

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 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). The most up-to-date information about events can also be found there.

QUERY FOR NOVEMBER

Do I keep my life uncluttered with things and activities, avoiding commitments beyond my strength and light?

Is the life of our Meeting so ordered that it helps us to simplify our lives?

THINKING ABOUT YOUNG FRIENDS

from the the article "Four Leadership Querues for Adults and Young Friends" by Karen Greenler in the June/July 2023 issue of Friends Journal (<https://www.friendsjournal.org/and-a-child-shall-lead-them/>)

Four leadership queries that are worth exploring when working with children, either as parents, First-day school teachers, or as meeting members at large. The first is, how do we lead or guide our children? The second is, how do we develop leadership skills in our children? In the other two queries, the dynamic changes; adults become the recipients of the leadership: How do we learn about leadership from our youth, and how do we accept eldering from our youth?

At our December 2023 Meeting for Worship with Attention for Business, the Religious Education Committee asked Atlanta Friends Meeting (those there and the meeting as a whole) to consider the following query. It is still important, especially as our numbers in the First Day School continue to grow.

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

POEM

by *Patricia Turner*

The room was well established
mid-century
every piece of furniture
a work of art
exquisite
a life time of effort
this place
where I know
god

shattered in an instant
upturned, broken
vases, tables,
all the traces
of certainty
gone

I sweep the debris
from the room
unrepairable

I walk into the empty
space
sit square in the middle
of the floor
and wait

for the god
I do not know

the unexpected
One
who has been
waiting
for me.

GULLAH-GEECHEE SONIC LIFE: RECORDINGS BY COURTNEY SICELOFF

A new blog post from the Library of Congress's American Folklife Center, "Exploring 1950s Gullah Geechee Sonic Life with Dr. Eric Crawford," focuses on the Penn Community Services collection (AFC 1957/009), which includes recordings of music, preaching, and testimonies from the Gullah Geechee people of St. Helena Island, South Carolina, made in 1955 and 1956. The collection was created by Courtney Siceloff, a Quaker and White Civil Rights activist, who served as director of Penn Community Services -- a community center on St. Helena Island for the island's Black population -- from 1950 to 1969 and was later a long-time member of AFM.

<https://blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2025/09/new-podcast-exploring-1950s-gullah-geechee-sonic-life-with-dr-eric-crawford/>. A copy of the picture in the post is in the meeting's library.

**PLEASE HOLD
IN THE LIGHT:**

Barbara Seal & husband
Erin Daniel
Becky Lough
Mary Ann Downey
Charlotte Flores
Gwen Davies' father
Diane Green & brother

*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: Bill Hooson, 770-786-8096
Administration: Jack Honderd, jkhonderd@gmail.com
Social Concerns: Karen Morris, karenh.1415@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: Ellen McQueen, missliveoak@aol.com. and
Elizabeth Lamb, gelds@comcast.net
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.

BOOK REVIEW OF *THE SEVEN MOUNTAIN MANDATE*

Book review by Jeremiah Gold-Hopton of The Seven Mountains Mandate: Exposing The Dangerous Plan To Christianize America And Destroy Democracy (Matthew Boedy, Westminster John Knox Press, 2025)

Many of us learned about Project 2025 last year, and we are experiencing its implementation this year, but many of us still don't know about the Seven Mountains Mandate Movement, which began more than 30 years ago and is the larger White Christian Nationalist strategy, not only for Project 2025 radically changing the "mountain" of government, but also for radically changing the additional "mountains" of education, religion, family, business, media, and entertainment.

In 146 pages, this book summarizes and discusses the development of White Christian Nationalist ideology and how the people who follow this ideology have begun to radically change these "seven mountains" of government, education, religion, family, business, media, and entertainment. One of these people is Charlie Kirk, who is referred to in the present tense in this book because he was still alive when this book was written. Kirk was killed just 3 weeks before this book's publication date. Turning Point, the organization that Kirk founded, is continuing his work on implementing the Seven Mountains Mandate.

