

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 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 are in the announcement sheet (link just above). The most up-to-date information about events can also be found there.

QUERY FOR DECEMBER

What activities do I participate in that are restorative?
How do I develop my physical, emotional, and intellectual abilities?
How do I care for my body as a gift from the Spirit?
How is fun a part of my life?
Where do I find joy in my life?

RESPECTING THAT OF GOD IN EVERYONE

by Pam Wilkins in Macon Worship Group's weekly email newsletter, in which she talks about a then-upcoming discussion following worship

The June query for the Atlanta meeting speaks to me:

Do I respect that of God in everyone, though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or be difficult to discern? How do I explore differences with grace, curiosity, and deep listening?

We are living in a time in which it's easy to despair of the possibility of exploring differences with "grace, curiosity, and deep listening" and all too hard to "respect that of God in everyone." Distrust and even contempt characterize much of our public and (alas) private discourse.

I don't know how to get past this (or don't do it consistently in these polarized times), and our discussion Saturday will concern how we do this – even when it's *hard*.

A starting point is to remind ourselves – frequently – that there *is* "that of God" in those with whom we have strong differences, even when we can't see it. What came to mind for me is the famous quote from Thomas Merton about his revelation about his fellow humans. [Italics added by Pam.]

In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all these people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious self-isolation in a special world

This sense of liberation from an illusory difference was such a relief and such a joy to me that I almost laughed out loud I have the immense joy of being man, a member of a race in which God Himself became incarnate. As if the sorrows and stupidities of the human condition could overwhelm me, now that I realize what we all are. And if only everybody could realize this! But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun.

Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they could all see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way all the time. There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed But this cannot be seen, only believed and 'understood' by a peculiar gift.

**PLEASE HOLD
IN THE LIGHT:**

Jennifer Crumpley and family
Howie Sankofa's son Hakim
Kathy Johnson and family

*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, karenth.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,
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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.

UPDATE FROM SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN YEARLY MEETING AND ASSOCIATION (SAYMA)

November email update from the SAYMA Clerk: <https://tinyurl.com/4u6jnn5b>

SAAYMA is our yearly meeting, a regional umbrella for Quaker meetings. SAYMA also holds an annual gathering each year, this year June 18 to 21 at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky.

UPDATE ON MEETING ROOM CHAIRS AND AISLES

When the chairs were returned to the meeting room after painting the ceiling, we widened the outside aisle that goes all the way around the meeting room. This will make it easier for those using wheelchairs, crutches, or other mobility aids. If you sit against the window, please continue to watch your feet so those using wheelchairs, crutches or other mobility aids can get past you. Doing this will both protect your feet and make it so no one has to speak to ask you to move your feet so they can get past.

We are also making one aisle between the sections wider so people can get to the center of the meeting room. This will be the aisle near the table closet and near the right most door as you enter.

In addition, we've moved one bench to the greeting room so there are seats for those who might find that useful.

FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE SIGNS ON TO INTERFAITH STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR TRANSGENDER, INTERSEX AND NONBINARY PEOPLE

On November 20, Friends General Conference (FGC) posted on Facebook:

FGC has signed on to an interfaith Statement of Support for Transgender, Intersex, and Nonbinary People. The statement calls for equal rights, safety, an affirmation of the range of genders, and space for people of all genders to fully participation in society. Part of the statement says: "Our faiths, our theologies, and our practices of prophetic witness call on us to say with one voice to transgender people among us: 'You are holy. You are sacred. We love you. We support you, and we will protect you.'" Today is the Transgender Day of Remembrance, a reminder that protection is critical now more than ever. As of now, 12 faith communities have endorsed the statement. Read a summary from FGC here [as well as a link to the statement itself]:

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/2025/11/20/transgender-day-of-remembrance/>

QUAKERS AND MARRIAGE EQUALITY

The August issue of *Friends Journal* included an article on marriage equality / same-sex marriages within Quaker meetings, including Atlanta: <https://www.friendsjournal.org/a-union-unlike-any-other/>.



This is a photograph of the celebration mentioned in the final paragraph of the article. The words strung around the meeting room are the final paragraph of the Supreme Court's 2015 ruling, written out and sewn together by Elizabeth Tolmach.

by Herb Edwards and Susan Firestone

The October 26, 2025 forum offered by the Committee on Reparations, Reparative Justice, and Right Relations (RRJRR) featured key learning outcomes from the July Faith-Based Reparative Justice Conference at Pendle Hill. Faith leaders from around the United States convened to explore spiritual and practical approaches to reparations and racial healing. Atlanta Friends Meeting RRJRR Committee participants Diane Rowley, Alison Mawle, S.Y. Bowland, and Herb Edwards gained practical tools and collaborative strategies to support truth-telling, repair, and wealth redistribution as vital spiritual and moral commitments. Attendees learned how to organize action teams, encourage democratic decision-making, and sustain multi-faith efforts for reparations.

Workshops emphasized concrete steps for repair, identifying community needs, and promoting both structural and relational change—including wealth redistribution and deeper community bonds. Diversity, equity, and inclusion were presented as essential components of daily faith life, not optional extras.

