ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING
NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2026

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

https://atlantaquakers.org/announcement-sheet/ has the most recent announcement sheet with up-to-date event information

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, in-person-only 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 AUGUST

Are our meetings for Worship with Attention to Business and our Committee Meetings held in a spirit of worship and in dependence on the the guidance of God/Spirit?

– adapted from Britain Yearly Meeting

EPISTLE FROM FLGBTQC MEETING AT FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE 2026 GATHERING

Atlanta's FLGBTQC is part a larger organization of Friends from across the US and Canada. Below is the Epistle from the recent Friends General Conference Gathering in July.

To All Friends Everywhere.

We greet you warmly and open this epistle with a part of the vision statement of Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns:

> *Ours is a Quaker faith community committed to justice, liberation, and the full affirmation of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. We honor the divine Light in all humans and nurture a deep well of faith that sustains courageous witness in the world. We gather to listen deeply to the Spirit, to one another, and to the spoken and unspoken messages that rise among us.*
>
> *Through direct experience of the Light, we seek spiritual refreshment, fellowship, and the bonds of love that we discover in our shared differences. We affirm loving, Spirit-led sexuality and gender expression as powerful, Divinely bestowed gifts. Guided by this sense of sacred queerness, we reclaim faith as a source of power and resistance, embodying a living testimony of inclusion, equality, and deep, nourishing love.*

We came together at the University of Vermont during the Friends General Conference Gathering July 7-12, 2026. In 2024 at Gathering at Haverford College in Pennsylvania, we sat in discernment over the future of the organization. We listened deeply to one another, worshiped together, felt the profound love that has always been the hallmark of FLGBTQC. Over the last year a “Steering Committee” has been working together to examine next steps. They engaged the community in a lengthy survey that asked hard questions including the possibility that FLGBTQC should be laid down. It’s noteworthy that seven times as many people responded to the survey than had in 2022 and there was an overwhelming desire to revitalize the organization. From the Steering Committee four sub-committees were formed: the Reconnecting Subcommittee, the Rebooting Subcommittee, the Revisioning Subcommittee and the ReGathering Subcommittee. Friends did great, creative work including three online threshing sessions.

We are delighted to report that FLGBTQC is alive and revitalized, stronger than ever in spirit. Themes of gratitude were abundant in our Meetings for Worship and our Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business were spirit led. We have clerks, a working Nominating Committee, and Friends joining all the committees: Ministry and Counsel, Online Presence and Tech, Finance and Fundraising. It was very moving to be together in our hybrid format. A Friend wrote: "Being in a room of queer folks of all generations is incredibly meaningful."

Humor was evident in our work together. Our co-clerk kept referring to doing an agenda review as a gender review! And to the Rebooting Subcommittee as the Rebooting Commootee.
We accomplished a lot in our Business Meetings this week because we were so present with each other and Spirit and trusted in the work of our committee. The Rebooting Subcommittee determined that groups.io might better serve our online needs and over 100 Friends have tested this online platform. Hoots and hollers of gratitude were heard as we approved going forward with groups.io as the platform for our communication, a place where we may know each other deeply and honestly. We further approved the 5-year road map proposed for first stabilizing our structure, then expanding our capacities online and with regional gatherings, and finally bringing our online and in-person community together. There are already two regional gatherings in the works for 2027 and the possibility of a national mid-year hybrid gathering in 2028 Infused in all our work is attention to accessibility for all. We seek the participation of people of all generations to serve FLGBTQC in leadership roles.

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) has had a long witness supporting LGBTQ+ rights, spiritual gifts and equality. Now, in a time of mounting backlash and rising discrimination against transgender people, four Yearly Meetings within Quakerism have named transgender Friends to prominent roles. FLGBTQC sends these Friends our care and support in their new roles and blessings for their service. We also send our care and support to transgender people in all places. We continue, as always, to pray and work for a world where each person's dignity is honored and each person's spiritual gifts and talents are nurtured by their communities unconditionally.

On behalf of Friends for Lesbian Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns,

John Skinner and Karen Lightner, co-clerks
clerks@flgbtqc.org
http://flgbtqc.org

REVIEW OF MARY ANN DOWNEY'S BOOK FROM MEMPHIS FRIENDS MEETING

Your can read a review of Mary Ann's book, *Walking with Faith: Southern Baptist to Quaker,* in the Memphis Friends Meeting August newsletter at https://tinyurl.com/reviewmaryann.

PLEASE HOLD IN THE LIGHT:

Rebecca Thornburley & family
Becky Lough
Elizabeth Valera & Adele Frank
Ivie & Samuel Cole
Diane Green and brother David
Joshua Hart's mother & brother Josiah
David Small
Carol Gray

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: Brent Wolff, afmclerk1@gmail.com
Office Coordinator: Nina Gooch, atlantaquakers@gmail.com
Treasurer: Stacey Sharer, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com
Ministry & Worship: Folami Adams, drfolami@me.com,
Finance: Bill Hooson, 770-786-8096
Administration: Jack Honderd, jkhonderd@gmail.com
Social Concerns: Karen Morris, karenth.1415@gmail.com
Care & Counsel: afm.care.counsel@gmail.com
Quakers for Racial Equality: Susan Firestone, susanfires@gmail.com
Committee on Undoing Racism in AFM:
Lissa Place, placesatellkids@gmail.com
Reparations,Reparative Justice and Right Relations:
Herb Edwards, herbmedwards@gmail.com
Religious Education: Waman French, wamanf@gmail.com
Young Friends Program Coordinator:
Rebecca Thornburley, afm.young.friends@gmail.com
Nominating: Elizabeth Lamb, gelds@comcast.net
Newsletter Editor: Nina Gooch, atlquakerltr@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.

