

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025



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
(For those who prefer a more intimate worship experience, we have resumed small meetings for worship in the library at 10 am.)

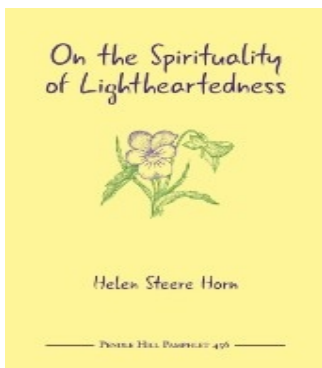
Details for Sunday worship and for our Wednesday small meetings for worship as well as worship opportunities with the Macon Worship Group, in person and via zoom, are in the announcement sheet (link just above).

QUERY FOR MARCH

Do I hold in the Light the responsibility to share my views even though I perceive I may be a minority of one? How do I discern when to stand in the way or when to stand aside?

BOOK REVIEW: *On the Spirituality of Lightheartedness* by Helen Steere Horn

by Derek Harootune Otis



this Pendle Hill pamphlet is in the AFM Library
Call Number: PH 456 (Pendle Hill Pamphlet 456)

Helen Steere Horn was a poet, a lifelong Quaker, and a lifelong member of the Pendle Hill community. This pamphlet is her message about the value of lightheartedness as a spiritual practice. As the pamphlet, organized into short passages, moves through each of its sections, Helen's idea of lightheartedness becomes more and more complex: at times it is basically leisure, the practice of joy as a relief from the heaviness of the world; at other times, it is almost the opposite, a lightness found precisely in the middle of the world's weight as we embrace it and lift it up. For Helen, the common thread that ties these different kinds of lightheartedness together

is Jesus as Lord of the Dance. She imagines him as a master who, in the very moment he asks his followers to take up a burden, reverses his step, and makes it light. Just the same, this pamphlet has a sudden, surprising feeling, full of nuances and pin-turns, like good conversation. In these days when we are surrounded by so many heavy things, I think it is a worthwhile read. To Helen's idea of Jesus as Lord of the Dance, I would respond with another idea that rhymes with it: "heavy is the root of light," and the light is master of the heavy, and indeed, we'll need both in the days to come.

**PLEASE HOLD
IN THE LIGHT:**

Diane Rowley and family
Carol Gray
Donna Roberts
Myrna & Bob Trapp
Judy Lumb's sister Becky
Suzie Lippold's sister Elizabeth

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
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Administration: Jack Honderd, jkhonderd@gmail.com
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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
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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.

DEATH OF DEE DEBRA

Dee DeBra, long-time member and teacher for First Day School, died Friday, February 7. Cards can be sent to Liz DeBray, 507 Coventry Road, Decatur, GA 30030. A memorial service will be held at a later date. You can read her October 2021 Spiritual Journey at <https://tinyurl.com/375d2ehu>.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE HELD FOR ELIZABETH SICELOFF

There was a celebration of life for Mary Sicheloff on Saturday, February 22 at the Sacramento (CA) Friends Meeting and via Zoom. Mary, who died December 23, 2024, was the daughter of Courtney and Elizabeth Sicheloff, long time members of the meeting. Mary grew up on St Helena Island, SC, an African-American cultural and educational center. (A picture of her parents, Dr. King, and her older brother hangs in the library.) Sally Ferguson says, "Mary was creative and brave, leaving a legacy of excellence and kindness. She started each morning with a 'word of the day' to guide her daily intentions and purpose. She was a mime, actor, art lover, legal marketer, producer of television commercials and visual effects. (The visual effects she helped produce for the movie *Total Recall* won an Academy Award.) She founded and ran an art gallery and tea room, along with her independent film-screening series, Fringe Film. She excelled as a dog socializer, lover of the outdoors and friend. The Mary we knew was brave, whip smart, with a sense of humor and kind; I'll miss her laugh. Mary edited and published her brother's book, *Lowcountry Blood, A Memoir*, an account of growing up in the Gullah community. According to her introduction, it recounts 'the work that the Beloved Community had done, about how it had forged us all and lit the long road forward.' " Our AFM library has a copy. In lieu of flowers, Mary's family encourages donations in her memory to the Sacramento SPCA, where she was a regular volunteer.

INTERESTED IN DEEPENING YOUR SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE?

Are you interested in deepening your spiritual experience at AFM? There are currently 3 spiritual nurture groups in the meeting, one of which is currently open to new members. There is also the possibility of forming a fourth group if there is enough interest. For more information, please contact Alison Mawle at zumilla@gmail.com

FUNDRAISING FOR SOLIDARITY PILGRIMAGE TO PALESTINE

AFM Attendee and Emory Master of Divinity student Cate Tedford will be going on a solidarity pilgrimage to Palestine this March with a cohort of students in partnership with Sabeel, an ecumenical grassroots liberation theology center, promoting justice, peace, and liberation for Palestine. For more information about the trip and to donate, visit <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/fundraising/cate-tedford> or contact her at 803-984-8787.

RECORDING AND RESOURCES: SURJ CONVERSATION WITH ANGELA DAVIS

Recording and resources from the January 16 online conversation with Dr. Angela Davis (Our Work in the Days Ahead: A Conversation for Antiracist White People), sponsored by SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice).

- Info about SURJ: <https://surj.org/>
- Call recording: <https://click.everyaction.com/k/100566325/523186696/-1068411014>
- Leyla McCalla's music: <https://leylamccalla.com/>
- *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine*, book by Rashid Khalidi: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hundred_Years'_War_on_Palestine
- Angela Davis: Standing with Palestinians: <https://hammerandhope.org/article/angela-davis-palestinians-gaza>

WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW FOR YOUR TRANS AND NON-BINARY FRIENDS

Recommendations from members of Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns.