Pendle Hill conference participants reflected on the United Nations' five conditions for reparations. In addition, they explored the impact of "ghosts and haunting" as reasons why multiracial meetings sometimes struggle due to moral injury from previous generations of colonialism and slavery. The group also envisioned a world transformed by comprehensive reparations. The conference provided strategies to move from principles to tangible, sustained action for repair and justice.

At the October 26 AFM forum, panelists shared both the key points of the Pendle Hill conference and their own perspectives or responses. After that, all forum participants formed small worship sharing groups and responded to queries to individuals about reparative justice and spiritual practice. Then participants in the whole group made suggestions for steps that Atlanta Friends Meeting can take for reparations and reparative justice. See the summary of these suggestions below:

Concrete Steps for AFM to take for Reparative Justice (Summary)

Find out more about reparations commissions/ study-action groups

- Find out what the City of Decatur commission on reparations is doing and who's on it.
- Connect with Beacon Hill Black Alliance for Human Rights and their work identifying harm done to former residents of the Beacon Hill / Black residents of Decatur.
- Find out more about the City of Atlanta and Fulton County commissions on reparations.
- Connect with the Greater Atlanta Reparations Collaborative, which includes all 3 commissions. The City of Decatur, City of Atlanta, and Fulton County are all focusing on harm reports. Find out if it's possible for Atlanta Friends Meeting to join the Greater Atlanta Reparations Collective.
 - Considerations: Avoid prioritizing white Friends as we organize for future actions for reparations. Focus on truth and reconciliation and how to bring a more spiritual approach to reparations.
- Leverage contacts made at the Pendle Hill conference, and especially look at initiatives in California and apply to our actions in Georgia.

Actions at the governmental level

- Get the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) to work on federal reparations in a meaningful way that actually pays back people who've experienced neglect, harm and intentional destruction.
- Work for reparative justice, using a model of the successes of Reconstruction.

- Lobby for an apology from the U.S. Congress to say what happened to the Indigenous populations and to the development and economic success of this country on the backs of those who were enslaved.
 - Considerations: Some descendants of enslaved people now own the land where their families were enslaved. Other people of African descent were never enslaved.
- Lobby for a congressional forum on reparative justice in the form of financial equity restored. So 50 million acres of land taken from slaves and descendants would be returned at its current value.

Help people of African descent keep their land, homes, and stay in historic communities

- Find out more about how land was taken away from Black families, and especially how descendants struggling with the “heirs’ property” rules can keep their land.
- Help people who are in danger of losing their homes because of taxes and gentrification by paying down one or two tax liens a year.
- Help African Americans who want to stay in their neighborhoods with being able to buy a house that has increased dramatically in price.
- Reinvest in historic neighborhoods and look into Community Benefits Agreements that would benefit long-term residents.
- Provide African American homeowners in gentrified neighborhoods with information and training on how to appeal their taxes at home and how to avoid paying school taxes if they are senior citizens.
- Contact Green Street Meeting in Philadelphia about their reparative justice project helping Black neighbors with free legal help with housing issues such as taxes, titles, wills, and home loans.

AFM Funding for reparative justice

- Make one larger fund in AFM for reparative justice so that the money would not be in smaller amounts divided up between the Reparations, Reparative Justice, and Right Relations committee and Quakers for Racial Equality in the Social Concerns budget. That way, we could do bigger projects.

Love and supporting the ministries of Friends of Color

- “The moment we choose to love, we begin to move against domination, against depression. The moment we choose to love, we begin to move toward freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others.” - bell hooks
- Love is not a substitute for land back or labor back. But Love may be a step towards being able to release what is thought to be a limited resource, shifting into a concept of being unlimited.
- Take time to find out what Friends of Color in AFM are led to do and support their ministries; possibly have a restorative circle about their ministry.

The Reparations, Reparative Justice, and Right Relations committee plans to follow through on these suggestions with your input and help. RRJRR will also share information and resources with AFM on a quarterly basis. Understanding how Friends of European descent have fallen short of the equality testimony and true connection with Friends of African and Indigenous descent can help Quakers work toward meaningful repair and transformation. So today we are sharing forum resources on Quakers and Racism. <https://tinyurl.com/m9k3dwep>

GREEN FRIENDS ON CLIMATE AND WEATHER

Green Friends are giving regular messages about climate and weather. Weather is what we experience; climate is what we expect, i.e., cold in winter.

November 9 (Bob Place)

Green Friends plans to make 2 announcements each month to share information and helpful hints about addressing Climate Change. I (Bob Place) am a member of both Green Friends and the national organization, Citizens Climate Lobby (known as CCL). Our Quaker Meeting helps both groups to alleviate some of the impacts of a warming Earth which continue to worsen. We support our Green Friends Committee, and we also support CCL which meets monthly in our library and sponsors special programs here. On Saturday, Nov. 15, CCL held a national virtual meeting, and the Atlanta chapter was here from 12:30 to 6 to figure out modified priorities to address climate change in this age of TRUMP! CCL lobbies all national Congress People and Senators twice a year. In July, 900 of us converge on Washington D.C. in person to lobby for passage of specific legislation such as to facilitate the more rapid construction of solar and wind farms and also to protect the health of our wonderful forests.

