

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

MAY 2024



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

<https://atlantaquakers.org/announcement-sheet/> will always have the most recent announcement sheet

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 MAY

Do you endeavor to widen your circle of friendships within the Meeting, seeking to know persons of all ages and at all stages of the spiritual journey?

ENCHANTMENT

by Patricia Turner

In
the tree house
perched
far above
the maddening
vortex of
worldly cares

I find enchantment
in the furious flutter
of the hummingbird's
wings
an emerald blur
defying
gravity

Enchantment in the
warbler
bearers of the sun

Enchantment in their
uniform of green
and gold

Hope
for the war-torn
world.

HAVE YOU VISITED THE FERGUSON CABINS?

Atlanta Friends Meeting has a unique and wonderful gift: a lakeside retreat with rustic cabins, a dock, kayak, gentle beach, and plenty of water toys. This place was bequeathed to AFM by member Dwight Ferguson for the use of Quaker members, attendees, and friends and family as a spiritual nurturing and gathering place. When we had our committee fair, the Cabin Stewards Committee realized that many folks don't know about the property at all.

There can be spiritual nurturing in so many places and we can gather anywhere, but the Ferguson cabins offer an escape to the Quaker testimonies of simplicity. Of walking on this earth and caring for it. A place with no televisions, telephones (the cell phone service is spotty) or the race of meeting deadlines we face in our society. It is 7 wooded acres, with some simple cabin structures and a dock with a view that can take your breath away every time you see it.

There are several structures, but most folks choose Dwight Cabin or Irene Cabin, with Squirrel House and Tree Tops for overflow. Dwight Cabin features a full kitchen, a futon, wood burning stove, fans, an electric heater, and a wonderful, screened porch with room for many lay out mattresses. There is running water, but no hot water or bathroom. Irene Cabin was added by the Cabin Committee within the last few years and has hot and cold water, a half bath in the main structure, and a full bath with shower underneath available to all. Irene also has a heat and cooling mini split system that makes it very comfortable.



We want more folks to experience this amazing place. Dwight's gift is truly impossible to realize until you go there. You can read descriptions, but there is no replacement for the peace, the quiet that we have forgotten, the smell of trees, the land, and the slowed pace. There are many AFM members who grew up going to Ferguson Cabin at Lake Burton. We want new generations to do this as well.

So how do you reserve it? Go to <https://atlantaquakers.org/ferguson-cabins/>. If you are reading this offline, go to atlantaquakers.org. In the **Facilities** tab, click **Ferguson Cabins** in the dropdown. This page has more descriptions of the cabins. Scroll down to see the calendar. This is a real-time calendar of current reservations so you can see what is available.

Reservations must be made within 60 days of the start day of your visit, but once a year, you can make a reservation that's more than 60 days in advance. This applies to both individuals and groups

Email thefergusoncabin@gmail.com to request a reservation. Please include:

- Dates and times of arrival and departures
- Which cabin you want
- If you are willing to share
- If you are not willing to share, indicate whole property in the reservation

The cabins are available after May 5. We want more F/friends to enjoy this amazing place so start making reservations! If your preferred dates are not currently available, let us know you are interested in those dates in case there is a cancellation.

Find out what a wonderful gift Dwight Ferguson gave our meeting!

A DIFFERENT FUTURE IS POSSIBLE:
QUAKER ORGANIZATIONS SHARE A VISION FOR PEACE IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

Shared by Bill Holland, who says, "Eight Wider Quaker Organizations representing Friends in the United States, Europe, England and worldwide have signed onto a statement dated April 12, 2024 regarding the future of Palestine and Israel While no single organization speaks for all Friends, the statement represents the collective discernment of many Friends from around the world. The statement can also be read online at https://www.fcni.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/april-12-joint-quaker-statement-on-peace-and-justice-in-palestine-and-israel_updated.pdf

April 12, 2024

For centuries, Quakers have worked for peace. This mission is a practical expression of the nonviolent message of the gospels and the teaching reflected in the many religions around the world: love your neighbor as yourself.

Quakers believe in the inherent worth of every individual and have a history of supporting both Palestinian and Israeli communities in the region. One of our organizations, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), established the first refugee camps in Gaza in 1949 and continues to work in Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel today. Indeed, we have a longstanding presence in what is now Israel and Palestine, dating back to the 1800s. Quakers established the Ramallah Friends Schools over 150 years ago, one of the first institutions to educate Palestinian women. Palestinian Quakers continue to worship at the historic Friends Meeting House in Ramallah.