- <https://medium.com/@sbearbergman/what-you-can-do-right-now-for-your-trans-and-nonbinary-friends-family-students-and-colleagues-d56b9672e4d6>.
- Advocates For Trans Equality at transequality.org
- Lambda Legal at lambdalegal.org
- Georgia Equality at <https://georgiaequality.org/>

ANTI-RACIST CLERKING GUIDE FOR FRIENDS

The Coalition for Uprooting Racism – a coalition of representatives from American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Friends Council on Education, Friends General Conference, Pendle Hill Center, and Quaker Voluntary Service – has published a guide for anti-racist clerking. Here's the link to the guide: <https://friendsgc.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Final-Antiracist-clerking-advice-Google-Docs.pdf>

FLGBTQC – Saturday, March 1 & Sunday, March 2

To make it easier to attend, Atlanta's local FLGBTQC (Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender – and genderqueer, nonbinary and genderfluid – Concerns) group has moved their monthly game night to the first Saturday evening of the month. This month that will be March 1 at 6:30 pm at the meetinghouse. We will be meeting in the library this month. You (and all your friends) are invited for conversation, games and potluck-style food. Allies welcome! We encourage you to bring a board game or other tabletop game you'd like to share with the group. Just be willing to explain the game to new players, or (if it's your first time playing it) be willing to learn it along with the rest of us. We will also eat together at potluck on Sunday, March 2 (look for the queer flag). For more information about these events or about FLGBTQC, contact Nina Gooch or Derek Harootune Otis. To join the group email list and receive updates, contact Nina in the office.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS & ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL – Sundays, March 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 lives. On March 2, Bill Lempffer will share his Spiritual Journey. (To listen to Mark Taylor's Spiritual Journey shared February 2, visit <https://tinyurl.com/4cr65wna>. For other past Spiritual Journeys, see previous newsletters or 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.

On the second, third and fourth Sundays of the month in March, Adult First Day School will be discussing the book *The Depth of Our Belonging: Mysticism, Physics, and Healing* by Mary Conrow Coelho. You are welcome to join the discussion even if you have not read the book.

On fifth Sundays, including March 30, Adult First Day School 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 more details or questions, please contact Elizabeth Lamb.

FIRST SUNDAY POTLUCK -- Sunday, March 2

Please join us for a potluck lunch following the rise of Meeting. Weather permitting, there are several outdoor tables for those who prefer to eat outside. Green Friends and FLGBTQC (Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns) will meet during potluck this Sunday. (See details in announcement sheet.)

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

BOOKS BY AND ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR -- Thursday, March 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. The book for March 6 is *American Marriage* by Tayari Jones. Upcoming books include: April 3, *James* by Percival Everett; May 1, *Take My Hand* by Dolen Perkins-Valdez; June 5, *Wandering Stars* by Tommy Orange. For questions or the Zoom link, contact Susan Cole (cole2544@bellsouth.net).

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS -- Sunday, March 9

Daylight Savings Time begins at 2 am on Sunday, March 9. Any clocks or watches that won't automatically reset themselves should be set one hour forward, to 3 am, at that time (or before you go to bed), so you'll be on time for meeting for worship or for Adult First Day School

MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – Sunday, March 16

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

ABOUT MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS

"Friends' decision-making is rooted in the spiritual oneness of a religious community. We reject majority rule for the higher goal of reaching decisions in unity, through distinctive attitudes developed by Friends over the centuries. Our process is democratic in the sense that everyone is encouraged to participate. However, it also goes beyond democracy in that it does not rely solely on human will or ability. Participants are expected to put aside personal desires and allow themselves to be led by a Guide beyond the self." (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice 1998)

"Whenever we remember that we are in the presence of God, transformation is possible. Every task, no matter how mundane, becomes an act of worship, a word of praise offered to God. This is the basis for Quaker business practice. We call it 'meeting for worship with attention to business' because it is grounded in an awareness of God's presence!" (Friends General Conference)

Atlanta Friends Meeting guidelines for meeting for Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business are at https://atlantaquakers.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines_for_Meeting_for_Business.pdf. In addition, <https://www.friendsjournal.org/meeting-for-business-as-spiritual-rehearsal> talks more about the spiritual side of Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business as well as the ways the Quaker decision-making process differs from consensus. Another resource is Pendle Hill Pamphlet #307, *Beyond Consensus: Salvaging Sense of the Meeting*. The AFM library has two copies, and there's a description of it at <https://pendlehill.org/product/beyond-consensus-salvaging-sense-meeting/>.

NEWCOMER WELCOME DINNER -- Tuesday, March 18

On the 18th of each month, newcomers to Atlanta Friends Meeting are invited to dinner at the home of a member or long-time attender. You'll have a chance to get to know other new attenders as well as long-time Quakers in a casual setting. See announcement sheet for more details.

If you are interested in hosting a winter or spring Welcome Dinner, held on the 18th of each month, please contact Jim Tolmach at 404-294-5194 or jimtolmach@icloud.com.

SEWING CIRCLE – Saturday, March 22

Join us for a Sewing Circle, meeting in the library on Saturday, March 22 at 3 pm. All art/craft mediums (that are easily cleanable!!) welcome as we create deeper community around shared interests. For more information, see Lisa Magee, lisammagee@gmail.com.