You are invited to attend our meetings as a member or as a visitor. Green Friends meets monthly after each Potluck Supper behind our kitchen. CCL meets here in the afternoon of the 2nd or 3rd Saturday of each month. See Kathy Johnson, Henry Slack, myself or any Green Friend about helping out. A good number of current Quaker Friends belong to both.

Remember that Climate warming is the most urgent and dangerous problem facing humanity long term. We can do many things separately and together to help lessen the effects of a warming Earth, and we must all do more.

November 23 (Henry Slack)

Fossil fuel pollution has caused us to overheat and changed our climate and weather, bringing bigger storms and more floods, as well as droughts and warmer days, which make wildfires worse. These increased disasters are raising home insurance rates and making home buying more expensive.

What Is Ours To Do? We cannot completely remove oil and gas from our lives, but we reduce their use. In the Meetinghouse, we installed solar panels and replaced a gas appliance with an electric one.

Today Green Friends suggest that you look into electrifying your vehicle. Electric cars are cheaper to operate than gas-driven cars, and their prices are going down as batteries get less expensive. Some EVs are made in Georgia! E-bikes are another option that also allows you to bike without worries of sweating as you climb Atlanta's hills.

ONLINE RESOURCES ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

from Friends Peace Team about the process:

<https://friendspeaceteams.org/conscientious-objection-to-war/>

from Quaker House, which provides counseling and support to service members who are questioning their role in the military: <https://quakerhouse.org/>

about AFM's work with conscientious objectors during the Vietnam War, chapter 6 of the meeting's history: https://atlantaquakers.org/wp-content/uploads/As_Way_Opened-History_of_AFM.pdf
(paper copies are also available to borrow from the library or to purchase from the office)

HURRICANE MELISSA RELIEF FOR JAMAICA

Member Clive Gordon, who is from Jamaica, has recommended that contributions go to J-FLAG, (originally Jamaica Forum for Lesbians All Sexuals and Gays, now known as the Equality For All Foundation, Jamaica), through the the Rustin Fund for Global Equality at <http://www.RustinFund.org/>. (FYI, this should NOT be confused with the Bodine-Rustin Fund of New England Yearly Meeting.) You can also give money thru the meeting. Please label your checks Hurricane Relief or put cash in an envelope marked Hurricane Relief.

INFORMATION ABOUT SNAP AND WHY IT MATTERS

from John Hopkins: <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2025/what-is-snap-and-why-does-it-matter>

DONATING TO DECATUR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE MINISTRY (DEAM)

DEAM, with the help of Decatur churches (including AFM), provides emergency assistance with food, utilities and medication and refers clients to longer-term help. This is one option if you want to make a difference for those whose SNAP benefits were/are delayed and those who were on furlough. Monetary contributions help stock DEAM's food pantry (and provide the most food for the dollar), and DEAM relies completely on monetary contributions to fund financial aid for prescriptions and the prevention of utility cut-offs. You can mail them a check (address on website) or donate online at their website (www.deamdecatur.org/contribute). You can also bring food items and leave them in the basket under the greeting table near the front door. DEAM's website lists items particularly needed each month. <https://deamdecatur.org/volunteer/> has information about volunteering.

OTHER RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO DONATE AND VOLUNTEER

Attender Chadé Walker is a social worker put together a list of food resources for her clients that she wanted to share with Friends. People can use the resource to donate, volunteer or to obtain food if they need OR share it with others who are impacted by food insecurity: <https://tinyurl.com/h8223tn2>. Some resources may have been short term, but others are long term and will continue to be helpful.

TO SIGN UP TO HELP ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

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

- <https://tinyurl.com/afmvolunteerguide> has information about the various ways you can help.
- You can sign up online at <http://tinyurl.com/afmvolunteers>
- You can sign up at the meetinghouse. Look for the sign in sheet on the greeting table by the front door or sign up as the volunteer sign up sheet is passed during announcements after meeting for worship.
- You can call or email the Office Coordinator at atlantaquakers@gmail.com or 404-377-2474.
- You can sign up to greet or help in First Day School (etc!) on the same Sunday each month. Just let the Office Coordinator know.

ADVENT ON ICE: A SILENT WITNESS FOR IMMIGRANT JUSTICE -- most weekdays, Dec 1 to 18

Casa Alterna invites Friends to join a small, silent Advent vigil at the gates of ICE—one or two people per shift, supported by a trained Casa Alterna coordinator and by volunteers accompanying individuals to their check-ins. On most weekday mornings, we will hold simple signs with Scripture and a query, offering a quiet but prophetic witness that the Light calls us to justice, mercy, and steadfast love. This is not a protest, but a grounded presence that reminds immigrants they are not alone and invites ICE officials to imagine a world where love crosses borders.