With these deep roots, we speak with firsthand knowledge. In a context where entrenched inequality, violence, and injustice have persisted for decades, we anticipated that desperation would eventually boil over - and sadly, it has.

The last six months have been marked by constant grief. The devastating attack by Hamas on October 7th in Israel claimed the lives of 1,163 Israelis and resulted in over 250 people being taken hostage. As of early April 2024, Israel's subsequent attacks on Gaza have killed at least 33,000 Palestinians, with thousands missing and presumed dead under the rubble.

Since October 7th, over 7,500 Palestinians from the West Bank and thousands more from Gaza, including children, have been imprisoned, many without charge or trial. Shockingly, more than 40 percent of those killed in Gaza have been children, surpassing the global count of child casualties in all other conflicts from 2019 to 2022. Countless children have been orphaned and maimed as a result.

In Gaza, hospitals, schools, universities, aid distribution centers, mosques, and churches have all been bombed and destroyed, leaving no safe space. Over 70% of homes have been damaged or destroyed, with more than 1.9 million people displaced.

Essential systems such as healthcare, water, and sanitation have collapsed, leading to preventable deaths, surgeries without anesthesia, and pregnant women giving birth in tents and without proper care.

AFSC staff in Gaza have shared horrendous accounts of starvation used as a tool of war. Children in Gaza are starving to death. The World Health Organization predicts that up to 80,000 more lives will be lost to disease and starvation if no immediate action is taken. This crisis surpasses anything many of us have witnessed in our decades of responding to disasters worldwide.

The continued restrictions on aid access and Israel's failure to respect and protect humanitarian workers have created an environment where it is nearly impossible for organizations to provide assistance. This dire situation has pushed the Gaza population to the brink of extreme food insecurity and imminent famine. Hundreds of local and foreign aid workers have been targeted and killed, and AFSC's relief staff continue to face extreme insecurity, sharing with us that they are "still alive by chance."

Disturbingly, instead of increasing aid provisions, major actors such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and other members of the international community have cut off or delayed funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Unproven Israeli allegations linking UNRWA employees to the October 7th attack have had severe repercussions on the welfare of the most vulnerable population the agency serves.

Immediate action is needed so that killings and suffering can end. That starts with a permanent ceasefire, the release of hostages and prisoners, and unrestricted humanitarian access in Gaza.

In January, the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel's actions in Gaza might constitute genocide. Regrettably, Israel has taken no steps to change its behavior since this ruling, ignoring the court's provisional measures. Western governments, especially the United States, the United Kingdom, and key European states, continue to provide arms and support to Israel. Their complicity, along with unilateral vetoes preventing repeated ceasefire resolutions at the UN Security Council, raises concerns about international commitments to multilateralism and respect for international legal frameworks.

Finally, Western leaders must look beyond this moment and work towards achieving a just and lasting peace in Palestine and Israel. Violence is not limited to Gaza. More than 500 Palestinians, including more than 100 children, have been killed in the West Bank by Israeli soldiers and settlers since October 7. Settler and military violence has resulted in the complete depopulation of 16 Palestinian villages, causing fear and tension to permeate the whole population. Restricting worship and access to mosques and churches further infringes on freedom of worship and exacerbates tensions.

Over the last several years, a growing number of international human rights organizations have recognized Israel's treatment of Palestinians as meeting the legal definition of apartheid. In the face of this pervasive injustice, Quakers stand firm in our witness, as we have throughout history against racial inequality, South African apartheid, and all forms of war.

Even in this time of violence and pain, we hold the belief that a different future, free from injustice and violence, is possible. Lasting peace and reconciliation will be realized when both past and ongoing injustices are acknowledged and addressed, ensuring freedom, dignity, equal rights, and justice for all people living in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Let us work together to make this vision a reality.