CELEBRATION OF WOMEN – Sunday, March 23

On March 23 our Meeting will be celebrating International Women's Day and Women's History Month. During coffee hour, we will be celebrating courageous women, and the men who support them. We will have CAKE!! Please bring a book or article to share to a good Friendly home! As we browse and nosh, let's tell one another about the courageous women in our families who have helped us all to be who we are today! In addition, after coffee hour, Quakers for Racial Equality will be hosting a forum on Black Women's Health. Details on the forum in later announcement sheets.

WHITE PRIVILEGE CONFERENCE – March 26 to 29; registration open now

Pre-register now with Friends General Conference (FGC) for a discount code to the 2025 White Privilege Conference in Hartford, CT from March 26-29! FGC says: Our time together will be a vital opportunity to deepen our antiracism work, build collective power, and strengthen community as we navigate our everchanging political landscape. You may complete the pre-registration form with FGC (<https://fgc.tfaforms.net/5109910>) to get \$100/person off the conference registration fee. This also ensures you will be connected to the Quaker community present at the conference this coming year. (They expect to have a dedicated Quaker worship + reflection space.) Once you have pre-registered with FGC, you must register with the White Privilege Conference at <https://tinyurl.com/mwvs4wkm>.

RESTORATIVE CIRCLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE – Saturday, March 29

On March 29, 2025 from 1:30 to 4:30 pm in the AFM meeting room, the Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting (CURAFM) invites you to participate in a Restorative Circle Learning Experience with S.Y. Bowland. She is skilled in conflict resolution and restorative practices. S. Y. Bowland is a co-editor of *Beyond Equity and Inclusion: Recentering the profession* and of *RE-CENTERING Culture and Knowledge in Conflict Resolution Practice*. She attends AFM worship and committees virtually and is active in SAYMA.

One of the purposes of this Restorative Circle Learning Experience is to help create a community of Friends that is open to exploring difficult situations that involve race matters in a sacred, brave

MINUTES FOR SECOND MONTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS
February, 2025, held in person and via Zoom in a blended meeting
Minutes Recorded Pending Approval

Attendance: Mike Aland, Richard Allen, Cathy Amanti, Jon Bender, Judy Beder, Mark Bryans, Cheryl Cowherd, Jennifer Crumpley, Mary Ann Downey, Julia Ewen, Sally Ferguson, Susan Firestone, Julie Foster, Larry Foster, Erica French, Jeremiah Gold-Hopton, Nina Gooch, Clive Gordon, Bill Holland, Bill Hoosen, Teri Key-Hoosen, Mary Claire Kelly, Elizabeth Lamb, Georgia Lord, Becky Lough, Judy Lumb, Patricia Turner, Alison Mawle, Connor McMahon, Shannon McNeal, John Michael, Caroline Morris, Karen terHorst Morris, Jay Roache, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Mark Taylor, Cate Tedford, Jim Tolmach, Myrna Trapp, Austin Wattles, Christophe Ian Lawrence Wells, David Small (Clerk), Charles Hicks (Recording Clerk)

Worship

Query for the Second Month: How do I maintain simplicity, moderation, and honesty in my speech, my manner of living, and my daily work? Do I recognize when I have enough? Do I live simply, and promote the right sharing of the world's bounty.

Discernment

- Ministry and Worship — Mary Ann Downey reported for Ministry and Worship Committee.

Mary Ann Downey read a memorial minute for Harriet Unfug:

Harriet Elise Gilbert Treadwell Unfug died on January 26, 2025, in Decatur, GA. She was born December 24, 1934, and lived in Ventura, California, second of four daughters of Harriet (nee Felton) and Vernon Rountree Gilbert. She grew up practicing the Episcopal faith with her mother and especially enjoyed singing in the choir.

Harriet married Perry Edward Treadwell in 1952 and was a devoted mother of four children. She moved to Atlanta in 1962 when Perry took a faculty position at Emory University. Harriet earned an associate degree from Emory University while running their household.

In 1968 during a year of Perry's sabbatical in La Hoya CA, they attended their first Quaker meeting and were moved to continue attending the meeting that year joining protests against the Vietnam war. Back in Atlanta, they became active in Atlanta Friends Meeting and Harriet joined other Friends in November 1969 for a national antiwar demonstration in Washington, D.C. She became a member of the Atlanta Meeting in 1974.

In the 1970's they became one of several families in meeting who moved into the Candler Park neighborhood near the meeting house inspired by simple living principles and the needs of the neighborhood. Harriet and two Friends started a women's lunch group meeting monthly that continues today. With Friends, she protested the proposed freeway through intown neighborhoods that was blocked and successful in saving the area. Harriet worked to address the needs of the area in a variety of ways including The Chrysalis, a drug rehabilitation center for teenagers and helped create and run The Patch Inc., a community center in Cabbagetown for children of low-income millworkers, as well as The Paideia School.

In 1977, Harriet and Perry with Friends from Meeting played a key role in the revitalization of Little Five Points neighborhood as part-owners of the Little Five Points Community Pub, which

became known as the 'Quaker Pub'. The pub had been a site for drug trade and violence affecting a wide area. Creating a safe space for community gatherings with good food led to a series of other positive changes in the area. One of them was the BOND Community Federal Credit Union where Harriet began working in 1988. After her divorce from Perry, Harriet married Douglas Unfug, proposing to him in 1996. They had many happy years together, including a variety of travel adventures, until his death in 2017.