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

The book group reading works by and about people of color meets at 1:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month in person in combination with Zoom. On December 4, the group will be reading and discussing *My Documents* by Kevin Nguyen. All are welcome, and the group encourages anyone interested in a particular book to drop in. Future books include:

January 8 -- *Fools* by Njabulo Ndebele (this is the second Tuesday)

February 5 -- *A Guardian And A Thief* by Megha Majumdar

March 5 -- *This Is How You Lose Her* by Junot Diaz

April 2 -- *Thank You, Mr. Nixon* by Gish Jen

May 7 -- *We The Animals* by Justin Torres

June 4 -- *The Wilderness: a Novel* by Angela Flournoy

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

LOVE AS ACTION: PUBLIC SILENT WORSHIP AT ICE FIELD OFFICE -- Saturday, December 6

Save the date for a Public Worship: Saturday, December 6 at 2 pm. Join Atlanta area Friends to gather in public silent worship at the ICE Field office (180 Ted Turner Dr SW). We will hold signs saying "Immigrants Make Our Communities Stronger." Quaker witness for public action has stood in silent opposition to cruel and authoritarian actions in our country before. It is time for us to show this love in action again. Please join the American Friends Service Committee and Atlanta Friends to bear witness to the destruction and dehumanization that federal immigration actions are inflicting in our communities. **On Saturday Dec. 6 at 2:00 pm, we will gather at the ICE Field office at 180 Ted Turner Dr. SW for one hour of silent public worship.** Our hope is that our presence will give heart to all who see us - including through media and online - and remind everyone of our moral obligations to one another. This is part of a new national, monthly public witness campaign coordinated by the AFSC. Carpools and more details to be announced soon. Email Jacob (jflowers@afsc.org) to join planning efforts.

GUNS TO GARDENS: A SAFE SURRENDER EVENT -- Saturday, December 6

An opportunity to bring unloaded firearm(s) stored in the trunk of a vehicle to Oakhurst Presbyterian Church, 229 Second Avenue, Decatur on Saturday, December 6, from 10 am to 1 pm. (Enter parking lot from East Lake Drive.) Guns will be dismantled and sent to RAWtools to be made into garden tools. Co-sponsored by AFM Social Concerns Committee. Volunteers are also welcome. Volunteer possibilities include ambassadors (offer spiritual support) greeters, reporters, sign holders, and publicizing to other groups. To volunteer, contact Mary Smarr (mhsmarr@gmail.com) at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church.

FLGBTQC OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORSHIP & COMMUNITY – Sat, Dec 6 and Sun, Dec 7

-- At 6:30 pm on Saturday, December 6, instead of FLGBTQC's usual Game Night, Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns (FLGBTQC) will meet to talk about what FLGBTQC might do within the meeting and how we might organize ourselves.

Back in February, members of FLGBTQC talked about how we felt post-inauguration and what we might like to accomplish as a group. That conversation produced a list of interests and goals for us to pursue in the following months. Some of these goals, the group has accomplished, others not. Our goal with this meeting is to give FLGBTQC a better way to accomplish business. **If you want to help shape the future of FLGBTQC in Atlanta, please join us on December 6th at 6:30PM, at the Meetinghouse, in the library.**

Food will be provided and potluck contributions are welcome. After food and conversation, we'll begin with a short period of silent worship, followed by a semi-structured discussion. Discussion topics will include how we want to hold business meetings, what goals we want to prioritize, how we'll handle leadership, and whether we want to become a regular committee.

-- On Sunday, December 7, 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 or Jeremiah Gold-Hopton. To join the group email list and receive updates, contact Nina in the office.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS & ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL – Sundays, December 7, 14, 21, 28

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 December 7, Pam Wilkins of the Macon Worship Group will share her Spiritual Journey. To hear Cliff Waddington's Spiritual Journey, shared November 2, visit <https://tinyurl.com/bdhe2yrz>. 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, 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.

VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON DOCUMENTARY NIGHTS – December 7, 12, 21

For virtual documentary nights, participants watch the film online in advance, then meet online to discuss the film. For in-person documentary nights, participants watch the film together in person and then discuss it. Reservations are required for both. For reservations and links to watch the films for virtual documentary nights, check the announcement sheet or visit <https://documentarynight.wordpress.com/events/>.

Virtual: Sunday, December 7 from 7 to 9 pm, in honor of Human Rights' Month. *Segregated By Design* examine the forgotten history of how our federal, state and local governments unconstitutionally segregated every major metropolitan area in America through law and policy.

In-Person: Friday, December 12 from 6:45 to 10 pm. *The Panama Deception* tells the untold story of the December 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama; the events which led to it; the excessive force used; the enormity of the death and destruction; and the devastating aftermath.

Virtual: Sunday, December 21 from 7 to 9 pm. *Dominion* uses drones, hidden and handheld cameras to expose the dark underbelly of modern animal agriculture. While mainly focusing on animals used for food, it also explores other ways animals are exploited and abused by humans, including clothing, entertainment and research.

HOOSON'S HAVEN HOLIDAY HAPPENING -- Saturday, December 13

Let's enjoy the holidays with great friends, great food, and holiday cheer! December 13, 2:16 to 6:07. Newcomers especially welcome since there is no Welcome Dinner in December. 1455 Ridgeway Road, Covington, GA. 770-786-8096. RSVP to bhooson@aol.com by 12/7, so the chef will know how much food to prepare. No need to bring food. Cider, tea, water and non-alcoholic punch provided. Feel free to bring your own bottle.