(continued on the next page)

Now is the time for action. As Quakers and as peacemakers we are called to actively live into our testimonies of equality and peace. To this end, we urgently put forward these calls to action:

To the **Israeli** government:

1. End attacks on Gaza, commit to a permanent ceasefire, withdraw from reoccupied areas of Gaza, and end the Gaza blockade.
2. Cease settler and military violence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
3. Guarantee uninterrupted, unconditional, swift, and adequate humanitarian access in Gaza and open land crossings.
4. Hold accountable those who have violated the law or committed human rights abuses, including settlers.
5. Release Palestinian political prisoners and hostages and provide fair trials following international standards free from coercion, torture, and abuse.
6. Guarantee the self-determination of Palestinians by ending its occupation of all Palestinian territory and ensure Palestinians and Israelis share equal human, political, and civil rights currently denied under Israeli Occupation.

To **Hamas** and other armed Palestinian groups:

1. Release Israeli hostages.
2. Commit to and maintain a permanent ceasefire as a long-term, just, and sustainable peace is sought.
3. Hold accountable those who have violated the law or committed human rights abuses.

To **Western leaders** and the US and UK governments in particular:

1. Urgently press for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and Israel.
2. End complicity in Israeli human rights violations and exert levers of power with immediate economic and political pressure on the government of Israel, including imposing an arms embargo.
3. Actively work to ensure uninterrupted humanitarian access in Gaza, especially through ground entry points, and commit to funding and protecting UNRWA.
4. Hold accountable those who have violated the law or committed human rights abuses.
5. Uphold international law, demand equal accountability for State and non-state actors, and enforce the ICJ provisions imposed on Israel.
6. Support an end to Israel's occupation and equal protection and rights for all.
7. Ensure an inclusive political process for peace that incorporates all voices, perspectives, and political factions, especially those marginalized or acting as potential spoilers and those most affected by injustice and violence.

As **Friends**, we will continue to support the global community of Quakers to:

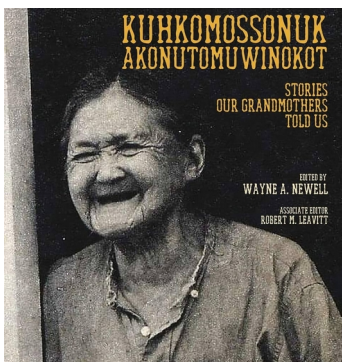
1. Urgently call and fervently work for a permanent ceasefire and amplify our voices in our communities and at the local, state, and national levels.
2. Encourage decision-makers calling for a ceasefire and working for peace.
3. Organize and participate in teach-ins, actions, and protests until a ceasefire and a just and lasting peace are realized.
4. Actively support an end to Israel's occupation and equal protection and rights for all people living under Israeli control and commit to actions as meetings/churches until this reality is realized.
5. Divest from corporations profiting from militarism, including the occupation of Palestine.
6. Support those in Israel and Palestine who are working for peace.

INFORMATION FOR MAY'S PRIMARY ELECTION

Early voting for the May 21 primary began April 29. Go to <https://mvp.sos.ga.gov/> to find out what districts you'll be voting in following redistricting and where you'll be voting and see a sample ballot. State Senate and House districts have been most affected, but your district for other races may have changed as well. The AJC and Atlanta Civic Circle have created Georgia Decides, an online voter guide containing information on the more than 700 candidates running for office in Georgia from Congress to judges to county commissioners. Visit atlantaciviccircle.org/elections-2024/ or www.ajc.com/politics/voter-guide/georgia-decides-may-2024/.

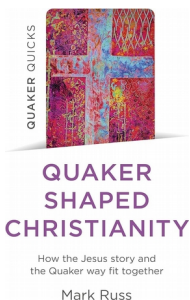
CHECK OUT THESE RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

Kuhkomossonuk Akonutomuwinokot: Stories Our Grandmother's Told Us



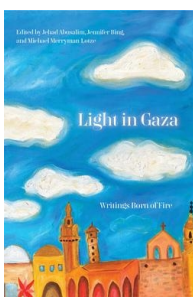
The Passamaquoddy people, whose homeland stretches across Maine and New Brunswick, have a rich and varied storytelling tradition. This collection of Passamaquoddy stories was brought together by Wayne Newell, a member of the tribe and the former director of the American Friends Service Committee's Wabanaki Program. Wayne spent a lifetime working to care for his people and reimagine indigenous-settler relations. Those interested in restorative justice for First Nations peoples will find this book interesting not only as a unique window into the Passamaquoddy way of life, but also as a glimpse into the personal foundation that supported Wayne's lifelong work.