When Harriet offered her spiritual journey to the Atlanta Meeting in 2010, she spoke of feeling love for the simplicity and silence in her first meeting and remembered a message given there. She recalled silently singing chants from morning prayers to help her settle in worship. She was guided by the belief that there is that of God in everyone and the teachings of Jesus for how to live. "I'll call myself post Christian," she said, "since I don't know what to call myself Christian."

Harriet was a vivacious, kind and loving person living life fully, from teenage drug store soda jerk to community builder to the matriarch of her family. Even though diminished by dementia, she never forgot her children's names.

Harriet is survived by son Gilbert Treadwell and daughters Gail Holland (Clay), Sally Treadwell and Susan Treadwell (Linda) along with granddaughters Sarah Stegall (Jeremy), Amanda Chow (Philip) and Amy Clower Pederson (Ryan), great grandchildren Rosalie and Ethan Chow and Andrew and Claire Stegall. Donations in Harriet's memory can be made to the Atlanta Friends Meeting. A memorial celebration was held February 15, 2025 at the Atlanta Friends Meeting.

A Friend thanked Mary Ann for the memorial minute and pressed the importance of this meeting minute for the life of our meeting. He said births, memberships, and deaths are important stages in the life of our meeting so that whoever comes after will be able to see what happened at this time at this point in this meeting.

Minute-02-16-25:01: The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the memorial minute for Harriet Unfug.

- The working group on Sanctuary and the Social Concerns Committee — Karen Skellie reported for Social Concerns Committee

Karen read her report after raising that no one has come forward with any proposed changes since this was brought last month:

Atlanta Friends Meeting reaffirms its commitment to being a sanctuary for immigrants. As people of faith who respect the inherent dignity and humanity of people whose immigration status is irregular, we recognize sanctuary as both a spiritual practice and a moral imperative. This commitment calls us to act with courage and compassion, responding to the needs of people seeking refuge while opposing policies and practices rooted in oppression, exclusion, and harm toward all people.

Sanctuary extends beyond physical shelter; it is a collective practice of living into our testimonies of peace, equality, and community. To this end, we call on the entire Meeting to join in the work of creating a just and welcoming alternative to systems of harm. This work may include:

- *Providing care, protection, and solidarity to immigrants seeking safety and stability;*
- *Interrupting systems of deportation and detention through advocacy, accompaniment, and, when led by the Spirit, acts of nonviolent civil disobedience;*

- *Defending democratic structures that protect the rights of all people;*
- *Expanding our understanding of sanctuary through education, dialogue, and faithful discernment;*
- *Supporting organizations that embody these commitments and provide transformative sanctuary models.*

We affirm our unwavering support for Casa Alterna as one expression of sanctuary. Under the care of the Meeting, Casa Alterna challenges us to embody its name—a loving “alternative”—as we respond to the realities of injustice with collective care and solidarity.

This call to sanctuary belongs to the Meeting as a whole. We are invited to discern how the Spirit leads us to act through direct participation, advocacy, education, or prayerful accompaniment. Together, we commit to practicing love and justice in a world marked by dehumanization and division.

May we move forward in faith, trusting the Spirit to guide and sustain us in this sacred work.

A Friend (who asked to be identified as a Friend of Color) who was on the committee that developed this minute said he wanted to update the minute because the last time the Meeting brought a minute like this was when he was three years old and now he is 42 years old.

Minute-02-16-25:02: The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves this minute from the Social Concerns Committee.

- Nominating — Alison Mawle reported for Nominating Committee.

Last month, Nominating brought forward Shannon McNeal’s name for consideration for Administration member at large, for a term of 3 years. This month we bring her name back for discernment.

Minute-02-16-25:03: On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Shannon McNeal to serve as Administration member at large for a term of 3 years.

Reports

- FLGBTQC — Jeremiah Gold-Hopton reported for FLGBTQC Committee.

Atlanta Friends for LGBTQ Concerns have been very active during the last few weeks. We are presenting a brief report of our current activities and concerns, and we are bringing two requests for approval at this Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. We will begin by reading a minute that has already been approved by Atlanta Friends Meeting in 2005 because many Friends may not be aware of the existence of this minute and because we feel led to propose more actions that Atlanta Meeting can take to live more fully into these words:

As a community of faith, we [the Atlanta Friends Meeting] have become aware of the many ways in which lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer people have been silenced and excluded. We will never go back to silencing these voices among us, or suppressing these gifts, for in so doing, we impoverish our whole community. Our experience has been that Spiritual gifts are not distributed with regard to sexual orientation or gender identity. Our experience has been that the life of our Meeting and its work have been immeasurably enriched over the years by the full participation and Spirit-guided leadership of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer Friends. Full participation includes encouragement in ministry and positions of leadership, ability to be married under the care of the Meeting, and nurture to all families. We therefore explicitly celebrate the

participation of LGBTQ Friends in these, as in all other aspects of the life of the Meeting. Our experience confirms that we are all equal before God, as God made us, and we feel blessed to be engaged in community and religious life together.

We have brought this 2005-minute back to the attention of this meeting because LGBTQ people — particularly transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people — are currently being targeted by both the Georgia state legislature and President Trump’s executive orders.

These attacks have been so numerous and continuing that we cannot list all of the specifics here, so we encourage Friends to check the websites of Advocates For Trans Equality at transequality.org and Lambda Legal at lambdalegal.org for detailed information and ways that you can take action as individuals. These attacks are intended to erase the existence of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people, and these attacks have direct and important consequences for some members of Atlanta Meeting.