COVINGTON REGIONAL BALLET NUTCRACKER -- December 12 to 14

If you are looking for a heartwarming (non-professional) Nutcracker to brighten your holiday season - the Covington Regional Ballet is putting on the Nutcracker from December 12th-14th at the Porter Events Center. Geneva Lee (7 years old) who you might have seen washing dishes or acting as greeter with her mom (Kelly-Jeanne) will be appearing as a villager to open the show and in the corps of angels (as a little cherub) to open the second act. There are 4 opportunities to see the show and both student and senior tickets are available. If you happen to be attending the *Hooson's Haven Holiday Happening*, it's not far away and starts after their event ends! For more information or tickets: <https://newtoncountyarts.vbotickets.com/events>

HELP PROVIDE NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS TO THE FRIENDS SCHOOL OF ATLANTA AND REDUCE YOUR GEORGIA TAX – deadline Monday, December 15

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

MINUTES FOR ELEVENTH MONTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS
November 16, 2025, held in person and via zoom in a blended meeting
Minutes Recorded Pending Approval

Attendance: Folami Adams, Cathy Amanti, Steve Collins, Betsy Eggers, Julia Ewen, Susan Firestone, Clive Gordon, Chad Heilig, Jeremiah Gold-Hopton, Jack Honderd, Bill Hooson, Kathy Johnson, Teri Key-Hooson, Becky Lough, Georgia Lord, Ellen McQueen, Christina Repoley, Aaron Ruscetta, Stacey Sharer, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Big Softy, James Strong, Myrna Trapp, Patricia Turner, Austin Wattles, Jackie Yates, Tim Yates, David Small (Clerk), and Charles Hicks (Recording Clerk)

Worship

Query for the Eleventh Month: 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?

Discernment

- **Care and Counsel** — Georgia Lorde reported for Care and Counsel Committee.

The Care and Counsel Committee is requesting approval for a Significant Need grant in the amount of \$400, to be given to a Friend in need of financial assistance for medical bills, car repair, and orthopedic shoes. The Friend's bills total, approximately, \$7,000.

Earlier this year, the Friend was given a grant in the amount of \$600 by way of the Atlanta Friends Meeting Assistance Fund for Members and Attenders. Any amount above \$600 must be approved by Meeting for Business.

The Friend has attempted to cover some of their bills with the help of a family member and a personal loan.

The Care and Counsel Committee is requesting approval for a \$400 grant to be given to a Friend experiencing Significant Need.

Minute-11-16-25:01: On the recommendation of the Care and Counsel Committee, Atlanta Meeting approves granting the \$400 request for our Friend in significant need.

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

1) Lay Down Music Ministry of Richard Allen

We have several recorded ministries under our care as a meeting. Ministry in the Friends tradition arises from, and is rooted in, a sense of leading. Britain Yearly meeting advises us "Responding to divine guidance, try to discern the right time to undertake or relinquish responsibilities without undue pride or guilt." After a period of discernment, Richard Allen working with his Anchoring Committee and on the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee has discerned it is time to lay down his ministry. We bring you three minutes. The first is an appreciation and description of Richard's ministry and service to the meeting. The second formally lays down this formal ministry and the third lays down the anchoring committee we have charged with support of this ministry.

Minute-11-16-25:02: In January of 2014 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, Atlanta Meeting on the recommendation of Ministry and Worship Committee, united in recognizing and taking under our care the music ministry of our member Richard Allen. Richard has been a talented musician and shared his skill and attention with the meeting. Before our formal recognition, Richard had offered his service in many ways providing piano

accompaniment for before meeting hymn singing and holiday music. The recognition of his music ministry was the result of a deeper movement of spirit. Richard has described with great power his experience composing “Two Thousand Years Ago in Jerusalem” a musical composition in several parts that describes the Easter week journey of Jesus. Richard experienced this as a mystical experience as something given to him, channeling a message of divine through his music. As we aspire to in vocal ministry, this was a message that was both him and not him. Richard found that music was a channel of love that creates a space without the need for argument or difference, but communication. Over the past eleven years, Richards has regularly shared this composition with our meeting, with SAYMA Friends, with Southern Appalachian Young Friends, in person performances with one or many. In addition to his composition, Richard has faithfully supported the music ministry of the Burundi Friends during the time they were in meeting with us and later as they moved to form the Stone Mountain Evangelical Friends Church. Richard has been a channel of love and a gift to our meeting. We recognize and support that it is now time to lay down this ministry.

Minute-11-16-25:03: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Meeting lays down the music ministry of Richard Allen with our thanks for his faithfulness.

Minute-11-16-25:04: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Meeting lays down the Anchoring Committee we appointed to support this ministry. We thank Bert Skellie, Karen Morris, Susan Firestone and Ron Nuse for their faithful and attentive care over the last eleven years.

2) Ministries Under our Care: Christina Repoley

In third month, we approved recognizing and taking under our care the ministry of Christina Repoley. We appointed an anchoring committee to support her faithfulness in ministry. At that time, we reported that additional members may be added. We now bring two additional members for meeting appointment.

Minute-11-16-25:05: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, we approve Clive Gordon and Claire Hannapel to serve on the anchoring committee for Christina Repoley’s ministry.

3) Transfer of membership: Jodie English

We have received a letter from Jodie English, a member of our meeting, requesting her membership be transferred. She became a member in June of 1985.

