for everyone across the country with local and regional in-person gatherings. Atlanta is one of the local/regional gatherings and will be welcoming guests from the region and across the country to join those of us in the meeting. Local in person programming will include worship sharing, conversation, and a panel/speaker on Atlanta's LGBTQ history. All in the meeting are invited, and more details will be available in the announcement sheet as they are worked out. You can also contact Nina or Derek.

## GRANTS FOR THE STUDY & PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM – apply by March 1, 2024

The Elizabeth Ann Bogert Memorial Fund for the Study and Practice of Christian Mysticism, administered by the Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas, makes annual grants of up to \$1,000 to individuals, groups or institutions. As a general guideline the Bogert Fund understands the mystical element in Christianity to be that aspect of its belief and practices that relates to an immediate and direct sense of the presence of the Divine. Both experiential and scholarly exploration of this realm are encouraged.

Proposals should be no more than two typed pages and include the following: a full description of the project, including an indication of how the project relates to the study and/or practice of Christian mysticism; the specific amount of money requested; the way the grant will be spent; an indication of any other resources expected to be called upon; and plans for communicating the results of the project to others. Two or three letters of reference from persons familiar with the work of the applicant(s) should be mailed directly to Kathleen McVey, Professor Emerita, Princeton Theological Seminary, 272 Mercer Street, Princeton, NJ 08540. Email inquiries may be sent to [kathleen.mcvay@ptsem.edu](mailto:kathleen.mcvay@ptsem.edu). Application deadline: Proposals and references for 2024 grants are due by March 1, 2024. Awards are announced by July 1.

## MINUTES FOR TWELFTH MONTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS DECEMBER 17, 2023, held in person and via Zoom in a blended meeting

Minutes Recorded Pending Approval

---

**Attendance:** Mike Aland, Richard Allen, Cathy Amanti, Mary Ann Downey, Betsy Eggers, Sally Ferguson, Susan Firestone, Julie Foster, Larry Foster, Waman French, Amanda Gendreau, Eric Glenn, Nina Gooch, Clive Gordon, Bill Holland, Bill Hooson, Teri Key-Hooson, Jack Honderd, Greg Johnson, Kathy Johnson, Elizabeth Lamb, Suzie Lippold, Lisa Magee, Paul Mangelsdorf, Alison Mawle, Karen terHorst Morris, Derek Harootune Otis, Sara Patenaude, Lissa Place, Mary Place, Arianna Rodriguez, Stacey Sharer, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Henry Slack, David Small, Jim Tolmach, Myrna Trapp, Ian "bigSofty" Wells, Austin Wattles, Jackie Yates, Mark Yates, Jennifer Dickie (Clerk), Emma Bingham (Recording Clerk)

### **Worship**

**Query for Twelfth Month:** How can we show integrity, peacefulness and kindness in our hearts? (*Source: First Grade class, Friends School of Atlanta*)

### **Discernment**

#### **Ministry and Worship - memorial minute —**

Mary Ann Downey reported for Ministry and Worship Committee.

Lynn Leuszler was born February 1, 1952, in Lorain County, Ohio. He was the 3rd of 4 sons of Harold Leuszler and Melba Kiiting Leuszler. The family lived on and ran a small truck farm. Lynn died September 22, 2023.

As Lynn neared completion of his high school years, he became increasingly determined to go to Ohio State. For Lynn, going to Ohio State would require earning enough through student jobs to pay for all of his own tuition and costs of living. His jobs left him exhausted and his studies were very

challenging as well. He stuck it out, though, and graduated with a B.S. degree in Journalism and Public Relations in 1973. Ohio State (and especially Ohio State Football) would continue to be special to him for the rest of his life.