Atlanta Friends for LGBTQ Concerns has been discussing our responses to these attacks at in person and online gatherings and on our email listserv. We have shared our fears, and our stories. We have done our best to nail down what exactly is actually going on. We have also shared some ideas for how we might respond, including:

1. We want to intentionally make community:

In this time, making real, trusting community with the people around us is especially important.

We thought of two ways that being in community helps us: practically (as a source of material, emotional, and political support) and essentially.

By "essentially", we mean that being in community with people who recognize and celebrate who we are, when the powers that be try to push us to the margin, gives us a place to affirm our identities beyond their reach.

We can look at one another, recognize one another, and be who we are, even when powerful people want us to be something else - or not at all.

2. We want to make Atlanta Friends Meeting a clearly and thoroughly affirming space:

Atlanta Friends Meeting is already an affirming community, in the sense of accepting (in principle) the fellowship of all, regardless of identity.

However, we have noticed ways that Atlanta Meeting could do better, especially when it comes to our space.

We approved a request from Jai Davis, Faith Organizer for Georgia Equality, for the rent-free use of our Meetinghouse for a town hall on SB 36—the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) to help faith leaders understand what we are up against. This event will be an educational event on what RFRA is and how it has been used to formulate anti-LGBTQ bills and so much more.

We also decided that we will have two workshops in Atlanta, at our Meeting House or at the Friends School, on Friday, April 18th, and on Saturday, April 19th led by Jim Fussell, a Baltimore Yearly Meeting Friend who has researched Queer Quaker history and led a workshop called “A Century of Queer Quaker Resistance: 1924-2024” as part of the 2025 online FGC Gathering.

During that FGC workshop, Jim Fussell presented a lot of interesting information — and he also did a great job of leading discussions among the workshop participants about how that history informs and influences our thoughts about our Queer Quaker present and future.

One of the Atlanta workshops led by Jim in April will be designed primarily for children and youth (but also appropriate for adults if they don't mind it being centered on children and youth).

The other one of these Atlanta workshops will be designed primarily for adults (but also appropriate for children and youth if they don't mind it being more centered on adults).

Straight and cisgender allies are encouraged to participate in these workshops (if you don't mind that the information and discussions will be more centered on LGBTQ people).

These workshops will be designed to have a large in person group participating, but with some online participation available for people who can't get to the Atlanta location.

We are now working out the scheduling details such as locations and starting and ending times.

As soon as we have decided upon those details, we will be advertising these workshops within Atlanta Meeting, at the Friends School, in the wider Atlanta area, and in the wider Quaker community.

REQUESTS

We decided to bring the following two requests to this February 16th Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business:

(1) We ask the Meeting to approve our planning to install signs and/or flags outside the Meetinghouse to make our LGBTQ welcome visible, particularly for transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people. We know that advertising our welcome will put the Meeting at some risk. Some churches with LGBTQ flags have been attacked by arsonists who burned the flags. We are asking our allies to take on the types of risks that LGBTQ people face every day of our lives. After getting approval from this Meeting, we will work with Admin Committee on the specific details of design, placement, size, etc. for these flags and signs.

Minute-02-16-25:04: On the recommendation of the FLGBTQC Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves planning to install signs and/or flags outside the Meetinghouse to make our LGBTQ welcome visible, particularly for transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people.

(2) We ask the Meeting to approve our planning to update the Meeting website to make our LGBTQ welcome visible, particularly for transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people. After getting approval from this Meeting, we will work with Emma Bingham, the Atlanta Meeting Web Manager, on the specific details of changes to the website.

Minute-02-16-25:05: On the recommendation of the FLGBTQC Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves updating the Meeting website to make our LGBTQ welcome visible, particularly for transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people.

We are also continuing to discuss additional types of requests which we will bring to the March 16th Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

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

Clive read two reports:

Proposed Minute of Religious Service for Christina Repoley

Atlanta Meeting has several ministries under our care. Friends who feel leadings for ministry can come to Ministry and Worship to assist with discernment. Ministry and Worship also has the responsibility to call out gifts of our members. Carrying a ministry under the care of the

meeting is an experience of mutual accountability, we receive the gifts of the the minister and the minister receives the gift of our support and tender care.

This month we bring to you a report that Ministry and Worship has united on recommending we take the ministry of Christina Repoley under our care. A clearness committee has met with her and united on a statement of her ministry, Ministry and Worship Committee also unite in recommending this Friend. We bring it to you as a report. We will return next month for the meeting's discernment. Here is our proposed Minute of Religious Service for Christina Repoley:

For over a quarter century, Christinia Repoley has opened herself to the promptings of spirit, attentive to leadings and deepening her connection to Spirit and the Society of Friends. As a young Friend, Christina regularly attended the Charlotte Friends Meeting (NC-FUM). In 1998, she participated in the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage in England where she experienced an opening, "I am ready God, I want to understand." She attended Guilford College where she deepened her Quaker studies and formation through academic study and participation in the Quaker Leadership Scholars Program. In August 2005 she gathered with over 200 young Friends in the World Gathering of Young Friends at Lancaster University in England. Christina came to Atlanta and coordinated the Peacebuilding program of AFSC. She became a member of Atlanta Meeting in 2008. She continued her spiritual formation at Candler School of Theology completing a Master of Divinity in 2011. Christina saw the need for a program of service and spiritual formation for young adult Friends. As she shared this spark, it resonated with others and led to the formation of Quaker Voluntary Service, where she served as founding director, and the opening in 2012 of the first QVS house in Atlanta. She married under the care of the meeting in 2012. Today she continues her faithfulness with the Forum for Theological Exploration, equipping and enabling a new generation of religious leaders.