Matthew Boedy, the author of this book, first became aware of Turning Point in 2016, when he was added to their "professor watchlist" because he wrote a newspaper opinion article opposing a Georgia law allowing concealed weapons to be carried on college campuses. He has become an expert scholar on Turning Point and the Seven Mountains Mandate. I heard him speak at Charis Books recently, bought his book, and read it.

Reading this book provides a view of the forest — the comprehensive and interconnected ideological strategy — that many of us might have only seen as trees — individual, disconnected ideas and

events. This allows us to predict what's coming next, so that we can be more proactive instead of only reacting to the most recent surprises. It also helps us to recognize how we might have unwittingly acted in ways that aid and abet the Seven Mountains Mandate Movement.

White Christian Nationalists believe that the USA should privilege White Christian people (if they are the "right" type of Christian people). They think that they lost their God-given privileges and that it's their religious duty to fight to re-conquer the "seven mountains" of government, education, religion, family, business, media, and entertainment. They've been working towards these goals for decades now.

All of the "seven mountains" are being attacked simultaneously, with multiple approaches. For example, the mountain of education is being attacked in at least four ways: creating watchlists; de-funding public schools; re-writing curriculum; and re-defining educational values. Turning Point publicizes lists — with photos and contact information — of college professors, public school teachers, and school board members for Turning Point's followers to harass and threaten. Turning Point supports any method of diverting money from public schools to private schools, including vouchers (that use tax revenues directly to pay private schools) and tax credits (that reduce tax revenues available for public schools by allowing businesses and individuals to completely avoid paying taxes with a 100% tax credit for money that goes instead into private school scholarship funds). Turning Point publishes White Christian Nationalist curriculum and pushes public and private schools to adopt that curriculum. Turning Point attacks colleges and schools that allow the expression or promotion of educational values that don't conform to White Christian Nationalist values. This is a coordinated strategy of many different methods all at once, and it's already begun to succeed in undermining support for the type of educational systems we need to spread the factual knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary to overcome the White Christian Nationalist agenda. And, at the same time as these attacks on the "mountain" of education, additional coordinated attacks are being made against the other six "mountains."

In the past, Quakers were persecuted for not conforming to the religion established by the government (in 17th-century England, in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and in other times and places). If the White Christian Nationalists succeed in establishing a state religion now in the USA, many Quakers will be persecuted again for our religion. The Seven Mountains Mandate has already targeted anyone who is not White, anyone who was not born in the USA, and anyone who does not conform to cisgender and heterosexual requirements. Some Quakers are already experiencing this targeted persecution personally and directly. Unless the USA overcomes the Seven Mountains Mandate Movement, all of us will eventually experience greater levels of persecution, as individuals and as a community. Reading this book is one important step toward a better future.

RAISING KIDS WHO BUILD BRIDGES NOT WALLS (RESOURCES)

"In this time of political and social tumult, many of us are not OK. And we are asking: how do we even begin to talk to our kids about what's going on? How do we raise children who can build real connections across all kinds of differences when it feels like the world is trying to divide us? This moment is [also] an opportunity to remember for ourselves - and to help kids see - that when any of us are under attack, we all are. Not to the same degree, of course. But when immigrant families are targeted, when transgender kids are denied basic dignity, when our religious identities matter more than our humanity, when communities of color face ongoing injustice — that's our kids' world getting smaller and meaner." Resources from the group Embrace Race at <https://tinyurl.com/ycxjx2kd>

QUOTE ON JUSTICE FROM THE COMMITTEE ON UNDOING RACISM IN AFM

The Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting (CURAFM) offers these questions and a quote. Did you ever hear that Shirley Chisholm had Quaker influences in her life? According to some online sources, she may have attended Quaker meetings while in Barbados. As you think of what is yours to do to make the world more welcoming and eliminate racism in a multi-real world, reflect on the following as it relates to justice:

“You don’t make progress by standing on the sidelines, whimpering and complaining. You make progress by implementing ideas.” Shirley Chisholm

See more at the Chisholm Legacy Project <https://thechisholmlegacyproject.org/celebrating-shirley-chisholm-a-trailblazer-a-change-maker-and-our-inspiration/>

ABOUT WORLD QUAKER DAY, CELEBRATED OCTOBER 5

from AFM Clerk David Small:

Thank You for a Wonderful World Quaker Day!

