

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

JUNE 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 JUNE

What do you do on a daily basis to support simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, stewardship?

WHAT TO DO IN THE MEETING FOR WORSHIP

by N Jean Toomer

from the booklet "An Interpretation of Friends Worship" published by Friends General Conference in 1947, which can be found at <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/24576/pg24576-images.html>

I never go to the meeting with an "itch to speak," though it sometimes happens to me, as to others, that I am moved to speak before arriving at the meeting house. Even so, I usually restrain the urge until we have had at least a short period of silent waiting before God. One is vain indeed if [they] think that [their] words are more important than this waiting. If I have not been moved to speak before arriving, such an impulse, if it comes at all, is likely to arise after I have been waiting a while. It arises within my silence. An insight or understanding flashes into my mind. A prayer or a pleading or a brief exhortation comes upon me. I hold it in mind and look at it, and at myself. I examine it.

Is this a genuine moving that deserves expression in a meeting for worship or had I best curb and forget it? May it have some real meaning for others, and is it suited to the condition of this meeting? Can I phrase it clearly and simply? If it passes these tests, I regard it as something to be said but I am not yet sure it should be said here and now. To find out how urgent it is, I press it down and try to forget it. If time passes and it does not take hold of me with increased strength, I conclude that it is not to be spoken of at this time. If, on the other hand, it will not be downed, if it rebounds and insists and will not leave me alone, I give it expression.

If it turns out that the words were spoken more in my own will than in the power, I feel that egotistical -- I have done it, and that this self-doing has set me apart from the other members of the meeting. I am dissatisfied until again immersed in the life of the group. But if it seems that I have been an instrument of the power, I have the feeling that the power has done it and has, by this very act, joined those assembled even closer. Having spoken, I feel at peace once again, warmed and made glowing by the passage of a living current through me to my fellows. With a heightened sense of fellowship with man and God, I resume my silent practices . . . The message should form with the silence a seamless whole."

MORE ABOUT AFRICAN-AMERICAN QUAKERS

- The Book Group reading Books by and about People of Color is reading Jean Toomer's *Cane* this month. See below for more details.
- Following the release of the movie *Rustin*, there has been renewed interest in Bayard Rustin and his widespread activism. One example is this *New Yorker* article: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/11/13/eclipsed-in-his-era-bayard-rustin-gets-to-shine-in-ours>
- *Black Fire: African American Quakers on Spirituality and Human Rights*, edited by Harold D. Weaver Jr., Paul Kriese, and Steven W. Angell, contains writings by Jean Toomer (including the selection above) and Bayard Rustin as well as Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806), William Boen (1735-1824), Paul Cuffe (1759-1817), Elizabeth (1766-1866), Sojourner Truth (1799-1883), Sarah Mapps Douglass (1806-1882), Robert Purvis (1810-1898), Howard Thurman (1899-1981), Ira DeAugustine Reid (1901-1968), Barrington Dunbar (1901-1978), Helen Morgan Brooks (1904-1989), Mahala Ashley Dickerson (1912-2007), Bill Sutherland (1918-2010), Charles Nichols (1919-2007), George Sawyer (1925-2002), Vera Green (1928-1982). There's a copy in the meeting library (<https://atlantaquakers.org/library/>) along with other related books. It's also available thru the Friends General Conference bookstore at <https://quakerbooks.org/products/black-fire-2251> or thru the Black Quaker Project.
- According to their website, <https://www.theblackquakerproject.org/>, the BlackQuaker Project (1) celebrates the lives and contributions of Quakers of Color worldwide and (2) documents and addresses their concerns. It is an outreach and in-reach ministry of Wellesley Friends Meeting, guided by the Quaker testimonies of Truth, Peace, Equality, Community, and Justice.”
- In a newsletter post, the Black Quaker Project asks why there are so few African American Quakers <https://mailchi.mp/cb8e4efb23d8/why-are-there-so-few-african-american-quakers?>

PLEASE HOLD IN THE LIGHT:

Becky Lough & family
Derek Otis' father
Bill Hooson & family
Jessamine Ewing & family
Angie Bonner

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: Clive Gordon, 404-534-1091
Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280
Social Concerns: Kevin Moran, moran.kevinmoran.kevin@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, atquakerltr@gmail.com
Webmaster: Emma Bingham, afm.web.wizard@gmail.com
Bookkeeper: Jonah McDonald, afmbookkeeper1@gmail.com

For info about these and other committees, visit or download the AFM Handbook from <https://atlantaquakers.org/handbook/> OR contact the Clerk of the committee you're interested in.