Christina Repoley has been faithful in following her leading to be a channel of God's love among Friends and beyond us. Currently, Christina's ministry takes several forms:

We recognize Christina's ministry as a public friend who is ministering and sharing the practices and approaches of our meeting and the Society of Friends in a variety of interdenominational and ecumenical settings.

We recognize that Christina carries a particular appreciation for the vitality and importance of Quaker practices of discernment and clearness and silence. These are special gifts Quakers can share with the world. She has the gift of translating and making these practices accessible in ecumenical spaces.

We recognize that Christina has a special leading to create and facilitate opportunities and experiences for young adults and those working with young adults to learn and practice discernment, clearness practices and Quaker methods of decision making. She has long been faithful to carry out the vision, inspired by Howard Thurman, to assist individuals and communities to come alive to how spirit calls them in this time. We recognize that Christina brings her gifts of presence and deep listening to create opportunities for individuals and communities to encounter the sacred, to listen deeply to the promptings of God for themselves, in their communities and in a hurting world.

Atlanta Friends Meeting records Christina Repoley's gifts and takes her ministry under our care.

Concern for Announcements and Potluck Sunday.

Friends may have noticed that the announcements at the rise of meeting are getting longer and longer. We have noticed that newcomers are leaving before the announcement period has ended. We also noticed that some announcements are repeating what is included in the announcement sheet. Our young Friends are being asked to wait long periods. Ministry and Worship has received comments and complaints about this pattern. We want to be sensitive to the desire to share passionate concerns with the gathered body but also want to respect the time. We encourage Friends to make short announcements that are invitational. If your announcement is also in the announcement sheet, consider trusting that Friends will read or make a short reference to the item.

Before the pandemic, it was our practice to not have announcements from the body on the First Sunday. This was to increase the time for social interaction and be more welcoming for young Friends and older ones, who look forward to the birthday circle and the fellowship of eating. Beginning in March, Ministry and Worship plans to return to this practice. We encourage Friends with announcements to publish them in the announcement sheet. You may also place them in the yellow folder at the front greeting table for the closer to read out.

We welcome suggestions or thoughts about this. This is not an emergency; this is a regular issue we face as a meeting.

The Office Coordinator said the due date for the announcement sheet was Thursday at noon and encouraged people to submit the announcements by noon on Thursday.

A Friend encouraged the Meeting to implement this in a reasonable way (for example, if there was a way to announce events the following Saturday, then please do). She also asked for the closer to be reasonable in listing off the standard announcements.

A Friend said it should be spread that the yellow folder on the announcement table should be a last-minute encounter, not a standard.

A Friend in religious education said that young people tend to get anxious the longer that the potluck Sunday meeting goes prior to potluck. Another Friend said, "This Friend speaks my mind."

- Nominating — Alison Mawle reported for Nominating Committee.

Alison read two reports:

Regarding the Nomination of Greg Johnson

Nominating is bringing forward Greg Johnson's name as Administration member at large, for a term of 3 years.

Regarding the Handbook Reworking

Nominating continues to labor with reworking the Handbook, and requests that any committees that have not yet submitted their updated descriptions, in the new format, aid us in our labors by completing their committee descriptions and sharing them with us.

A Friend asked for clarity on whether we were seeking information on non-committee positions at this time. Alison said not yet.

- SAYMA — David Small reported on the letter from Chattanooga Friends that was brought forward last month. No Friends had comments on the letter.

*[Editor's Note: See the Minutes in last month's newsletter for these letters:
https://atlantaquakers.org/wp-content/uploads/AFM_Newsletter_2025-02.pdf]*

- Reparations, Reparative Justice, and Right Relations (RRJRR) committee – Susan Firestone reported on behalf of RRJR.

One of the goals of the Reparations, Reparative Justice, and Right Relations (RRJRR) Committee is continuing Atlanta Friends Meeting efforts to work toward relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people based on truth, justice, and shared humanity. We are bringing this working statement on building toward land acknowledgement and making amends with Muscogee Creek people back to AFM's focus as a reminder of commitments we have made and steps we still need to take.

This working statement has had input from both Rev. Chebon Kernell, a Muscogee/Seminole spiritual leader who was a guest speaker at QRE/AFM in 2022, and from Craig Womack, a Muscogee Creek guest speaker at the 2023 RRJRR forum on "Reparative Justice & Right Relations for Indigenous Peoples & African Americans. In the RRJRR forum in November, 2024, we listed some of the other steps that AFM has taken through RRJRR or Quakers for Racial Equality in line with the working statement: offered forums on Quaker responsibility for harms of boarding schools for Indigenous children, contributed to the Muskoke Language Program, contributed to the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, researched the history of the land where the meetinghouse is located, supported a project on "The People's History of Decatur," wrote to officials of the City of Decatur to acknowledge historical and ongoing harms to people of Indigenous and African descent and to work with DeKalb County to place a plaque honoring the Muscogee Creek people on the courthouse square in Decatur.

We need to take more steps to build relationships and listen to Muscogee Creek people. We hope to begin that through a dinner RRJRR will be hosting for students and staff of The College of the Muscogee Nation. After we learn more from Muscogee people, we may revise this statement and bring it back in the future.

Atlanta Friends Meeting acknowledges that we need to learn more at both the head and heart levels, collaborate with Muscogee Creek People, and take action steps to make amends in order to make a meaningful land acknowledgement. We offer this working statement as part of the process leading toward Atlanta Friends Meeting making a formal public land acknowledgement at a later time.