Friends,

What a lovely day we shared for World Quaker Day! The Meetinghouse was full of warmth, laughter, and good conversation as we came together around this year’s theme, “Love your neighbour” (Galatians 5:14). From the thoughtful worship to the delicious potluck lunch, the whole morning felt like a true celebration of our community and the love that binds us together.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the day special—those who cooked, cleaned, set up tables, greeted visitors, shared stories, or simply showed up with an open heart. Each of you added something beautiful to the day.

If you weren’t able to be with us this time, we missed you—and we hope you’ll join us next year. World Quaker Day is one of those moments that reminds us how strong, caring, and connected our community really is.



Susan Firestone reminds us of the diversity of worldwide Quakerism:

There are approximately 400,000 Quakers worldwide in 87 different countries, with the majority concentrated in Africa. Kenya is the country with the highest number of Quakers in the world. Burundi is another African country with a notable Quaker population. The United States has the second largest Quaker population, followed by Bolivia with the third largest Quaker population and many indigenous Quakers. The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) [<https://fwcc.world/about-us/>] divides the global community into four regions—Africa, the Americas, Asia-West Pacific, and Europe & Middle East—to foster mutual support and action. Though founded in England in the 17th century, the international Quaker community today is diverse, encompassing a variety of worship styles and theological beliefs. Quakers are united by the belief in an "inward light" or direct experience of God within each person, leading to a focus on peace, equality, and simplicity. While rooted in Christianity, Quakerism encompasses various expressions, including programmed (evangelical) and unprogrammed (waiting worship) forms. A useful resource is The Black Quaker Project website [<https://www.theblackquakerproject.org/about-3-1>], which includes activities around retrospective justice and an archive of interviews with Quakers of Color. **What unites all of us is this year's theme of "Love your Neighbor."**

RESOURCES ON WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING TO TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY PEOPLE

Jeremiah Gold-Hopton says, "I've thought about writing something specifically about what's been happening to transgender and nonbinary people in the US since January 20th, but it keeps changing so quickly that anything I write for the monthly newsletter would be outdated by the time it got published. So, instead of writing an article, I think that a better approach would be to include information about particularly good sources for articles and podcasts." His recommendations:

- Imara Jones' podcasts: "TransLash" (conversations, information, and inspiration with, about, and for trans people; received the 2023 Outstanding Podcast Award from GLAAD) and "Anti-Trans Hate Machine" (investigative journalism about what and who is behind anti-trans attacks; received the Excellence in Podcasting Award from the National LGBTQ+ Journalists Association). Imara Jones is a Black trans woman who grew up in Atlanta in the 1980s and 1990s, earned an undergraduate degree at Columbia University and a graduate degree at the London School of Economics, and held economic policy posts in the Clinton White House. In 2019, she chaired the first United Nations High Level Meeting on Gender Diversity. She is an Emmy and Peabody award-winning political journalist who was the first trans person to receive an award from the National Black Journalist Association when she was given the Journalist of Distinction Award in 2022. She was named as one of Time magazine's 100 most influential people in 2023. She serves on the boards of the Transgender Law Center, Anti-Violence Project, GLSEN, the LGBTQ+ Museum, and the New Pride Agenda.
translash.org

- Erin Reed's Substack "Erin In The Morning" for news articles about the latest changes in federal and state government laws and policies affecting transgender and nonbinary people in the US: Erin Reed is a White trans woman who created a map of transgender healthcare providers in 2019. She served as the Digital Director for The American Independent until 2021, when she became an independent journalist. She created a map in 2023 highlighting the US states with the strongest and weakest legal protections for transgender people. She continues to update that map as new laws are created. She has been on PBS NewsHour and C-Span to discuss trans-related legislation.
<https://www.erininthemorning.com/>