After graduating, Lynn worked for a number of years in commercial real estate. Lynn performed site selection, contract negotiation, and zoning work. Due to work transfers, he moved repeatedly for several years. His work prompted a move to Atlanta. He had found the long, gray winters of northern Ohio very challenging, and truly appreciated Atlanta's weather. Lynn met his wife, Georgia Lord, in May 1980 when they were both doing volunteer work. They quickly fell deeply in love and married on April 18th, 1981. Lynn's encouragement gave Georgia the self-confidence she needed to go to law school. For the rest of his life, he continued to provide vital love and support for her. Lynn and Georgia first came to the Atlanta Friends Meeting in the Spring of 1981, after meeting a Meeting member at a peace demonstration. Lynn became a member in 1983. He said he immediately felt that he had "come home". He easily settled into a deep, rich silent worship.

In 1986, Lynn and Georgia happily welcomed their son David. The three of them, together with Georgia's mother, Ruth Lord, lived in Stone Mountain. Lynn returned to school at Georgia State and earned a Master of Business Administration. In 2006, the family joyfully celebrated Lynn and Georgia's 25th Wedding Anniversary, and David's graduation from Georgia Tech with a Computer Science degree.

Lynn was born with a congenital defect in his aortic heart valve and in 1991, Lynn had surgery to have his aortic heart valve replaced with a mechanical one. The surgery itself went well, but several days later an unusual complication caused his heart to suddenly stop. Hospital staff were able to resuscitate him, and another surgery removed the new valve and replaced it with a porcine valve. Sometime during this process, he suffered a stroke. Recovering from this second surgery and stroke was grueling, but he tackled it with determination.

This experience (which he called his "death day"), had a profound impact on Lynn. He found he was able to let go of grudges and past injuries. He said that each day after his "death" was a gift that made him an incredibly lucky guy. His son David was only five years old at the time of this surgery, and Lynn was very grateful that he was ultimately able to live long enough to watch his son grow up, to enjoy parenting him, and to be able to proudly reflect upon the man that David had become.

Lynn's medical issues made it very hard for him to maintain employment. He increasingly served his family as the primary caregiver to his son. He later also became the primary caregiver for Georgia's mother, Ruth. At times, he also cared for his nephew and niece: Dylan and Dana Cawthorne. Lynn brought true gifts to such caregiving! Lynn provided extensive volunteer service to David's elementary school and played a decisive role in the creation of Lord Park in the City of Tucker.

From 1981 until he died, Lynn served the Meeting in many roles. These included co-clerking the Hospitality Committee, serving the Friends Committee on National Legislation and Clerking the Ministry and Counsel Committee. He helped to build the original playground for the current Meeting House, taught pre-school Religious Education class, and participated in vigils and demonstrations. In recent years, Lynn served as Meeting Treasurer. He improved financial support, both by making it easier to donate and by encouraging and appreciating donations. He believed in the paradox of generosity: when we give of ourselves for others' well-being, we enhance our own well-being, too.

Lynn also provided lots of one-on-one assistance to members, sometimes at the request of a committee and sometimes on his own initiative. He willingly helped attenders of all ages in many different ways. When he served on a marriage clearness committee, his service did not end with the wedding: he tended to stay in touch with the couple, offering encouragement, assistance, and often gifts for their children. Lynn has been similarly supportive to friends outside of the Meeting.

He believed that in order to have friends, you have to be a friend, by being willing to help your friends as needed and by making the effort to keep in touch, and his actions were consistent with this philosophy. His generous spirit also extended to many strangers.

Lynn loved wearing tie-dye. He loved visiting his parents and his brothers and playing cards with them. He loved gathering with friends and family. He tended to bring positive energy into the room with him, along with a willingness to help. He enjoyed studying almanacs and had an impressive command of trivia, current events, and politics. He voraciously read large books stuffed with complex information but also loved silly movies that made him laugh loud and long. Lynn did not worry much about looking foolish; in fact, he was very rarely embarrassed, and this seemed to give him more freedom to enjoy life. One of his primary legacies of Lynn's life is that he showed by example how to be kinder, more patient, and more generous to others, even during moments when it is hard to summon such qualities!