Atlanta Friends Meeting is located in the homelands of the Muscogee Nation, where the Muscogee have lived for thousands of years. The meetinghouse sits adjacent to the Muscogee Creek Oktahasasi or Sandtown Trail that was used for trade, travel, and communication between the Oktahasasi or Sandtown communities the trail connected. After European settlers invaded, the U.S. government and settlers forced Muscogee Creek People into relinquishing more and more land through armed force and broken treaties. The Treaty of 1821 ceded the portion of Muscogee Creek land that later became DeKalb County and the area of Decatur, Ga, where our Quaker meetinghouse is located. The state of Georgia sold this stolen land to white settlers through land lotteries. In 1836, the U.S. government forcibly removed many thousands of Muscogee Creeks from their homelands, with thousands dying on the overland and river routes of the Creek Removal. Those of us of European descent have benefited from this genocide, removal of Indigenous Peoples, and our resulting accumulation of wealth through stolen land. We also acknowledge that Quakers harmed Indigenous children, families, and cultures by teaching children to reject their Native languages, cultural traditions, and spiritual practices in order to assimilate into European American culture through Quaker boarding schools for Indigenous children and other Friends' institutions.

In preparation for developing a land acknowledgement for Atlanta Friends Meeting that includes steps to make amends and restore right relationships, we commit to working on the following areas:

- *recognizing past, present, and future Indigenous elders as stewards of the land;*
- *learning more about and from the people whose land we occupy;*
- *restoring the histories of Indigenous and people of African descent in our narratives related to our current use of the land;*
- *building relationships of respect and deferring to the leadership of the Muscogee Creek People;*
- *acknowledging responsibility for reparative action steps by those of us of European descent, who have benefited from the genocide and forced removal of Indigenous people;*
- *deepening our understanding of the intergenerational trauma caused by boarding schools for Indigenous children and putting resources toward truth and healing;*
- *exploring ways to use our resources in solidarity with Muscogee efforts to preserve and restore homelands and cultural traditions, and for landback at the local level.*

Further, Susan announced the following event:

Thursday Feb. 20, 7:00 pm Dinner with guests from the College of the Muscogee Nation

Atlanta Friends Meeting is located in the homelands of the Muscogee Nation, and as part of working toward restoring right relations, we seek to build relationships of respect with Muscogee Creek people. AFM will host a “getting to know you” dinner on Thursday, Feb. 20 with 10 guests from The College of the Muscogee Nation during their “return to the homelands” trip. The College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) in Okmulgee, Oklahoma is the institution of higher education for the Muscogee Creek Nation emphasizing native culture, values, language and self-determination. The homelands return trip helps students connect more to their history and culture from the Southeast. The Feb. 20 dinner at AFM is a first meeting with limited space for Friends, and we hope to offer future opportunities for Friends to meet College of the Muscogee Nation students and teachers. The AFM Reparations, Reparative Justice, and Right Relations (RRJRR) committee is the lead sponsor organizing the event. If you have questions or would like to help, contact RRJRR committee member Waman French at waman.french@friendsschoolatlanta.org

A Friend asked what "limited space for Friends" meant. Susan responded there were 10 people from the Muscogee college. However, Susan said they capped the RSVPs at 30 people to allow for good communication and said this dinner was a first step to allow other opportunities in the future.

A Friend said she did some research into the current status of Muscogee people. She said all doctors for the Indian Health staff were fired as a result of the latest mass firing of federal employees. She said we should not talk about what we should do at this point but instead should focus on listening. She said she questioned whether a land acknowledgment at this point made sense. Susan said that is one of the things we hoped to better understand from this meeting and mentioned that the working statement has been worked on for a few years but perhaps this has changed in light of recent events.

A Friend (who asked to be recorded as a Friend of Color) mentioned that the treaty that Muscogee had with the State of Georgia was not honored and specifically mentioned the Police Training Center would be on Muscogee land. He pointed to the Indian Removal Act as a part of this history.

- Cabin committee – Mark Bryans reported for the Cabin committee.

There were 88 days of use of the Ferguson Cabins last year, including almost every day in July 2024, but the property was used less than usual in April and September.

Projects completed include the restoration of the beloved glider on Dwight Cabin's porch, pressure washing and sealing the dock, pressure washing Dwight Cabin and the screen porch, and installing GFI outlets in Dwight Cabin's kitchen.

Future projects include checking on the septic tank, replacing the electric panel and wiring in Treetops, repairing Treetops and Dwight roofs, replacing exterior doors at Irene Cabin, and removing a dead tree by Irene Cabin.,

Atlanta Friends Meeting's issues with a neighbor's clearing and use of Ferguson Cabins' property were resolved with the help of an attorney. David Small, Clerk of Meeting and 3 Ferguson Cabins Stewards had a cordial meeting with the neighbor at the neighbor's request.

An agreement was reached with the Ferguson family represented by Anne Boyte and Marty Frank regarding their use of the property to improve access by Meeting members and attenders. The agreement will be reassessed in a year.

The committee plans to set up a slide show in the greeting room after Meetings for Worship to enhance the Ferguson Cabins' presence. Slides will show pictures of the property and connect members and attenders with members of the committee. Invitations to F/friends, including Junior Young Friends and their teachers, the Men's and Women's Groups, and Young Adult Friends are encouraged so they may use and enjoy the simple pleasures of this beautiful natural place and spend time on retreat.

The Spring Work/Cleanup Weekend is scheduled on April 12-13. All are welcome!