VIDEO AND RESOURCES FROM MARCH 24 QRE FORUM WITH UPLIFTING PEOPLE

Ponchellis Jackson of Uplifting People, Inc (<https://upliftingpeople.org/>) spoke to Quakers for Racial Equality (QRE) on March 24. He talked about his own success story as a returning citizen and how Uplifting People, Inc. helps people transition out of the criminal justice system by offering housing, career training, and career placement to individuals released from Georgia's prisons, as well as mentoring to youth. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VeK8wJbZOqVTybhuf4j7z3ZtYljfW8Ao/view?usp=sharing> has the video of the meeting. (There is a moment near the beginning when a participant is unmuted. The rest of the video is fine.) Uplifting People, Inc. welcomes contributions and volunteers. To help, see <https://upliftingpeople.org/donate/> or contact Ponchellis Jackson pjackson@upliftingpeople.org (404 -536-3343)

RECORDING & RESOURCES: FCNL QUAKER VOICES FOR TRUTH, HEALING & JUSTICE

Several people from AFM were able to participate in the April 24 Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) webinar on "Quaker Voices for Truth, Healing, and Justice." The presenters have shared a recording of the webinar as well as a number of excellent resources on the Native American Boarding School Truth and Healing Commission: <https://tinyurl.com/3sbus8mj>.

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has released its 2023 Annual Report which includes highlights from its worldwide work for peace, migrant rights, and economic justice. https://afsc.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/2023-annual-report_web.pdf.

UPDATE ON STREET PARKING

In addition to the parking places in our lot, there are 9 parking places on the street in front of the meeting house, seven between the two entrances to the parking lot and two -- only two -- between the western driveway and Lansdowne, towards the city of Atlanta. (Unfortunately, there's no clear signage, but please park **behind** the neighbor's mailbox.) There are also six parking spots on the other side of the street, towards downtown Decatur, between the two forks of the street crossing the tracks. There may be parking spaces available on the side streets, but parking is illegal within 30 feet of Howard Avenue (or any stop sign), so people can see to make turns onto Howard. Again, there's no signage, but on Adair Street, this means parking within the white painted boxes. On other streets, it means don't park next to the white lines painted at the edge of the streets. Also, please be a good neighbor and don't block anyone's driveway.

WANT TO HEAR ABOUT AFM WALKS / HIKES?

Karen and Bert Skellie organize walks and hikes twice a month (usually the second Saturday and the fourth Tuesday). If you'd like to get announcements about these, just let email Bert at bertskellie@gmail.com. The Saturday walks are flat with 2-3 mile options. The weekday hikes have some hills but usually about 3 miles. Usually within the perimeter, some no more than 30 miles from Meetinghouse. Mostly in the morning.

IN PERSON RESTORATIVE CIRCLE TRAINING – Saturday, June 1 (RSVP by May 30)

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!

MACON QUAKERS WORSHIP – in person Saturday, June 1 & via Zoom on Wednesdays

On June 1, 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

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS & ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL – Sundays, June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

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 June 2, Howie Sankofa will share his Spiritual Journey. (To hear Charles Hicks' Spiritual Journey heard on May 5, visit <https://tinyurl.com/376669fh>. 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 thru June 16, they're discussing the book *The Perennial Philosophy* by Aldous Huxley. Please come, whether or not you've read the book. On June 23, they'll be selecting the next book.

On fifth Sundays, including June 30, Adult First Day School has worship sharing based on a query, either that month's query or another query.

SUMMER RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – Sundays, June 2 to July 28 (HOW YOU CAN HELP)

Summer classes will be held thru 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!

TO SIGN UP TO HELP ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

We invite your help in making worship and fellowship possible on Sundays as well as creating a space for our youngest Friends to learn about Quakerism and to become a part of the Meeting. We just need nine people each Sunday (twelve for potluck Sundays). If everyone who could, helped once every month or two, that would be plenty of volunteers.