Despite periodic, difficult hospitalizations, Lynn's life continued to encompass lots of joy, lots of good times with friends and family, and a general contentment. In late June, Lynn decided to forego further treatment and enter palliative care at home. On September 22nd, 2023, he slipped peacefully into death. A memorial meeting to celebrate his life was held at the Atlanta meeting October 14, 2023.

Lynn was preceded in death by his oldest brother, Michael; by his parents Harold and Melba Leuszler; and by his older brother Harold ("Tiny").

Lynn is survived by his wife, Georgia Lord; his son, David Leuszler; his brother and sister-in-law Dan and Debbie Leuszler of Groveland, Florida; his sister-in-law Mary Ann Leuszler of Berlin Heights, Ohio; his sister-in-law and brother-in-law Charlotte and Norris Klesman of Tifton, Georgia; his nephew Dylan Cawthorne of Odense, Denmark; his niece (and namesake) Dana Lynn Cawthorne of Wrangell, Alaska; and many other friends and family members.

**Minute-12-17-23:01:** Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the memorial minute for Lynn Leuszler.

**Ministry and Worship - Forum Dates** — Bill Hooson reported for Ministry and Worship Committee.

It has been the tradition of the meeting that 5th Sundays are reserved for Ministry and Worship. We ask that the following days be put aside for forums sponsored by Ministry and Worship: 3/31; 6/30; 9/29; and 12/29.

**Minute-12-17-23:02:** Atlanta Friends Meeting approves reserving fifth Sundays for Ministry and Worship forums in 2024.

**Finance Committee - 2024 budget** — Paul Mangelsdorf reported for Finance Committee.

The budget is the same as reported at last month's Meeting for Business (see [Budget](#), [Gifts and Affiliations](#), and [Notes](#)), but \$1500 was added for the Gathered Meeting Retreat, based on feedback at MfB. The Library Committee also requested an increased budget, from \$300 to \$900, to get books and a cart. *[Editor's Note: The budget figures linked above are after the addition of money for the Gathered Meeting Retreat, but before the increase in the library budget.]*

The projected number of contributions doesn't quite match the budget. But the investment income, which is not budgeted, should allow the meeting to break even.

The clerk asked if there would be more expenses for legal fees for Ferguson Cabins next year. Paul said they've just received a bill that should be paid in December, which brings us to \$1140, and there may be a few hundred dollars more in the future.

A Friend said that Green Friends believe they will get ~\$15,000 back from the IRS from the solar panels. Paul said he wasn't sure when this would happen, so he left it out of the budget for now. He added that when we replace our heating systems (which were first installed 2005-2007 and tend to have a 20-year lifespan), it would be a good thing to plan ahead to get heat pumps, and so perhaps the solar panel savings should be put towards that.

Another Friend said it seems we're putting aside \$10,000/year for improvements, which is less than the \$20,000 we used to. Paul said this is because our rental income went down from \$50,000 pre-Covid to ~\$30,000 post-Covid. They couldn't get to a level where contributions would be high enough to justify putting the additional money in. He added that in past years when this has happened, surpluses have been put into the permanent improvement fund.

**Minute-12-17-23:03:** The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the budget for 2024 with the changes to the library committee budget.

The clerk had asked if Nominating Committee nominates the members of Finance Committee. Paul said Nominating nominates the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Finance Committee Clerk, and the rest of the committee are volunteers. Paul said they are looking for more volunteers and added that they usually meet on Zoom.

A Friend said that as he listened to the budget presentation and memorial minute presentation, he reflected on how fortunate we are to have people volunteering to take on this important work.

**Naming Committee** — Bill Holland reported for Naming Committee.

The Naming Committee was appointed by the clerk with members announced at 9th and 10th month meeting for business. The members of the 2023 Naming Committee were Derek Harootune Otis, Lisa Magee, and Bill Holland. Bill Holland was asked to serve as clerk.

In 11th Month the Naming Committee presented its process and recommendations. This report is included in the Minutes of 11th Month Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

They brought forward five minutes for the discernment of meeting.