Quaker Shaped Christianity: How the Jesus Story and the Quaker Way Fit Together



The members of our meeting demonstrate a variety of relationships to the Christian tradition, varying from lifelong participation to complete non-identification. Mark Russ' *Quaker-Shaped Christianity* presents one friend's experience as a queer Christian in a liberal Quaker community, and the approach to Christianity he has developed as a member of that community. In describing this approach, friend Russ continually returns to the importance of diversity in Quaker belief, and in fact describes his particular commitment to Christianity as a way to celebrate that diversity. He encourages all meetings to "break the silence" and engage in more direct spiritual sharing. A short read sure to be of interest to Christians, non-Christians trying to understand the Quaker relationship to Christianity, and those working to enrich the spiritual life of the meeting.

Light in Gaza: Writings Born of Fire



Gaza is currently the center of the world's attention, and the center of a pervasive and terrible grief. *Light in Gaza*, an anthology of contemporary Palestinian writers, attempts to imagine the future of Gaza beyond that grief, and beyond the violent repression of colonialism. The writings collected here not only offer a profile of the Palestinian experience under occupation, but also a vision of what that experience might become in a liberated future. Sure to be of interest to anyone seeking a deeper, more humanistic understanding of the Palestinian people.

A friendly reminder - please return checked-out books once you're done with them!

EPISTLE FROM FLGBTQC MIDWINTER GATHERING

From February 16th through the 18th, Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns (FLGBTQC) at Atlanta Friends Meeting gathered for food, fellowship and worship sharing.

Atlanta's FLGBTQC is a part of a wider group of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer Quakers across the US and Canada. Our gathering was held in conjunction with the larger group's Midwinter Gathering, which was for many years an in person gathering, then became an online gathering during the pandemic, and with this year's Midwinter became a hybrid gathering. On Saturday afternoon, those of us here in Atlanta joined with others across the United States and Canada on zoom for meeting for worship, a slideshow of photos from past FLGBTQC gatherings going back to the 1970's, and a presentation from a group of activists who assist trans and gender expansive people in relocating from states with oppressive anti-trans laws. Living in one of these states made this particularly moving for us.

Over the weekend, nine people joined us in total. This time together gave us the opportunity for deeper, more relaxed conversations and connections than what is possible during our usual meetings during first Sunday potluck. We were particularly grateful for the opportunity to build connections across generations. We will be continuing to eat together for potluck, but will also meet at the meetinghouse on the fourth of each month, beginning in April, for food, games and conversation to continue to deepen our ties to each other.

We thank the larger FLGTQC group for the occasion to hold this weekend gathering and to consider how we might continue to build community. We thank the Atlanta Friends Meeting for the space to meet and for their support for LGBTQ people over the years.

In peace,

Nina Gooch and Derek Harootune Otis for Atlanta's FLGBTQC

BOOKS BY AND ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR -- Thursday, May 2

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 May 2, they will discuss *The Fraud* by Zadie Smith, and on June 2, *Cane* by Jean Toomer. For questions or the Zoom link, contact Susan Cole (cole2544@bellsouth.net).

MACON QUAKERS WORSHIP – in person Saturday, May 4 & via Zoom on Wednesdays

On May 4, 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. Enter through the side door on Ash Street.

This is in addition to the weekly Wednesday evening meeting for worship via Zoom at 7 pm:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85017745787?pwd=RUQ3OGJPenMrYktXemlxl1d2R3Q2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 850 1774 5787

Passcode: 22Light

MONTHLY FLGBTQC GET TOGETHER – Saturday, May 4 & continuing

AFM's local FLGBTQC group will be holding our second board game night on Saturday, May 4th, at 6:30PM, in the Meetinghouse Library. You (and all your friends) are invited! If you can, please RSVP at <https://tinyurl.com/5yw2c7r5>. We encourage you to bring any board game or other tabletop game you'd like to share with the group. The more the merrier! The only condition is that you be willing to explain the game to new players, or (if its your first time playing it) be willing to learn it along with the rest of us.) Food will be potluck-style. Thank you to everyone who came last time and made our first event such a big success. We had a wonderful evening getting to know each other better, sharing stories, and playing a board game from the 1920's!