Minute-11-16-25:06: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the request of Jodie English to transfer her membership to First Friends Meeting of Indianapolis. Atlanta Meeting ask First Friends Meeting of Indianapolis to accept the care of Jodie English’s membership

4) Hurricane Funding

Many of us have followed with concern the devastation caused by Hurricane Melissa. As always we look for ways we can assist. While many large organizations provide general relief, marginalized communities are often not served well. We are fortunate to have in our meeting Clive Gordon who has connections in Jamaica and knowledge of organizations that serve marginalized communities. The Rustin Fund for Global Equality is an established entity and has established a channel for donations to fund an existing organization in Jamaica reaching out to LGBTQI+ persons. While individual committees of meeting may have considered small donations, Ministry and Worship recommends we make a substantial donation from the meeting as a whole. We recommend a donation of \$500 from our unallocated general funds. This is an urgent matter.

Minute-11-16-25:07: Atlanta Friends Meeting approves donating \$1,000 to Equality for All Foundation Jamaica through the Rustin Fund for Global Equality.

A Friend proposed increasing this to \$1,000.

Another Friend cautioned that iterated giving from the General Fund could get unsustainable. She said that we need to find a way to make giving like this a budget item so that it is sustainable.

Clive said this would be in the vein of the AFSC Gaza Relief Fund contribution earlier this year where the money would be approved and then the finance committee would figure it out.

The Social Concerns Committee said it would help kick in some of the money from the Social Concerns budget.

Reports

- **Admin** — Jack Honderd reported for Admin Committee.

The repainting of the meeting room and other repairs around the Meetinghouse will occur during the week of Thanksgiving, and other folks should be aware going into that week.

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

1) Membership by Application from Charlotte Flores.

The meeting has received a request to join the meeting by application from Charlotte Flores. A clearness committee clerked by Bill Holland has met with Charlotte, all are in unity on recommending membership. Ministry and Worship unites with this recommendation and bring you this report in 11th month. We will return in 12th month for the meeting's discernment.

Charlotte's letter says:

Dear Ministry and Worship Committee,

I am writing to request membership in the Religious Society of Friends at Atlanta Friends Monthly Meeting, where I have been a regular attender since August 2019.

I was raised in the United Methodist Church, where my grandparents were founding members. Faith and commitment to Christian values were central to my upbringing, and I made a personal commitment at my confirmation at age 12. I was an active member of St. James United Methodist in Spartanburg, SC, until marriage and my permanent move to Georgia in 1994.

After moving to Georgia, I participated in several congregations in LaGrange. These included non-denominational, Lutheran, and Episcopal churches. A consistent thread throughout my spiritual journey has been a desire to deepen my faith and live it out through action. My beliefs have evolved as I have studied, witnessed, and listened to the Spirit. From childhood, I am grateful that my father encouraged questions and allowed space to disagree within faith communities, which has helped me embrace doubts and inquiry as part of my journey.

A profound period of growth occurred when Anton and I participated in a house fellowship. Within this intentional community, we lived in the same neighborhood, prayed together, shared meals regularly, worshiped weekly, and committed ourselves to acts of justice and mercy. In this community, I cultivated practices closely aligned with Quaker testimonies: simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and sustainability.

At a pivotal time in our lives, as we were grieving and discerning next steps, we learned about Atlanta Friends Meeting's Friend-in-Residence opportunity. Upon joining, we felt immediately drawn to the Meeting's testimonies and the transformative practice of silent worship.

Since attending, I have grown through patient listening and the hope that the Way will open. I have been challenged to see the Divine in all and to actively live the testimonies I value. I have served on the Religious Education Committee and currently serve on the Nominating Committee. I have also contributed as a doorkeeper, nursery volunteer, and greeter, and have shared my spiritual journey with the adult First Day School class. I attend Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business when possible and review the minutes when I do not attend.

I now wish to commit to this monthly meeting as a member and sincerely thank you for your consideration.

With gratitude,

Charlotte Flores

2) Membership by Application from Anton Maisonet-Flores

The meeting has received another request to join the meeting by application from Anton Flores-Maisonet. A second clearness committee clerked by Christina Repoley met with Anton and recommends his membership. Ministry and Worship Committee also unites with this recommendation and brings you this report in 11th month. We will return in 12th month for the meeting's discernment.

Anton's letter says:

Dear Friends in Ministry and Worship,

I write to seek membership in the Atlanta Friends Meeting. My spiritual journey has been shaped by varied streams of Living Water: a Catholic childhood, evangelical young adulthood, Anabaptist post-9/11 years, and a deepening faith that wove activism with spiritual direction, contemplative prayer, and silent retreats long before I arrived at this Meeting. Life's soul-piercing wounds shattered earlier certainties, opening me to a silence alive with presence. In the quiet of our Meeting, I have found a mysterious communion where God's grace meets my unanswered questions with steadfast, fierce love. I feel led to deepen my commitment through membership.

Before coming to Atlanta, I was already committed to the testimonies central to Friends — simplicity, peace, integrity, community, and equality. Arriving over six years ago for what we all thought would be a "two-year" residency, I have witnessed the Way opening before me. The Meeting has shaped my life profoundly, offering a spiritual home and many mentors, young and old, who embody what it means to be contemplatives-in-action. Out of this residency has grown a ministry of hospitality, where we have welcomed over 600 immigrant guests at the meetinghouse, and alongside others outside the Meeting, continue to accompany vulnerable immigrants at the ICE field office. I am deeply shaped and sustained by this community.