Extending Ellen McQueen's Term on Nominating Committee by One Year. (People usually serve for three years on Nominating Committee, but she was nominated to serve for two years originally.)

**Minute-12-17-23:04:** On the recommendation of Naming Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves extending the current two-year term of Ellen McQueen on Nominating Committee (2023-03-19:01) by one year, now ending her service in December 2025.

Appointing three Friends to regular three-year terms on Nominating.

**Minute-12-17-23:05:** On the recommendation of Naming Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Alison Mawle to a three-year term on the Nominating Committee, beginning her service in January 2024 and ending December 2026.

**Minute-12-17-23:06:** On the recommendation of Naming Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Eric Glenn to a three-year term on the Nominating Committee, beginning his service in January 2024 and ending December 2026.

**Minute-12-17-23:07:** On the recommendation of Naming Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Sara Patenaude to a three-year term on the Nominating Committee, beginning her service in January 2024 and ending December 2026.

Laying down Naming Committee

**Minute-12-17-23:08:** Atlanta Friends Meeting lays down the 2023 Naming Committee with grateful thanks and releases Derek Harootune Otis, Lisa Magee, and Bill Holland from their service.

**Nominating Committee** — Lissa Place reported for Nominating Committee.

**Minute-12-17-23:09:** On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Derik Harootune Otis as Clerk of the Library Committee for a term of 3 years from January of 2024-December of 2026.

**Minute-12-17-23:10:** On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Lisa Magee as Clerk of the Gathered Meeting Retreat Committee for a term of 2 years from January of 2024-December of 2025.

**Minute-12-17-23:11:** On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Arianna Rodriguez as a teacher for First Day School for a term of one year effective immediately through June of 2024.

**Minute-12-17-23:12:** On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Cathy Amanti as a teacher for First Day School for a term of one year effective immediately through June of 2024.

**Minute-12-17-23:13:** On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Stacey Sharer as Treasurer of Meeting for a term of 2 years effective immediately until December of 2025.

The Ferguson Cabin Stewards Committee members were brought forward for consideration in 3rd month Meeting for Business. Today they will be brought forward to be approved with staggered terms as suggested in 3rd month Meeting for Business.

**Minute-12-17-23:14:** On the recommendation of the nominating committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Martha Hutchins, Joan Thompson, and Mark Bryans for an extended term on the Ferguson Cabin Stewards Committee ending in 2024.

**Minute-12-17-23:15:** On the recommendation of the nominating committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Mike Aland, Mark Smith, and Sallie Carpentier for an extended term on the Ferguson Cabin Stewards Committee ending in 2025.

**Minute-12-17-23:16:** On the recommendation of the nominating committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Caroline Morris and John Carpentier for an extended term on the Ferguson Cabin Stewards Committee ending in 2026.

**Minute-12-17-23:17:** On the recommendation of the nominating committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Jennifer Thompson to serve on the Ferguson Cabin Stewards Committee for a 3-year term ending in 2026.

## **Reports**

**Nominating Committee** — Lissa Place reported for Nominating Committee.

Nominating has 3 recommendations for Ministry and Worship committee. Please take some time to get to know these folks over the next month, if you haven't already.

The Nominating Committee would like to bring forward the name Elizabeth Valera for Ministry and Worship Committee for a three year term starting January of 2024 until December of 2026.

The Nominating Committee would like to bring forward the name MaryAnn Lockard for Ministry and Worship Committee for a three year term starting January of 2024 until December of 2026.

The Nominating Committee would like to bring forward the name Jamie Lockard for Ministry and Worship Committee for a three year term starting January of 2024 until December of 2026.

Nominating is also seeking a clerk for Ministry and Worship, as Bill Hooson is rotating off as clerk.

Office coordinator, Nina Gooch, asked if there will be a de facto clerk who people could contact with questions until a new clerk is found. She said to let her know who the contact person should be so that she can keep that information updated.