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS & ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL – Sundays, May 5, 12, 19, 26

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 May 5, Charles Hicks will share his Spiritual Journey. (To hear Sallie Carpentier's Spiritual Journey heard on April 7, visit <https://tinyurl.com/337xatuv>. To listen to other past Spiritual Journeys, contact Mary Ann Downey at madowney@mindspring.com.)

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.

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. On second, third and fourth Sundays, they're discussing the book *The Perennial Philosophy* by Aldous Huxley. Please come, whether or not you've read the book. On fifth Sundays, Adult First Day School usually has worship sharing based on a query, either that month's query or another query.

POTLUCK – Sunday, May 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 eat together at potluck, and Green Friends will meet during and afterwards. If you can, please bring not only enough food for your family, but also extra for newcomers and guests.

BOOK TALK: *AMERICAN GUN: THE TRUE STORY OF THE AR-15* – Tuesday, May 7

Meeting member Cameron McWhirter will speak at the Atlanta History Center on May 7 at 7 pm about *American Gun: The True Story of the AR-15*, a book he recently co-authored about how a Cold War invention has become the divisive symbol of America's great gun debate. The talk is open to the public. Book signing afterward. More information here americangunbook.com and here <https://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/event/cameron-mcwhirter/>

WELCOME DINNER – Saturday, May 18

Newcomers to Atlanta Friends Meeting are invited to dinner at the home of Sara Partenaude and Stacey Shearer on Saturday, May 18. You'll have a chance to meet other new attenders as well as long-time Quakers in a casual setting. See the announcement sheet for more details. (If you are interested in hosting a summer Welcome Dinner, held on the 18th of each month, please contact Jim Tolmach at 404-294-5194 or jimtolmach@icloud.com.)

CELEBRATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH – Sunday, May 19

The 2023 / 2024 Religious Education school year will end on May 19 with the Celebration of Youth! This is a ritual at Atlanta Friends Meeting for many years, and the teachers, children and AFM community look forward to it each year! Short updates/announcements are made by teachers/children. Teachers, doorkeepers and nursery volunteers will be recognized, and each child will receive a special gift for their engagement and participation in class this school year! (Children in First Day School classes will stay with their parents in Big Meeting for the whole hour. Children in the Nursery may go to the Nursery and will come back to Meeting for Worship for the end of meeting.) Summer classes will be held from May 26 to July 28, and the 2024 / 2025 Religious Education school year will start August 4. (For more details on summer, see below.)

MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – Sunday, Sunday, May 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. The minutes for last month's meeting are below. To find out how meeting for business works, please visit https://atlantaquakers.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines_for_Meeting_for_Business.pdf and <https://www.friendsjournal.org/meeting-for-business-as-spiritual-rehearsal>, which talks about the spiritual side of Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business as well as the ways Quaker process differs from the usual understanding of consensus. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89686276751?pwd=M29EYlIFWEhSQUtZRVVPaIFFYmVDQT09>
Meeting ID: 896 8627 6751
Passcode: 789456

SUMMER RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – Sundays, May 26 to July 28 *(HOW YOU CAN HELP)*

Summer classes will be held from May 26 to July 28, with the 2024/2025 Religious Education school year starting August 4. Over the summer, most Religious Education teachers take a break and committees sign up to teach for a week about how their committee contributes to the life of the Meeting. The Religious Education Committee will support the committees who sign up to teach. We will continue to need nursery volunteers and Doorkeepers for the Elementary class..

- If you are a committee, please reach out to Amanda Gendreau, Clerk of the Religious Education Committee!
- If you are interested in being a doorkeeper this school year, this summer or next school year, please contact Amanda Gendreau! You can also continue to sign up on the volunteer sign up sheet.
- If you are interested in being a religious education teacher next school year, please contact Lissa Place, clerk of the Nominating Committee, now!
- If you are interested in helping in the Nursery this summer, continue to sign up on the volunteer sheet and contact Amanada Gendreau or Nina Gooch for more information!