HELP PROVIDE NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS TO THE FRIENDS SCHOOL OF ATLANTA AND REDUCE YOUR GEORGIA TAX

Help provide need-based scholarships to the Friends School of Atlanta AND reduce the Georgia State taxes you pay! In two minutes, you can complete an on-line application (www.apogee123.org and go to “Get started Apply Today”) whereby you pay into the Tax Credit Scholarship Fund (designating “the Friends School of Atlanta” to receive your funds). The amount you pay (due by March) is deducted from Georgia taxes that you’ll owe! The deadline is fast approaching! December 15! Please apply today. Questions? Need help? Call Betsy Eggers at 404-831-8856

GETTING HELP THROUGH THE AFM ASSISTANCE FUND

The Care & Counsel Committee maintains an Assistance Fund for Members and Attenders for providing temporary assistance with financial emergencies. If you have a financial need, don’t hesitate to ask. The information about the process and an application form are on the Atlanta Friends Meeting website in the Care and Counsel Committee section. https://atlantaquakers.org/wp-content/uploads/20200619-CC_Assistance_Fund_Guidelines.pdf has a description of the fund and instructions on how to apply: You can download the application form, found at atlantaquakers.org/wp-content/uploads/Assistance_Fund_Request_Form_2020_update.pdf, and fill it out, or you can email the information to the Clerk of Care & Counsel at afm.care.counsel@gmail.com.

HOW TO HELP OTHERS THRU THE AFM ASSISTANCE FUND

Would you like to help others through the AFM Assistance Fund? You can donate by check or online.

Check: Make the check payable to Atlanta Friends Meeting and write “Assistance Fund” on the “memo” line. You can mail it to the meetinghouse address: 701 W. Howard Ave. Decatur, GA 30030 or drop it in the Contributions slot in the greeting room at the meetinghouse.

Online: Go to the Atlanta Friends Meeting website to the <https://atlantaquakers.org/contact-donate/> page and click on the Donate button to donate through PayPal or a credit card. Under Special Instructions, say your donation is for the Assistance fund OR send an email to the bookkeeper at afmbookkeeper1@gmail.com.

MONTEVERDE FRIENDS SCHOOL IN COSTA RICA OFFERS STUDY ABROAD AND SUMMER PROGRAMS FOR HIGH-SCHOOLERS

- For information about the study abroad programs (semester or full year) for students in grades 10, 11, and 12 with knowledge of Spanish, see <https://mfschool.org/study-abroad/>
- For information about an 11 day immersion program for high schoolers, June 21 to July 1, ziplining, kayaking, wildlife tours, planting trees or other service projects, see <https://mfschool.org/teen-adventure/>.

UPDATES FROM SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN YEARLY MEETING AND ASSOCIATION (SAYMA)

October email from the SAYMA Clerk: <https://tinyurl.com/2xxeheyu>
From SAYMA's Uplifting Racial Justice: <https://tinyurl.com/b9yrvnsb>

FUNDRAISING WALK FOR EDUCATION OF REFUGEE GIRLS – Saturday, November 1

Hope Covington says: Join Global Village Project (GVP) for our annual Welcome Walk Fundraiser on November 1! GVP is a nonprofit middle school dedicated to reactivating the education of refugee girls. This is a fun opportunity to walk together and support the meaningful work GVP does. I'd love for you to join me! Register at: <https://p2p.onecause.com/> or talk to Hope Covington for more info.

FLGBTQC OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORSHIP & COMMUNITY – Sat, Nov 1 and Sun, Nov 2

-- At 5 to 6 pm on Saturday November 1, join FLGBTQC Friends in person at our Meetinghouse and FLGBTQC Friends online from all over the U.S. and Canada for a hybrid meeting for worship with time for introductions and conversation from 6 to 6:30 PM. If Atlanta Friends can not get to the Meetinghouse in person for this worship and want to attend online, please contact Jeremiah Gold-Hopton at jeremiah313134 at mac dot com for the international FLGBTQC Zoom link.