A Friend said she had always assumed that a clerk comes from the members of the committee. Lissa said that's typically the way it works, but there are situations where it is different. It could be a new member of the committee, or it could be an additional member that will be found in the future for M&W (outside of the three names just brought forward). The clerk (of meeting) said the handbook outlines how each committee clerk is chosen, and certain committees specify that the clerk will be nominated, while others don't. The clerk of M&W could come from outside the current members of M&W. Several people are being considered for clerk of Ministry and Worship.

### **Kathy Johnson**

Kathy expressed gratitude to the meeting for the minute of thanks for her work with the Ferguson Cabins. She feels honored that the meeting did that, and thanked Bill Holland for writing it.

**Green Friends** — Henry Slack reported for Green Friends.

Henry reported that the solar panels on our roof are powering the meetinghouse — even on a cloudy day, they still produce power. They were activated early this year, and since then 40% of the electric bill has been saved (about \$3000 from January through October of 2023 compared to those same months the previous year). Even more savings are expected in future years as electricity prices increase.

However, Henry noted, the solar panels are about more than money. There are two paths the world can take. One leads to an increase in carbon dioxide, which traps more heat, resulting in widespread species extinctions, increasing storms and droughts, extreme heat days, and a reduction in crop yields which will have the greatest impact on the poorest communities around the world. On the other path, the world turns away from fossil fuels by embracing energy conservation and renewable energy sources, electrifying everything. Atlanta Friends Meeting is choosing the second path.

Individuals in the meeting can also help cut fossil fuel use by using rooftop solar, electric heat pumps and hybrid and electric vehicles. Recent legislation provides financial incentives to help us pay for these. Here is a link for more information: <https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/financing-and-incentives>.

Friends can also help by supporting groups of people that are pushing the government and corporations to do more. Some of these organizations are Third Act, Sierra Club, Citizens Climate Lobby and Sunrise Movement. Georgia Power has announced plans to burn more fossil fuel, too; Friends can speak up about this in early 2024.

The clerk of finance, Paul Manglesdorf, said we probably saved even more money with the solar panels, given that we had a much hotter July and August this year, so we would have used more on AC this past summer.

An article from Green Friends about the solar panels, including some of the information above and more, will appear in this month's newsletter.



## **Religious Education Committee & Query —**

Amanda Gendreau reported for Religious Education Committee

Amanda is the nursery caregiver and clerk of the Religious Education Committee. During Covid, she said, RE didn't have any children because the classes were closed, then they slowly started trickling back. Amanda and Laura MacNorlin have been trying to grow the religious ed program, both the number of children and the number of volunteers (nursery, doorkeepers, and teachers). Even with the new teachers just approved (see above in minutes), they are still half-staffed when it comes to volunteers. Teachers used to teach once a month, now they teach 2+ times a month. They have more students, so they split the elementary classes into upper and lower. They also want to encourage older children to come, and older children and teens feel more comfortable if they have a dedicated class.

This school year, RE added two new teachers, and they are currently recruiting new Religious Education volunteers (doorkeepers and nursery volunteers). To relieve the pressure of a growing elementary class, they added back a second elementary class to serve our older elementary students. They also expanded the age range that the nursery serves from 0-2 years to 0-4 years. New and experienced teachers have had background checks this fall to fulfill the requirement of teachers to have regular background checks. They currently have one middle/high school teacher, two upper elementary teachers, two lower elementary teachers and one nursery caregiver. They also have one more teacher who has taught in lower elementary, upper elementary and middle/high school classes. At least twenty-four people have volunteered in Religious Education classes in the past year.

The overwhelming concern of Religious Education teachers is a lack of consistent volunteers. Although they have had many volunteers over the past year, almost all volunteers volunteer infrequently leaving frequent gaps in class coverage. Volunteers are needed to assist children during First Day classes each week. More dedicated teachers are needed to teach our current classes. One of the few teachers will be out of the country next semester. People who can substitute for teachers are also sorely needed. Teachers have had to combine classes, teach while sick, and teach without the proper support and supervision for children. To treat our teachers fairly, it is important that the classes are fully staffed every single week. To help retain current teachers, substitutes need to be available to allow teachers to fulfill family obligations, have coverage when ill, and to work.