FORUM WITH THE PEOPLE'S AGENDA: ENSURING A FAIR ELECTION – Sunday, May 26

Social Concerns Committee and Quakers for Racial Equality will sponsor a forum with Gloria Butler, Executive Director of The People's Agenda (<https://thepeoplesagenda.org/>) at 11:45 pm, following meeting for worship. She will tell us how we can help ensure a fair election in November, despite changes in districts and election laws that will challenge us. For more details about the forum, see the announcement sheet. The Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda, founded by the Rev. Joseph Lowery, is an umbrella organization of human rights, civil rights, labor, women's, youth, and peace and justice groups which advocate for voting rights protection, elimination of barriers to the ballot box, criminal justice reform, quality education, affordable housing, economic development and equal participation in the political process for Georgians of color and underrepresented communities.

IN PERSON RESTORATIVE CIRCLE TRAINING – Saturday, June 1

The Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting (CURAFM) invites all participants in Atlanta Friends Meeting to a restorative circle practice session on Saturday June 1, 2024 from 2 to 5 pm at the Atlanta Friends Meetinghouse. The training is the rescheduled session that was canceled on March 16, and will be held in-person only. Our facilitator will be John Lash, the former Executive Director of the Georgia Conflict Center, who has extensive experience with restorative justice circles. John will lead us through proactive and repair harm circle practice scenarios, and take us through the varying roles for circle practitioners by leading a whole group exercise first, and then dividing us into small groups for practice. CURAFM is sponsoring this workshop, so there is no cost to you. For planning purposes, we need to know the number to expect. **Please reply by email to Karen Morris (karenth.1415@gmail.com) by Thursday, May 30.** We look forward to seeing you there!

DISCOUNTS FOR SUMMER CAMPS AT THE MEETING HOUSE



Week 1: June 10-14: ROBOTICS & Creativity:

Learn how robots are built, how they work and how they serve people in a positive way in many different roles.

Week 2: June 17-21: ARTS & Technology:

During ARTS & Technology week, projects will combine the visual arts, technology literacy and mindfulness movement.

For more information and to register, visit: www.make555.com, and enter the code *Friends* for an additional 10% discount.

SAYMA RETREAT AND SESSIONS – June 20 to 23 (deadline for in person registration June 7)

This Summer, Friends from Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA), our yearly meeting, will gather at Berea College in Kentucky for our annual Retreat and Sessions, to conduct business and enjoy workshops and interest groups. This year's theme is **Becoming Breath of Spirit**. From 1:00 p.m. on June 20 to 1:00 p.m. on June 23. Both in person and virtually. Full scholarships from AFM available for Young Adult Friends (18 to 35) and partial scholarships from AFM for others. Contact Mary Ann Downey and Bill Holland of Ministry & Worship for details for both. www.sayma.org now has an Advance Program with more details as well as a link for registration. Deadline for in person registration is June 7 and for virtual registration, June 18.

Friends General Conference (FGC), an umbrella organization of North American unprogrammed monthly meetings like ours, holds an annual Gathering each year, this year at Haverford College near Philadelphia. The Gathering is a week of Quaker worship, workshops and community for all ages. Friends come together to deepen their connections to one another and the Spirit. The theme for 2024 is ***Rooted in Story***. Registration continues thru May 31 or until places are filled. Full scholarships from AFM available for Young Adult Friends (18 to 35) and partial scholarships from AFM for others. Contact Mary Ann Downey and Bill Holland of Ministry & Worship for details for both. For registration and more information, go to fgcquaker.org/gathering2024. For those who wish to cut travel cost as well as the impact on the environment; Amtrak is offering a set of discounts for group travel. These discounts are based on the size of a traveling group and can amount to a 60% discount for a group of eight people traveling via Amtrak. For more information see the link above under Travel. Kevin Moran has agreed to coordinate a group from Atlanta.

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MINUTES FOR FOURTH MONTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS
April 19, 2024, held in person and via Zoom in a blended meeting
Minutes Recorded Pending Approval

Attendance: Richard Allen, Emma Bingham, Rob Collins (visiting from Birmingham), Jennifer Crumpley, Mary Ann Downey, Julia Ewen, Susan Firestone, Waman French, Clive Gordon, Lucinda Hastings, Charles Hicks, Bill Holland, Bill Hooson, Teri Key-Hooson, Elizabeth Lamb, Sue May, John Malbourne Michael, Kevin Moran, Karen terHorst Morris, Derek Harootune Otis, Arianna Rodriguez, Karen Skellie, Jim Tolmach, Myrna Trapp, Elizabeth Valera, Brent Wolff, Jennifer Dickie (Acting Clerk), Nina Gooch (Acting Recording Clerk)

Worship

Query for the Fourth Month:

Do you make your home a place of affection where God’s presence is felt? Can you keep a sense of humor and avoid taking yourself too seriously?