<https://tinyurl.com/afmvolunteerguide2023> has information about the various ways you can help.

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

POTLUCK – Sunday, June 2

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.

MONTHLY FLGBTQC GAME NIGHT – Tuesday, June 4 & continuing

AFM's local FLGBTQC (Friends for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer Concens) group will be holding our monthly board game night on Tuesday, June 4 at 6:30PM, in the Meetinghouse Library. You (and all your friends) are invited for conversation, games and potluck-style food! If you can, RSVP here: <https://forms.gle/sYnJHDqVPwMcvVVD6>. 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. Our last board game night was incredibly successful, with over ten attendees in total. The food was great, the games were fun, and the fellowship was wonderful. We may not get that number every time, but it wonderful to see so many moments of laughter and connection. For those who can't make it to this event, remember that FLGBTQC meets twice each month -- once during the whole meeting potluck on the first Sunday of the month, and once on the 4th day of each month. We hope to see you around! Allies welcome.

BOOKS BY AND ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR -- Thursday, June 6

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 June 6, they will discuss *Cane* by Jean Toomer. Upcoming books include:

July 11, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin (note date change)

August 1, *Beyond the Door of No Return: A Novel* by David Diop (256 pages)

September 5, poetry selected by the group

October 3, *Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America 1619-2019*

November 7, *Behind You Is the Sea: A Novel* by Susan Muaddi Darraj

December 5, *Daughters of the Dust* by Julie Dash

For questions or the Zoom link, contact Susan Cole (cole2544@bellsouth.net).

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 ***Becomng 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.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY WORKSHOP -- Saturday, June 8

June 8, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm at the meetinghouse. Learn what you can do to effectively help advocate for change in government policies with Lobbyist Jeff Willard. Sponsored by Georgians Against the Death Penalty, Tzedek Georgia, and the meeting. Bring your own lunch, but snacks and drinks provided. More details at <https://www.gfadp.org/upcoming-events>; scroll down. Free, but RSVP at <https://actionnetwork.org/events/gfadp-legislative-advocacy-day-sat-june-8-2024>.

MINUTES FOR FIFTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS

May 19, 2024, held in person and via Zoom in a blended meeting

Minutes Recorded Pending Approval

Attendance: Don Bender, Judy Bender, Cheryll Cowherd, Jennifer Crumpley, Julia Ewen, Sally Ferguson, Susan Firestone, Anton Flores, Amanda Gendreau, Clive Gordon, Lucinda Hastings, Bill Holland, Teri Key-Hooson, Bill Hooson, Elizabeth Lamb, Georgia Lord, Ellen McQueen, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Jim Tolmach, Myrna Trapp, Ian “big Softy” Wells, David Small (Clerk), Emma Bingham (Recording Clerk)

Worship

Query for the Fourth Month:

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?

Discernment:

- **Social Concerns** — Kevin Moran reported for Social Concerns Committee.

Minute supporting Casa Alterna’s ministry requires approval by substituting the phrase “radical hospitality” with “compassionate hospitality.” If approved, the amended minute will be submitted to the May meeting for business.

Kevin explained that radical hospitality means that “whoever comes to my door is welcome”, and that was Social Concerns Committee’s intent behind the use of the word “radical”. They understand the outside world does not understand this meaning, so they are substituting the word “compassionate”.

Proposed Amended Minute in Support of Casa Alterna

The Atlanta Friends Meeting expresses deep concern about the spread of misinformation by media, and elected officials regarding humanitarian assistance asylum seekers receive at Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. Acts of hospitality should never lead to threats of violence requiring FBI involvement. Guided by peace, equality, and integrity, we unwaveringly support Casa Alterna and Team Libertad, urging responsible information-sharing by the media and elected officials. We are grateful for Team Libertad's witness, providing asylum seekers hospitality. Despite false accusations, their compassionate work is the kind of welcome those seeking asylum deserve. We are thankful for Team Libertad's close ties with Casa Alterna, a ministry under the care of the Atlanta Friends Meeting that has hosted over 500 asylum-seeking guests at our meetinghouse over the past four years. Quaker values stress truth and integrity. In this polarized campaign season, we call for accountability and urge the end of unfiltered lies by politicians and the verification of facts by the media to prevent the spread of xenophobia and intolerance. Acts of compassionate hospitality reflect Quaker beliefs and the call to respond to the divine within everyone. Team Libertad, Casa Alterna, and their volunteers embody love and foster acceptance amid adversity. As the Atlanta Friends Meeting, we strive for nonviolent social change. Therefore, we urge officials to act empathetically, speak the truth, and support policies upholding all individuals' rights and inherent dignity. No one should flee persecution in their homeland only to face scapegoating and repression in the United States. Thank you, Team Libertad, Casa Alterna, and volunteers, for welcoming newcomers as friends, not strangers.