Another impact of the lack of staff is on the ability to grow the Religious Education program. Since before the COVID-19 pandemic, but especially since the pandemic closed our Religious Education classes, our priority has been encouraging families to return to Meeting and send their children to First Day School. However, our priorities of maintaining a safe environment for the spiritual growth of young Friends, and growing our First Day School program are at odds with each other. If we have regular volunteer vacancies for our current classes, which fails to meet our current child safety guidelines, we should not be trying to encourage new families to attend with their children or previously attending families to return.

A Friend asked if we're still doing criminal background checks. Amanda replied that teachers get this background check. The doorkeepers volunteers are not required to be. The background checks cost money and there have been 24 volunteers over the past year. Amanda said she will bring the topic of background checks back up in the future. A Friend said she felt background checks were a cost the meeting should incur.

**Query for Meeting:**

*Supporting the work of the Religious Education Committee to build a vibrant RE program can take many forms and is the work of the whole meeting. In what ways can Atlanta Friends Meeting generally or you personally support the Religious Education Committee and teachers to build the RE program AFM wants to have?*

A period of worship was held around this query.

**Ministry and Worship Committee —**

Bill Hooson reported for Ministry and Worship Committee.

M&W is working towards a welcome/meet & greet with Dot Lopez – Head of Friends School of Atlanta, potentially on the 4th 1st day of 1st month of next year. She has been head of the Friends School for several months, but M&W feels it is appropriate to have both an informal meet and greet at the rise of meeting and a more formal forum.

Two people requested membership but asked that the process be postponed until after the holidays.

**FLGBTQC —**

Derek Harootune Otis reported for FLGBTQC (Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns).

Derek, Nina Gooch, and Jeremiah Gold-Hopton have been working on planning a local gathering to go with the national FLGBTQC organization's Midwinter Gathering, to be held mid-February (2/16 to 2/19) of 2024. The national-level programming will be remote — however, Derek, Nina, and Jeremiah are planning one of several local gatherings, which will provide programming and hospitality (food, potentially housing) for those interested in meeting in-person. So far, they have met three times as a trio, and met once with the broader group of FLGBTQC affiliates at AFM. They have defined the outline of the local events schedule, created a form to record those interested in attending the in-person gathering, and begun seeking funding via the national organization and AFM's Social Concerns Committee. Currently, they are working on a final budget, distributing the interest form, and seeking speakers for a panel on Atlanta's LGBTQ history (that they plan to be the central event of the local gathering). They will share additional details with the meeting as planning continues.

Derek went over a few concerns that had been brought up:

- Has the hospitality committee been informed? Derek said they will reach out after this meeting for business to find out. Alison Mawle, as clerk of hospitality, said it was the first time she'd heard of this event, so she and Derek will be in touch.
- Will the funds from the SCC and national organization be able to cover the budget? The SCC budget will be able to cover honoraria for the panel speakers. Other items such as food will be funded either by the national organization or by suggested donation from attendees. Details are still being worked out.
- Will the events be limited to members of FLGBTQC? No, it will not be limited to members of FLGBTQC – anyone can come.

**SAYMA Representative Report from Rep Meeting 151 —**

Alison Mawle reported as the SAYMA representative.

SAYMA representatives met virtually on November 4, 2023, co-clerked by Margaret Farmer and Daryl Bergquist.

The full meeting minutes are available on the SAYMA website, and the highlights are listed below.