Discernment

- **SAYMA Climate Change Minute** — the Acting Clerk read the minute.

This statement is put forward by SAYMA’s Earth Justice Committee for consideration by the monthly meetings before consideration by SAYMA’s Yearly Sessions and Retreat. It was brought to 2nd month meeting for business at AFM.

The Religious Society of Friends witnesses to the truth of our times. In this moment, we recognize that we are facing an existential crisis that requires a response greater than individual actions. The systemic structures as well as the daily choices of peoples, governments and faith communities across the globe must act in radical concert to address the climate catastrophe we have created.

World leaders will come together for the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (COP29). SAYMA calls on them to acknowledge that the burning of fossil fuels is the primary cause of the climate crisis, and to recognize that many of the nations that are hardest hit by a warming climate have been the least responsible for the crisis and are least able to cope with the consequences. We call on COP29 to clearly state that the existential crisis of climate change requires more than merely an orderly transition. We must end our use of

fossil fuels by 2030. We call on COP29 negotiators to commit to fully finance the Loss and Damage Fund to compensate developing countries, and the Green Climate Fund to implement renewable solutions in developing countries.

The continued burning of fossil fuels is destabilizing the climate, acidifying oceans, and destroying the natural systems that humans and all living creatures depend on. Friends in the Southern Appalachian region are guided by our query for Care of the Earth that asks “How do I hold in the Light the impact of climate change on the 'least of these,' the vulnerable members of the human, animal, and plant communities?”

Every Friend, household, and meeting in our community is asked to be responsive to this query and we all ask our neighbors around the world to take immediate and practical steps to reverse our dependence on fossil fuels and demonstrate a communal reverence for interdependent life.

This statement has been brought forward by SAYMA's Earth Justice Committee, which plays the essential role of helping SAYMA be accountable to our commitment. We acknowledge the work of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and PYM's Climate Witness Stewards, from which we have drawn much of the language in this statement.

A Friend expressed concern that it was impossible to end all use of fossil fuel by 2030, though they agreed with the intent of the minute. They also said that the minute doesn't consider how those in the developing world are being affected.

Another Friend talked about the difficulties of making changes in energy sources giving the example of her own living situation in a condo.

Several Friends said they supported the intent, but that the minute did not seem particularly Quaker. For example, the minute does not mention Simplicity.

Another Friend said that while we do need to end the use of fossil fuel, this minute doesn't suggest any positive changes or how society should change in general, for example, that switching the energy source doesn't end overconsumption.

Another Friend talked about the idea of leading with principles over precedents.

A Friend encouraged the planting of trees.

A Friend expressed gratitude for the SAYMA Earth Justice Committee for bringing the minute. She noted that this committee had been inactive for a long time.

A Friend asked if there was someone who might draft a response, a preamble or notes regarding this minute. Emma Bingham and Brent Wolff offered to do this and bring it back to the next meeting for worship with attention to business.

Atlanta Friends Meeting is not in unity on approving the minute at this time.

- **Ministry and Worship Committee** — Clive Gordon reported for Ministry and Worship Committee.

In third month, Ministry and Worship reported the meeting received an application for membership from Charles Hicks. A clearness committee has met with Charles and found him clear. Ministry and Worship united with that recommendation. Last month we invited Friends to welcome Charles. We now bring our recommendation for discernment by the meeting.

Minute-04-21-24:01: On the recommendation of Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Charles Hicks as a member of Meeting.

Mary Ann Downey presented the book *Walking in the World as a Friend* by Nadine Hoover to Charles.

■ **Nominating Committee** — Jim Tolmach reported for Nominating Committee.

Minute-04-21-24:02: On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, the Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Christina Repoley as a member of Ministry and Worship for a term of April 2024-December 2026.

Minute-04-21-24:03: The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the format shown here for handbook entries.

Purpose: This explains why the committee exists

Membership: Please outline the following:

- Is there a specific number of people that are needed for your committee? How many of them need to be Members of Meeting?
- Who needs to be approved through Business Meeting on your committee?