Minute-05-19-24:01: The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the minute in support of Casa Alterna.

The background for this minute is that someone saw the Team Libertad office at the airport and thought it meant asylum seekers were being 'hidden' from the authorities in order to smuggle them into the country illegally, and this story was taken up by the media.

A Friend asked if we would like to send this to the newspaper to be published. Kevin said he'd be happy to do that with the permission of the clerk.

■ **Ministry and Worship** — Clive Gordon reported for Ministry & Worship Committee.

Report from Richard Allen's Anchoring Committee:

Ministry & Worship reviewed a recent report from Richard Allen's anchoring committee and found that Richard's music ministry continues to be active as noted by his offering of his piano composition at the recent threshing session related to Israel and Gaza.

Minute-05-19-24:02: Atlanta Friends Meeting recognizes and supports the continuing ministry of Richard Allen. Our meeting and many Friends beyond our meeting are enriched by his faithfulness to serve as a channel of love through music.

Minute-05-19-24:03: Ministry & Worship recommends to Atlanta friends meeting the reappointment of Susan Firestone, Karen Morris, Ron Nuse, and Bert Skellie to serve on the Anchoring Committee for Richard Allen's ministry.

Reports:

■ **Ministry and Worship** — Clive Gordon reported for Ministry & Worship Committee.

In response to suggestions from the community, the forum scheduled for June 30th will focus on "Holding in the Light" as a Quaker practice, instead of the "Four Doors to Meeting for Worship" as previously announced.

The Four Doors to Meeting for Worship forum will be rescheduled to a later time.

■ **SAYMA Climate Change Minute** — Emma Bingham reported about the climate change minute.

Brent Wolff and I were tasked to draft some notes or a response to the climate change minute put forward by SAYMA's [Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association's] Earth Justice Committee. Derek Harootune Otis also joined us. We sensed that we would not be able to satisfactorily revise the minute so that Atlanta Friends Meeting would be able to come to unity around it. Therefore, we would like to suggest that AFM send a note to SAYMA that we could not reach unity, perhaps with a link to the 4th and 5th month Meeting for Business minutes showing the discussion of the minute.

The three of us had what I see as two main threads of concern, after thinking it over and taking into consideration the comments at 4th month meeting for business.

- We felt that the minute does not capture what we believe Quakers have to offer spiritually in this crisis. In particular, Friends are better equipped than others to point out the ways that simple and climate-conscious living not only has a material benefit for the climate but a spiritual benefit for the individual. There are many people and organizations calling (rightly) for urgent solutions to the climate crisis, but fewer offering an understanding of the moral foundation for living an ecological life. We believe Friends' traditions can speak to that foundation.

- At the same time, we recognize that the climate crisis is urgent and that Quakers can move slowly. And we also recognize that the solutions to climate change must come not just from individuals, but also from institutions. Informed by an understanding of our moral foundations, we'd like to continue to advocate for actions by governments, corporations, and other groups.

We suggest that if there is interest, this meeting should draft its own minute, perhaps led by Green Friends. We would like to see a minute informed by Quaker tradition. We can look to our history to find exemplars of simplicity and personal witness in the face of other moral crises. To that end, Derek (who is the meeting's librarian) is going to look into this history.

Brent added that one question we had was what is our autonomy in responding to this minute. Are we under an obligation to come to some kind of unity on this for SAYMA so that the minute can go out?

A Friend said Green Friends received this minute, sent from SAYMA by Roy Taylor. Green Friends approved it as is. They said they thought that this minute, if not approved, would have to go back out to every other meeting and most likely wouldn't go forward this year.