-- After this, AFM's local FLGBTQC monthly game night begins at 6:30 pm at the meetinghouse. Conversation, games and potluck-style food! Allies welcome! Bring any 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. For more information, contact Nina Gooch or Derek Harootune Otis.

-- On Sunday, November 2, we will also eat together at potluck (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.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS NOVEMBER 2

Daylight Savings Time ends November 2 at 2 am. If your clocks, etc, don't automatically reset, set them back one hour, giving you an extra hour of sleep.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS & ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL – Sundays, November 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 November 2, Cliff Waddington will share his Spiritual Journey. To hear Nan O'Connor's Spiritual Journey, shared October 5, visit <https://tinyurl.com/5dhahykd>. If you'd like to listen to other past Spiritual Journeys, contact Mary Ann Downey.

We offer a standing invitation to all attenders and members (those new to meeting, transfers from other meetings, or longtime Atlanta members and attenders) to share your answers to these questions. Some Friends find it helpful to do this as an interview. For more information and to schedule a time to tell your story, contact Mary Ann Downey at madowney@mindspring.com.

On the second, third and fourth Sundays of the month, plus the fifth Sunday of November, Adult First Day School will be discussing the book *Women, Family, and Utopia* by member Lawrence (Larry) Foster. You are welcome to join the discussion even if you have not read the book. 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.

CLIMATE ADVOCATE TRAINING -- Sunday, November 2

How do you talk to friends and family about climate change in a way that brings you both hope? What do you say to your members of Congress? Green Friends (with Citizens Climate Lobby) will host a free in-person-only Climate Advocate Training at the Meetinghouse 2 to 4 pm on Sunday November 2. The training focuses on climate change communication and lobbying through practicing storytelling and lobbying scenarios. The Meeting's own Henry Slack will conduct this training. Snacks will be provided. If you would, please register in advance at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/climate-advocate-training-tickets-1839104534169>. Walk-ins will be accepted, and the training is free.

BOOKS BY AND ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR -- Thursday, November 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 November 6, the group will be reading and discussing *Dream Count* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. All are welcome, and the group encourages anyone interested in a particular book to drop in. Upcoming books include December 6, *My Documents* by Kevin Nguyen. For questions or the Zoom link, contact Susan Cole (cole2544@bellsouth.net).

MEMORIAL MEETING FOR WORSHIP FOR DEE DeBRA -- Saturday, November 8

Friends and family will gather at the Meeting to remember and celebrate the life of Dee DeBra on November 8 at 1 pm. All are welcome and if you are new to the meeting, this is a good time to learn not only about this Friend, but also experience worship filled with wonderful stories about a life lived with Spirit touching others. If you can bring finger food, help with set up or clean up, please contact Mary Ann Downey, madowney@mindspring.com.

STILL SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER: FCNL ANNUAL MEETING -- Fri to Sun, Nov 14 to 16

From November 14 to 16, Friends Committee for National Legislation (FCNL) governors and supporters will gather online for worship, witness, action, and connection. They say, "Linked by the Spirit and our common purpose, we will listen together for where we are called to this vital work. Register today to claim your spot at <https://act.fcnl.org/go/155865>. There is no set fee for this online gathering; we ask attendees to support this event and FCNL's work with a donation as you are led."

MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS -- Sunday, November 16

Stay after meeting for worship, whether in person or via Zoom. Minutes from last month are below. Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business will be held in a combined format about 11:45, using the Zoom coordinates for Meeting for Worship. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89686276751?pwd=M29EYlIFWEhSQUtZRVVPalFFYmVDQT09>
Meeting ID: 896 8627 6751
Passcode: 789456

In 9th month we joyfully approved celebrating and taking under our ongoing care the marriage of Derek Harootune Otis and Arianna Rodriguez. We now bring you our recommendation for the marriage committee for your discernment.