I am especially drawn to Friends' recognition of seeing that of God within every person. This principle guides my work and is why the memoir I recently published chronicling our ministry at the meetinghouse is called WELCOME, FRIENDS. Membership is the next chapter — not only to live these values more fully but also to offer my experience, gifts, and energy in service to the life of this Meeting.

I attend Meeting for Worship and our monthly business meetings regularly and serve on the Administration Committee. I hope to continue being inspired by Friends I worship and serve alongside, and to be a source of encouragement to others. Membership affirms my spiritual path, deepens my connection to the community that has nurtured me, and strengthens my commitment to walk with this community in the Light.

Thank you for your care, discernment, and the many ways you have already welcomed and supported me.

With gratitude and friendship,

Anton Flores-Maisonet

3) Christina Repoley – Annual Report of Ministry

When we take a ministry under our care, we ask the minister and/or the anchoring committee to share a report of their ministry each year. This serves to inform the meeting and equips us all to assist the friend in their faithfulness. We share this in Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business and often publish it in the newsletter. This meeting we bring you the report of Christina Repoley.

Christina's report says:

Dear Friends,

In May of 2025, the Atlanta Friends Meeting took my ministry under its care and recognized me as a recorded minister. An anchor committee was formed and this is my annual report to the meeting on my ministry activities.

I engaged in many and varied ministry activities with the meeting itself this year. I continued to serve on the Ministry and Worship committee and continued to clerk Anton's anchor committee. I also clerked the clearness committee for Anton's membership request and provided informal support on a small committee for attendee Jillian Minnarich.

One of the pieces of my ministry this year I enjoyed the most was enacting my leading to have a "baby blessing" for new parents Hope Covington and Andrew Lambert, before they gave birth to their first child, Noah. This was a wonderful community building event that helped Andrew and Hope to feel more a part of our community and supported in this big life transition. After this initial baby blessing, two more were organized this year that I did not lead. We are continuing in discernment on the best way to welcome children and families into our community and support them on the parenting journey.

I also enjoyed co-leading the Gathered Meeting Retreat with Folami on the theme of discernment. I was able to bring in some of my professional experience with discernment practices as well as introducing the Quaker practice of clearness committees. Leading this retreat for the last two years has been a deeply fulfilling way of bringing my gifts to AFM and helping to weave a more connected community. More recently, I helped to lead a discussion between AFM and Durham NC meeting around shared challenges and opportunities for larger, unprogrammed meetings in the southeast. This was a useful time of sharing best practices and building relationships.

In the wider Quaker world, I have supported two Quaker organizations in big ways and others in smaller ways. I have served on the board of directors of Friends Fiduciary Corporation since 2013, and this was my last year of service. I served as the secretary of the board, a member of the governance committee, and the first clerk of the relatively recently formed DEI committee. For Quaker Voluntary Service, I clerked the search committee and led the entire search and hiring process for the new Executive Director, which was like an unpaid part time job over the spring and early summer. Once Greg Stefanski was hired, I have continued to meet with and advise him. Currently, I have stepped in to provide more formal support for planning and visioning with the departure of a key staff person, and I have continued to support the fundraising and development work of QVS.

I play an informal advisory and coaching role to Jon Watts, Executive Director of Thee Quaker and to Evan Welkin, General Secretary of FWCC Section of the Americas. Both are new to this level of leadership and it has been fulfilling to mentor younger leaders in these important Quaker organizations. Next month I will speak on a panel for the Quaker Leadership Center on the pros and cons of seminary for Quakers.

In my paid work for the Forum for Theological Exploration, I have engaged in many and varied ministry activities in 2025, all around themes of discernment and supporting young adults in discovering their purpose, passion and call. Some of the most fulfilling work I have done this year was in our Discernment Labs, where we brought together cohorts of leaders who work with young adults in churches, campus ministries, and denominational bodies to learn the FTE discernment framework and practices of discernment. I co-facilitated four cohorts of leaders through in person and virtual gatherings and am preparing for four new cohorts to begin next year. We give each organization or church a grant to experiment with disciplines of discernment in their context and we offer support and coaching over an 18 month period. It has been exciting to see the fruits of this work in the changes trajectories and deeper clarity of their young adults.

I also co-facilitated our annual Co-CREATE facilitation training, where we bring church and faith based nonprofit leaders together to learn facilitation practices so that they can be more effective leaders in their contexts. I am also working on developing two online courses on discernment for leaders like these, and two online courses for young adults on discerning their next most faithful steps. Last month, I designed and managed a large event called the Festival of Discernment where we brought together 70 young adults and 100 ministry leaders to learn, reflect, worship, and design next steps around discernment. People left the event inspired and energized about their work even in the midst of such difficult times in the world. I am very proud of what we created and the impact the experience had on those gathered.

When meeting with my anchor committee recently, we had a very helpful discussion about what my ministry is and how to continue to be discerning in the future about when to say yes to invitations to lead and when to say no, even if it is something I might be good at. We also talked about the need for me to find experiences that can nourish me, rather than always being in charge. I look forward to continuing to be grounded and supported by my anchor committee and to seeing how Way opens for my ministry in 2026. I am grateful to be recognized and supported by this community.