Terms: Please answer the following questions:

- How long is a term on your committee?
- Are terms consecutive or not? Possible verbiage, “terms are 2 years with up to 3 consecutive terms”
- Mention ideal staggering of terms

Meetings:

- What is the frequency of your committee’s meetings?
- Is your meeting open or closed; meaning, are people allowed to visit your committee meetings?

Duties: What is the work of your committee and how is it done?

Other: Are there any specific additional items special to your committee that have not yet been covered? Please detail them here.

Notes:

- The first time an acronym is used in a description, please spell it out.
- Nominating Committee will be reminding each committee to examine their description annually for changes in their duties, and we will do a more thorough revision of the Handbook every five years.
- The date of the most recent revision will be added under the heading after it has been approved by Meeting for Business.
- Pronouns should be edited to include gender neutral pronouns

Julia Ewen, who is on SAYMA Nominating Committee, asked that our Nominating Committee pass on to her the names of any people who might be suitable for a SAYMA committee.

■ **Finance Committee** — Paul Mangelsdorf reported for Finance Committee.

Minute-04-21-24:04: On the recommendation of the Finance Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves opening an investment account with Friends Fiduciary Corporation. We further approve transferring the Meeting’s existing investment funds from the Impax Sustainable Value Fund to the Friends Fiduciary Corporation. We approve creating a separate sub-account at Friends Fiduciary for our new endowment. Finally, we authorize the Treasurer and the Finance Committee to take all actions necessary to open the account and transfer the funds.

Minute-04-21-24:05: On the recommendation of the Finance Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the Finance Committee's proposed amendments to our existing Donations Policy to take effect immediately and to remain in effect until amended or revoked at some later date.

Minute-04-21-24:06: On the recommendation of the Finance Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the Finance Committee's proposed Endowment Policy to take effect immediately and to remain in effect until amended or revoked at some later date.

Minute-04-21-24:07: On the recommendation of the Finance Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the Finance Committee's proposed Investment Policy to take effect immediately and to remain in effect until amended or revoked at some later date.

These policies are attached to these minutes and will go onto the website.

[Editor's Note: They can also be read at <https://tinyurl.com/bdeaufhd>.]

Thanks was expressed to the Finance Committee for their work.

Reports

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

Quarterly Financial Report

As of March 31, 2024, AFM is running a \$22,654 deficit YTD. A deficit through this part of the year is usual, as contribution income is largely received in the 4th quarter. The deficit is \$5,110 less than the \$27,766 deficit that was budgeted through March. Revenue YTD is \$4,204 higher than budget and expenses are \$905 less than budget.

Revenue YTD is \$1,986 less than the same period in the prior year driven by lower donations (\$1,442 less than 2023) and slightly lower rental income (\$631 less this year).

Expenses are running \$14,778 more than the prior year driven by the change in timing of the Gifts and Affiliations (\$9,175) as all the gift payments except the 2nd – 4th quarter payments to SAYMA were made in the first quarter. This year we have \$1,522 in costs for the upcoming Gathered Meeting Retreat (no retreat has been held since COVID. Additionally, we have \$420 in unbudgeted expense as the final payment for legal work related to the neighbor encroaching on the cabin property. All other variances are purely a timing issue.

Compared to year-end, our balance sheet is \$18,587 smaller. This is primarily the result of the YTD deficit of (\$22,655) offset by the seasonal increase in the Beloved Community Scholarship 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 \$6,179 which resulted in higher Checking balances. In keeping with our practice, we maintain lower balances in our checking account as it does not earn any interest.

- **Ministry and Worship** — Clive Gordon reported for Ministry and Worship Committee.

Meeting for Threshing on Israel and Palestine War. On March 31, Ministry and Worship sponsored a Threshing Session on the ongoing conflict in Israel/Palestine. We invited Friends to share how they were led at this time and the concerns and questions that arose. The forum was held in hybrid forum and thirty Friends attended in person with six joining online. We heard a diversity of views and concerns. As this was a threshing session, there is no action required at this time, but much to think about going forward.

We encourage Friends to consider opportunities to attend our Yearly Meeting Sessions in Berea Kentucky and/or Friends General Conference Gatherings at Haverford College in Pennsylvania.