She added for historical context that Green Friends also approved a minute on climate change years ago in the early 2000s.

The statement from SAYMA was re-read by the clerk. (See 4th month meeting for business minutes for the text.)

A Friend thanked Green Friends for bringing this minute forward from SAYMA. SAYMA's Earth Justice Committee is newly revived. He thinks they would benefit from us taking a position now and approving this minute now.

A Friend said that when this was first brought up, there was a concern about faithful practice. It hit him this time that this was an external request. If that means it doesn't come before SAYMA this session, so be it. He is not comfortable with it now, as it is only addressing institutions and not saying anything about what local meetings and Friends can do to move this forward. For example, here, we have put in solar panels, we're looking into more environmentally-friendly kitchen appliances, etc. He would like to see a minute from SAYMA about how to begin with personal changes and then move to external.

Brent said he is grateful for this conversation, and feels a little guilty because we were tasked to revise it, but as we thought about it, we realized we couldn't come to unity. Speed is not always part of the Quaker process, but given time we can usually come up with the right answer. The statement sounds like it might have come from a climate NGO rather than a Quaker meeting, and it should reflect our values more. In terms of process, he asked if it was too late to put it on the agenda for the SAYMA sessions, and for now just say we don't feel comfortable to move forward as it is.

A Friend asked whether COP29 — which the minute addresses — had already happened or not. (It will occur in November 2024.)

A Friend asked if there was a way to send a note to SAYMA with the things we're concerned about.

A Friend said he was not comfortable with the minute, especially as two-thirds was copied from a different minute from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. He thinks SAYMA has important things to say about the environment. A constructive step will be to send our meeting for business minutes to them. He posed the query: what truth can we speak now about this climate crisis we are having?

A Friend said her recollection was that when AFM has said they were not in unity on something, the SAYMA reps have gone and done that something anyways. Is it still possible for SAYMA, in their business meeting, to approve part of this minute? Also, what about the option of standing aside?

A Friend made the point that AFM has responded with silence after a number of key events in the past 10 years, missing the opportunity to develop minutes on topics such as making roads safer, Tortugita's murder, the pipeline, Occupy Wall Street, and Cop City protestors at Emory. There are cases where a few people are able to hold up a whole group of people so that consensus cannot be reached. The monthly meetings make up SAYMA, it's not like there is a Pope handing down rulings that could excommunicate us. He doesn't understand why he's in a Quaker meeting discussing the environment... he should be at Morehouse right now. He feels like he's selling out by being at a Quaker meeting right now. Students are at Morehouse protesting nonviolently. He asked the meeting to think about when we don't say anything.

The clerk said, as he knows it, a person can't prevent consensus, an idea can.

The clerk said the sense of the meeting is that we will go to SAYMA and explain to them why we're not in unity and go from there.

A Friend said this will be on the agenda at SAYMA because the Earth Justice Committee has put it on the agenda. She added she thinks it's good we're all discussing this as meetings.

Announcements

- Amanda Gendreau, clerk of Religious Education, said **committees should sign up for slots to take a First Day School session during the summer**. So far, only two committees have signed up. Committees can do activities with the children to show their role as part of the community of Quaker meeting.
 - Contact Amanda at amandagendreau5@gmail.com.
 - Members of the committee don't need a background check. A teacher will be there with the committee. Also, if a committee needs help, the teachers can help develop the activities based on what the committee wants to do.
- **Macon Worship Group clerk, Kellie Divis, is stepping back as clerk, and Pam Wilkins is stepping in**. Pam will be visiting Atlanta Friends Meeting next week. A minute of thanks will be developed for Kellie's service.
- Signup is open for the **SAYMA yearly sessions and retreat**, which will take place June 20–23 at Berea College in Kentucky. Visit sayma.org to sign up.
 - Big Softy reported that there will be a few bicycles there so that people can bike around campus.
- **The clerk will be spending a month at Ramallah Friends School this summer**. A Friend asked how we can support him while he's there. Can the meeting formally endorse his time there?
 - The clerk said he doesn't need support, but Ramallah Friends does. They are struggling right now. Students are not allowed on campus because of settler violence, the soccer team captain is still under arrest, families can't pay tuition because of the economic collapse.