*Submitted by Christina Repoley
November 9, 2025*

■ **Nominating** — Ellen McQueen reported for Nominating Committee.

Nominating is bringing the following names forward for consideration by the Meeting:

- Barbara Seal, as Administration Member at Large, for a term of 3 years, Jan 2026-Dec 2028, to replace Greg Johnson, who is stepping down.
- Sallie Mykel Carpentier, for an additional 3-year term as Ferguson Cabin steward, Jan 2026-Dec 2028.
- Mark Smith, for an additional 3-year term as Ferguson Cabin steward, Jan 2026-Dec 2028.
- Blake Williamson and Mark Taylor, as co-clerks of the Meetinghouse and Grounds Committee, for a 3-year term, beginning upon approval, through Dec 2028.
- Folami Adams, as clerk of Ministry and Worship, for a 1-year term, beginning Jan 2026 through Jan 2027.

Additionally, for the handbook, gathering new descriptions of positions in the Meeting has revealed that some duties have, or need to be shifted— for example, some positions, like Database Manager, and Membership Recorder, are being subsumed into the Office Coordinator's duties. This is in the process of being sorted out.

■ **Finance** — Bill Hoosen reported for Finance Committee.

Finance Committee is asked to report quarterly to Meeting for Business on our financial status as a meeting. We are sitting on almost \$300,000.00, and we are in the process of moving our funds to Friends Fiduciary to set up an endowment program. We have various funds that are short-term that we can disburse as needed and long-term investments in future spending. Our balance sheet for the year is looking strong. Our surplus for the year is \$35,000, and we have expectancies coming in. We are projecting that we will finish ahead of the budget.

However, there are some concerns going into the next year, and our current budget is a working budget. We're looking at contributions at \$186,000.00, next year, which would align with our contributions, this year. Contributions are variable and volatile depending on the economy. We are finding some challenges in our committee programming for 2026. Committees have requested 47% more than what they spent this year. One challenge is honorariums and maintaining uniformity in what we provide to people for honorariums for services to the Meeting; we will be looking at this in the New Year.

We are looking at a deficit for 2026. The only ways to resolve this would be increasing contributions or cutting programming. Please keep that in mind moving forward. If we have to cut expenses, it will be specific and will not be done by a broad brush. We expect that this budget will change in December when we bring our budget back for approval. Additionally, we have the option of drawing from the general fund for the next year.

Additionally, specifically regarding Religious Education, items requested for tables, chairs, and cabinets will fall under the general facilities budget, and we will be responsive to those needs moving forward.

A Friend asked about the percentage of contributors who are donating automatically. Bill did not know.

A Friend asked about what committee is responsible for increasing rentals. Bill said to his knowledge that no committee was handling this.

A Friend said the Friends of Color got a lot of money but is not a committee and they receive more money than they need for services and they may be able to return money back to the budget.

A Friend asked how money is donated to specific funds. Stacey Sharer explained that money can be earmarked for certain funds or money can be contributed to the general fund.

A Friend asked for clarification on how much is needed to help reach the goals of the Meeting and asked for clarification on how money that wouldn't be used would come back to the Meeting. Stacey Sharer said these are the challenges that Finance Committee is facing that there is not a lot of clarity.

A Friend said we should be careful contributing to outside non-profits and said that we should have a process for allocating that money.

A Friend said there was a prior position for a fundraising subcommittee within the Finance Committee which could be considered. Bill Hoosen said these fundraising requests were incidental.

Clerk's Items

- Young Family's Support Committee

A number of young families with small children would like the meeting to support a young families support committee to help the parents parent. They would like to start a group but they would also like people who are older parents to be a part of the group to discuss parenting.

A Friend on the Library Committee posed the question on how the library committee may be able to support this group by creating a parenting section.

The Clerk also suggested a technology forum. Aaron Ruscetta said he would be willing to lead and organize that forum.

A Friend mentioned previously there was a fifth Sunday event for young families which we may bring back.

- Atlanta Public Ministry

On Saturday, December 6th, AFSC invites Atlanta area Friends from across Meetings to gather in a public place in silent worship with signs saying "Immigrants Make Our Communities Stronger", <https://afsc.org/posters-just-migration>. Starting in Atlanta and a few other cities on 12/6, the intention is that in future months coordinated events will occur in dozens of cities with shared messaging that serves as a public witness of our Quaker values. More details to follow, please hold the date and midday timing for this action.

We hope that these events will build on one another and provide a monthly way for community to come together in resistance and light. We also hope that it will help build support towards other regular actions such as the amazing work that Casa Alterna does and the existing call for public witness that they have given.

A Friend said Casa Alterna is asking for people to participate in silent witness at the ICE office here in Atlanta during Advent.

- Request for Information for the State of the Meeting Report

All committees should provide the Clerk with information for the State of the Meeting Report by next month.

Approval of Minutes from 10th month 2025

Minute-11-16-25:08: The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the 10th month 2025 minutes.

Events in the Life of the Meeting

- Charles Hicks and Sathya Balachander were married under the care of the Meeting at the Meetinghouse on October 25, 2025.
- We had a Memorial Service for Dee DeBra on November 8, 2025.

Closing Worship