Minute-10-19-25:01: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting appoints Waman French, Margaret Nagawa, Connor McMahon, Shannon McNeal and Mary Ann Downey as members of the Marriage/Joining Committee for the marriage of Derek Harootune Otis and Arianna Rodriguez.

■ **Social Concerns** — Claire Hannapel reported for Social Concerns Committee.

Claire brought back the following minute for discernment, which was approved after discussion.

Minute-10-19-25:02: “We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretense whatsoever; and this is our testimony to the whole world.” from the Quaker peace testimony, as announced in 1660

On the recommendation of the Social Concerns Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting (AFM) joins American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), and the 800+ signers (over 40 of which are Quaker Communities), in the Apartheid-Free Campaign. AFM responds to AFSC’s and others’ call on faith congregations, communities, and organizations to join in and declare themselves Apartheid-Free. As such:

- We affirm our commitment to freedom, justice, and equality for the Palestinian people and all people;
- We oppose all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination, and oppression; and
- We declare ourselves an Apartheid-free congregation and to that end;
- We pledge to join others in working to end all support to Israel’s Apartheid regime, settler colonialism, and military occupation.

AFM has provided minutes regarding our concerns in the past two years regarding a just and lasting peace in the Middle East regarding the people of Israel and Palestine.

One Friend asked what the pledge would mean for us as a Meeting. Claire said it would mean we would be a publicly facing group showing support for Palestinians. However, what this looks like for our community would be up to us and an ongoing conversation. One idea is to have some forums to help our community understand Israeli apartheid and continued advocacy at a policy level.

A Friend also said signing onto this to have a container to think about the Israeli and Palestinian conflict. This also could be a vessel to think about domestic issues related to apartheid, such as the issues of Native American apartheid in the United States.

A Friend asked whether this would mean whether we would want finance to consider where our investments are invested. A Friend responded that she was very involved in anti-apartheid movements in the 1980s and 1990s and said this was part of the conversation around South Africa; she suggested the Finance Committee reach out to Friends Fiduciary regarding what this would look like. She said she hoped this pledge would become part of the foundation of how we make decisions. Claire said she spoke to Bill Hoosen who shared that Finance Committee has taken this seriously in terms of weapons manufacturers and other companies that pull profit from guns and violence.

A Friend said she was supportive of the minute as a response to people who want to make other people exceptions to the rule, and this resolution would hold us to reminding ourselves that there are not exceptions to our responsibilities to peace.

A Friend said this minute came last month and that we have had time to think about this. She wanted to specifically recognize Courtney Siceloff for his work on this issue even though he was not here to see the result.

A Friend said that while he was anxious about this minute at first, discussion with other Friends helped him to thresh his opposition. Ultimately, he said we as a Meeting have to share our values, we want to support our Friends who are in Ramallah, and we are not making any claim about genocide which could be threshed at another time.

- **Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns** — Nina Gooch reported for FLGBTQC Committee.

FLGBTQC is working on a post to put on the bottom of the website to replace the COVID guidelines and they noticed a minute from 2005 regarding lgbtq people in the life of the meeting. FLGBTQC would like to replace portions of the minute with the below minute to better reflect modern dialogue. The meeting affirmed the original minute with the suggested changes.

Minute-10-19-25:03: As a community of faith, we [the Atlanta Friends Meeting] have become aware of the many ways in which lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender 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 lesbian, gay, 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.

A Friend asked whether we could just give FLGBTQC blanket approval to amend the minutes to be more inclusive. Another Friend said we should say the Friends joyfully reaffirms this minute with edits.

A Friend said we should consider whether we should have new listening to reflect new learning within the minute. He asked to affirm the 2005 minute but then have a new listening session to a broader notion of the language that exists.

A Friend suggested whether we should specifically include young people in the minute.