Beginning Balance on 1/1/2024 \$4,933.17

Income \$2,984.56

Expenses (Lake Burton Civic Association, Electricity, Supplies) \$1,223.99

Ending Balance on 12/31/2024 \$6,693.74

Difference \$1,223.99

Clerk's Items

- David announced an ad hoc committee for AFM Temporary Resident Safety.

The charge of the committee is to:

establish and implement protocols and policies for the safety of temporary residents and guests related to ICE encounters at the Meetinghouse in consultation with Casa Alternativa and other committees as needed.

Support the development of training that empowers and educates Friends for frontline encounters with ICE at the Meetinghouse.

Implement training for Friends who may be involved in ICE encounters at the meetinghouse including First Day Greeters, Religious Ed teachers and doorkeepers, Staff, Long term renters, Midweek Meetinghouse Users, Temporary Residents.

David said this was being created as a result of churches no longer being a sensitive space for ICE. We will need to be more careful about who we invite into the meeting. This will be co-chaired by Bill Hoosen and Anton. David said the meetings would not be regular but to establish new policies. A Friend asked who to send names of prospective member names to. David said to send prospective member names to Anton.

- David announced a new lawsuit that the Institute of Constitutional Advocacy and Protection in which AFM is participating, which is described in the letter below:

Dear SAYMA & Atlanta Friends:

Thank you for the care and commitment so many of you have shown.

Because of the faithful work of many Friends, including those from within your Yearly Meeting and Atlanta Friends Meeting, Friends General Conference has joined a multifaith coalition and the Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection (ICAP) in opposition to the rescission of ICE's sensitive locations policy, which is a direct violation of the First Amendment and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act

From the text of the litigation filed today:

Plaintiffs and their members are Baptist, Brethren, Conservative Jewish, Episcopalian, Evangelical, Mennonite, Quaker, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Reconstructionist Jewish, Reform Jewish, Unitarian Universalist, United Methodist, Zion Methodist, and more. They bring this suit unified on a fundamental belief: Every human being, regardless of birthplace, is a child of God worthy of dignity, care, and love.

The repeal of the sensitive locations policy directly interferes with the ability of meetings and churches within FGC to fulfill our spirit-led obligations and priorities. FGC strives to support all our meetings and attenders in the spirit of the equality testimony, and with the dignity that all people deserve.

FGC was able to join this suite, on behalf of all our affiliates, because of Friends who mobilized, discerned, and committed within a handful of days. This included the leadership of and Friends within your yearly meeting and Atlanta Friends Meeting, Pacific Yearly Meeting (PYM), Intermountain Yearly Meeting (IMYM), and South-Central Yearly Meeting (SCYM). Deep gratitude. The information you shared with ICAP through FGC spoke to just how deeply many FGC Friends take our religious commitment to serve, with immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers being a particular concern. As it is written, "For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, I was a stranger, and you welcomed me." (Matthew 25:35). Further proof of that commitment are the additional meetings who wanted to provide evidence and participate. However, it wasn't possible for some meetings given the ICAP deadlines. Even so, this helped demonstrate the widespread unity of FGC affiliated Friends on this matter.

We don't take this step lightly, but this action from the United States government challenges a foundation of our faith and threatens the peace of our meetinghouses and our communities. We are compelled by our religious convictions and the movement of Spirit to take a stand and protect our places of worship.

Read more about the lawsuit and other plaintiffs joining us in this action:

<https://www.law.georgetown.edu/.../Sensitive-Locations...>

If you as an individual would like to see the recission revoked, please visit www.sensitive-locations.com and sign the petition.

In Service,

Barry Crossno (He/Him)

General Secretary

Friends General Conference

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A Friend asked whether we are plaintiffs or what the implications of our participation is. David said there was concern that FGC not being a meeting in and of itself that there was a concern about standing; David said FGC and SAYMA learned they could be plaintiffs, and AFM is an example for FGC and SAYMA to use because of the unique situation of housing asylum seekers and our method of worship in that we do not face the door during worship. Our meeting is being used as an example of direct harm. David clarified if there was strong objection from the meeting that we can remove ourself from the lawsuit. A Friend clarified that we are not plaintiffs but that we are being used as standing. A Friend further clarified that we are not particularly named but that we are referenced in a way to show standing to get relief.

A Friend asked whether we can go ahead and approve since this wasn't brought in advance.

A Friend asked whether a minute was necessary. Another Friend said the purpose of a minute was to document support so we should support this. Another Friend said that putting our involvement in the lawsuit in the minutes could reveal our participation in the lawsuit. Another Friend said ICE knows we are here and knows we are a part of the lawsuit and questioned whether we would be anonymous to ICE even if we were anonymous in the lawsuit. A Friend said if we believe in the action then we should not hide behind anonymity.

A Friend said he had questioned whether we needed to take down our Casa Alterna sign at the meetinghouse given they have removed the Casa Alterna sign from the Casa Alterna house; the Friend said he was comfortable keeping our Casa Alterna sign up. The Friend said he had not heard us say anything reckless and did not have concern that we would do any unintentional harm at this point.

A Friend said "harboring" was private, and "providing hospitality" is public.

A Friend said this lawsuit provided hope in a time of despair and said this was a good thing to be a part of, and we do not need to hide.

A Friend suggested we bring a minute for consideration next month. Another Friend said we should go ahead and approve today.

Minute-02-16-25:06: Atlanta Friends Meeting appreciates and affirms our Meeting's participation in FGC and SAYMA's joining of a lawsuit against the US Department of Homeland Security, et. al., regarding the preservation of our meetinghouse as a sensitive place for the purpose of law enforcement at a religious facility.