1. Co-clerks announced the members of the Ad-hoc Faith and Practice revision committee. They are Melissa Preast, wood bouldin, Star Smith and Kathleen Mavournin.
2. Atlanta Friends Meeting offered to host the spring SAYMA representative meeting on April 6, 2024, pending approval from AFM at their 11th month Meeting for Business. (This was approved at MfB last month.)
3. Nominating committee presented the slate of nominees. There is still no formal nominee for Assistant Clerk (rising Clerk), though Jennifer Dickie has agreed to take the position if a co-clerk can be found for her current role as Yearly Meeting Planning Committee Clerk. There is no nominee for Assistant Treasurer (rising Treasurer).
4. Yearly meeting planning committee announced that next year's meeting will be at Berea College for either 4 or 5 days - 19/20 June - 23 June. Opinions are evenly split on whether to have a 4 or 5 day meeting. A survey was administered to gather information.
5. Uplifting Racial Justice committee (URJ) reported that the racial conflict training is continuing for a second year. They noted 2 concerns: that there was continued resistance from Friends in leadership to participate, and that the Ministry and Nurture committee had not yet responded to the 3 minutes brought forward at the October 2022 representatives' meeting.
6. Ministry and Nurture committee reported that they had participated in a retreat conducted by Folami Adams at the Ferguson Cabins. They met several times to discern a way forward on the 3 proposed minutes and were not in unity on how to move forward.
7. On the second reading of the slate of nominees, 2 Friends stood in the way of Star Smith's nomination as a delegate to FWCC's gathering in South Africa in 2024. SAYMA has funds to send 2 in-person representatives. Adrian Mehr, one of the the current appointed representatives to FWCC will attend. There followed a long and contentious discussion, which rehashed many old wounds, without substantially moving the question forward. I invite you to read the minutes and talk to those of us who were present (Alison Mawle, Jennifer Dickie, Karen Morris, Kevin Moran) if you'd like more insight. The slate was accepted with the exception of Star Smith as FWCC delegate. There is money to send her to FWCC in one of the open slots.
8. The remaining reports were accepted but not discussed due to lack of time.
9. Daryl Bergquist announced that Susan Phelan, SAYMA Administrative Assistant, is retiring, and her replacement is being sought. The meeting passed a minute of appreciation for her wonderful service to SAYMA.
10. Friends also passed a minute of appreciation of the co-Clerks and recording Clerk in navigating this discussion.

The clerk encouraged Friends to reach out to those who attended the representative meeting (Alison Mawle, Jennifer Dickie, Karen Morris, Kevin Moran) if they have questions.

### **Clerk's Item**

Call for committee reports for the state of the meeting report:

The clerk requested that committees consider the following query when writing their reports: "In what ways are you journeying towards the beloved community, and in what ways are you stumbling? What are the things your committee has done to move you in that direction, and what things are stopping you from getting there?"

The reports are due at the end of December/early January.

### **Announcements**

Committees are encouraged to review their page at [www.atlantaquakers.net](http://www.atlantaquakers.net). It will be published in February 2024. Please submit pictures or we will choose them for you!

It was clarified that once the new website goes live, the new content will be accessible at AtlantaQuakers.org and the old content will no longer exist at that url. The AtlantaQuakers.net url is currently being used for the development of the new site only.

**Approval of Minutes from 11th month 2023**

[https://atlantaquakers.org/\\_afm\\_newsletters/AFM\\_Newsletter\\_2023-12.pdf](https://atlantaquakers.org/_afm_newsletters/AFM_Newsletter_2023-12.pdf)

**Minute-12-17-23:18:** Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the 11th month minutes.

**Events in the life of the meeting**

Paul Baker, a member of this meeting who has been attending Peachtree Friends Meeting, died on the morning of Thursday, December 14.

**Closing Worship**

~\*

**ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING**

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

web and email: [atlantaquakers.org](http://atlantaquakers.org), [atlantaquakers@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaquakers@gmail.com) voicemail/phone: 404-377-2474

Clerk: David Small, [afmclerk1@gmail.com](mailto:afmclerk1@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Stacey Sharer, [afmtreasurer1@gmail.com](mailto:afmtreasurer1@gmail.com)

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

*This newsletter is a publication of the Atlanta Friends Meeting. Views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily that of the Meeting.*