A Friend said we should affirm the minute with changes and then send this concept back to Ministry and Worship for future discernment. Nina said FLGBTQC would be willing to help Ministry and Worship on the future minute.

- **Nominating** — Alison Mawle reported for Nominating Committee.

Nominating is bringing back the following names for discernment:

Dean Leeper as a member of the Young Friends Support Committee, for a period of two years, 2026-2027.

Minute-10-19-25:04: On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, AFM approves Dean Leeper, as a member of the Young Friends Support Committee, for a term of two years, from January 2026 through December 2027.

Alison Mawle, as Personnel Liaison, for a period of 1 year.

Minute-10-19-25:05: On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, AFM approves Alison Mawle, as Personnel Liaison, for a term beginning upon approval, through December 2026.

Stacey Sharer to continue as Treasurer for 2 years, through December 2027.

Minute-10-19-25:06: On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, AFM approves Stacey Sharer, as Treasurer, for a term of 2 years, from January 2026 through December 2027.

Don Bender to continue as Assistant Treasurer for 2 years, through December 2027.

Minute-10-19-25:07: On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, AFM approves Don Bender, as Assistant Treasurer, for a term of 2 years, from January 2026 through December 2027.

Reports

- **Nominating Committee** — Alison Mawle reported for Nominating Committee.

Nominating held a Committee Fair on 10/12, which was well attended. We are gathering feedback from various committees, but the feedback so far is very positive. Thanks to all who participated. Nominating has a rough first draft of the updated Handbook. Alison Mawle is serving as editor of the gathered material and will report on the state of the Handbook and answer questions. Alison made the suggestion to send the first draft revisions to each committee clerk for review instead of sending to the entire meeting as a whole.

- **Gathered Meeting Retreat** — Mary Ann Downey reported for Gathered Meeting Retreat Committee.

The Gathered Meeting Retreat took place at Calvin Center on September 5-7, 2025. Our programming was facilitated by Folami Adams and Christina Repoley around the topic of discernment, both individual and collective. Laura MacNorlin led the Young Friends programming with Connor McMahon and Dean Leeper assisting. There were 51 adults in total in attendance, with 8 of them for Saturday only. There were 14 Young Friends in attendance, with 1 of them for Saturday only. We had scholarship requests from 5 Young Friends, 5 Young Adult Friends, 3 Friends of Color and 3 other Friends.

We practiced deep listening, asking probing questions, and learned more about clearness committees. Participants felt like they walked away with a deeper understanding of clearness committees, established deeper community with Friends new and old, and had downtime to be able to explore. They could see the benefit of the retreat for the community, and a Young Friend commented that they wish the retreat could be once a month and not just once a year.

We appreciated the facilities of Calvin Center for the accessibility and lakeside location within an hour's drive, however evaluations confirmed our major concerns. We have decided not to hold our reservation there for next year.

We will look for another location and invite any information others have for this exploration. We will also reserve the weekend of September 4-6 at the meeting house. Our hope is that we can create an even more inclusive retreat for community building.

Minute-10-19-25:08: The Meeting expresses gratitude to Lisa McGee for her diligence in continuing our gathered meeting retreat following the pandemic over the last two years as the Clerk of the Gathered Meeting Retreat.

■ **Religious Education** — Amanda Gendreau reported for the Religious Education Committee.

First Day School classes are growing at all age levels. We welcome this growth and are happy that we have the teachers to teach the children most Sundays at the nursery, lower elementary, and upper elementary levels. The exception is the high school level. We have asked Nominating Committee to assist us in finding at least two more teachers for our teen group, which is also growing.

Number of Children per Week from Fall 2024 – Fall 2025				
Year	Nursery	Lower Elementary	Upper Elementary	Teens
Fall 2025	2-5 children	6-14 children	5-9 children	3-4 teens* *inconsistent data
Spring 2025	2-5 children	5-12 children	5-6 children* *inconsistent data	0-2 teens* *inconsistent data
Fall 2024	1-6 children	4- 11 children	2-10 children* *inconsistent data	0-2 teens* *inconsistent data

Total Number of Distinct Children from Fall 2024 – Fall 2025				
Year	Nursery	Lower Elementary	Upper Elementary	Teens
Fall 2025	8 children	17 children	13 children	11 teens
Spring 2025	12 children	23 children	13 children* *inconsistent data	2 teens* *inconsistent data
Fall 2024	9 children	29 children	10 children* *inconsistent data	2 teens* *inconsistent data

Because of the growing numbers of children, we are in the process of rethinking our use of space. Due to large class sizes, we can no longer have both the lower and upper elementary classes share the Classroom A/B space. Our upper elementary class will move permanently to Classroom C for the remainder of this school year. Due to the increase in children in our program, we will be using Classroom C for the foreseeable future. We will need to purchase a table, chairs and storage for the growth of our religious education program.

Our budget in 2025 has been spent on books for the classroom and our Celebration of Youth, curriculum books, a few background checks for religious education volunteers, and the Godly Play/Faith & Play training last spring. We have approved and submitted a budget request to the Finance Committee which prepares for current and future growth of our RE classes, including the furniture requests mentioned above and consistent safety training for teachers and more background checks for religious education volunteers.

We have held more frequent, monthly, Religious Education Committee meetings to address several pressing tasks, including updating guidelines and descriptions as well as prioritizing the safety of children in our R.E. classes. Like many committees, we updated the description of the R.E. Committee. The Nursery Caregiver position description has been updated again. A new description for a Nursery Caregiver Assistant position has been submitted to the Nominating and Administrative committees. Also, during our annual child safety training, we realized that our Guidelines for Child Safety were out-of-date and therefore important information was incorrect. As a committee, we updated these guidelines for clarification and accuracy. During this discussion, ideas for keeping children safe during religious education activities were generated. We are pushing forward with our plan to have practically all religious education volunteers (i.e., doorkeepers, nursery and teen volunteers, etc.) background checked faster than ever before, which aligns with the Guidelines for Child Safety and is reflected in our budget proposal.

This year, our curriculum focuses on the Old Testament. We have spent time worship sharing around how to approach the Old Testament from a Quaker perspective. We have realized that we have different understandings regarding the importance of teaching the Old Testament. While some teachers are not comfortable with teaching the Old Testament at all, others are seeking ways to connect the Old Testament to Quaker faith and practice, and to our own values and beliefs. We will be planning religious education curriculum in the future and would really appreciate input and dialogue with parents and the Meeting as a whole about the direction of the curricula and themes that are taught.

We encourage everyone in meeting to experience the Light in our young Friends by signing up to be a doorkeeper or teacher. There are other opportunities to engage with our young Friends, as well. If you have questions about being a doorkeeper, contact Religious Education clerk Amanda Gendreau at AmandaGendreau5@gmail.com. There will be another doorkeeper training in January. If you would like to be a doorkeeper or teacher on a regular basis, we encourage you to go through a background security clearance check through our Young Friends Program Coordinator as well as review the recently revised AFM Child Safety Guidelines. Finally, we welcome volunteers to help organize social events and special events such as the annual Easter egg hunt and end of school year Celebration of Youth.

Clerk's Items

- Last week, the Clerk was at a meeting in Philadelphia for AFSC and, this week, the Clerk was at a meeting in Atlanta with the Friends School of Atlanta. David said he wanted us to think through ways we can be more involved in AFSC and Friends School of Atlanta to show our care and support.
- In response, another Friend said we should consider serving on the Board of Trustees for the Friends School of Atlanta.
- Another Friend said there is a liaison role for AFSC which David Small is serving.

Approval of Minutes from 9th month 2025

Minute-10-19-25:09: The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the 9th month 2025 minutes with the following changes:

- Chad Heilig did not attend the September 2025 meeting for business.
- Corrected the spelling of Gray Folger and Suzanne Gaventa Folger's names.

(continued on next page)