PROVIDING PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR THE THORNBURLEYS

from Georgia Lord, of Care & Counsel

Rebecca and Brittney Thornburley, and their son Bayard, are going through a very challenging time. They are experiencing a major medical crisis and need help. Rebecca is scheduled to have surgery on August 4th. Please hold them in the Light -- and look for ways to provide them with practical help! (Georgia suggests that folks refrain from calling them and asking for information about the medical stuff, as it can get really exhausting to explain that stuff repeatedly.)

Here is the link for a Meal Train that has been established for them: https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/eeol52. Thanks to all of you who have already offered help there!

It looks like school drop off and pick up for Bayard is getting worked out, but they still need other types of help. Best guess is that they will need some help for several months: help with housecleaning, help (and company!) for Rebecca after she comes home from the hospital, and probably some transportation.

We do not yet have a structure organized, but we are collecting names of people who may be able and willing to offer certain types of help. Here is the link to a simple sign up sheet. Signing up here would mean that you would be included in the list of people that could be contacted and asked if they can provide that type of help during a particular day or week: you will not be assigned to do anything without your agreement. The volunteer sign up sheet is at https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1SDCSVDHVriL03dAlYX5aVratO9BiSzlA17yrJyBHAL4/edit?gid=0#gid=0

As you can tell, one type of help that is needed is help in organizing these volunteer efforts. If you are interested in doing that, please email Georgia at afm.care.counsel@gmail.com.

2026 DIRECTORY NOW AVAILABLE

Thanks to outgoing Directory Editor Brent Wolff (with help from Aaron Ruscetta, Emma Bingham, Chad Heiling and Office Coordinator Nina Gooch), the 2026 AFM is now ready. A copy of the directory should have gone to everyone in the new directory. If you did not get one and would like one, please contact the Office Coordinator at atlantaquakers@gmail.com.
If you need a printed copy and can't print one yourself, please let her know so she can decide how many copies to have printed. If you are not in the directory, you can add your information at http://tinyurl.com/addafmdirectoryinfo. If you have corrections, now and in the future, please let Nina know or you can enter them at http://tinyurl.com/addafmdirectoryinfo. Going forward, the Office Coordinator will be the one collecting addresses and phone numbers for the directory, and we will have a separate Directory Editor to put the directory together each year.

UPDATE FROM QUAKER VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Waman French (he/him) says: Friends, I'm passing along this letter from Greg Stefansk, Executive Director of Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS), sent out to the Quaker Voluntary Service community. QVS began in Atlanta under the leadership of Christina Repoley.

As we wrap up this program year with 18 amazing Fellows (and celebrate 300+ alumni), we are preparing to welcome 28 new Fellows into the QVS program for a September start. That's a 56% increase over this program year and we haven't seen numbers like this in five years (we've also seen a significant increase in the number of organizations wanting to be site placements). And the good news is not just about numbers, it's about impact. Here's what our alumni have shared about their QVS experience:

76% find value in the Quaker testimonies and values (spirit)
87% are still connected with their housemates (community)
57% received a job offer from their site placement (service)

More information about QVS at https://quakervoluntaryservice.org/.

FOLLOW UP: VOTING RIGHTS FORUM WITH HELEN BUTLER ON JUNE 28

On June 28, our guest speaker, Helen Butler, Executive Director of the Georgia Coalition for The Peoples' Agenda, gave an inspiring presentation on voter education and the power of voter turnout and advocacy. The Peoples' Agenda offers a number of nonpartisan services to voters such as ways to check voting status, information on upcoming elections, rides to the polls, and election protection. One key Georgia government tool that everyone should know about is the My Voter Page at www.mvp.sos.ga.gov. The People's Agenda welcomes volunteers. You can fill out a form with how you'd like to help at https://thepeoplesagenda.org/volunteer/. If you already volunteer with another voting rights group, please send the name of the group, and types of volunteer opportunities to Susan Firestone at susanfires@gmail.com. We'd like to collect resources and encourage Friends to coordinate with each other. A recording of the June 2026 Voting Rights forum is available at the link below. Note: Recording 1 is about 8 seconds of the Meeting room before the forum. Then you will see Recording 2, which is the forum itself. Due to Zoom not recording the second camera shots, the view is of the whole meeting room. You can still hear the speakers well and there are closed captions. Before clicking on the link, copy the passcode : **%ig9G+&r**
Shareable link: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/2Pm1h9anYyebIPeasgR-U3_m56wJFRzAsVcytWDjZiz-3sPqY55YfBYx_UFciG_O.H6Cmwf88N2HP77qR

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION TRAINING

Dr. Brenda Smith has asked us to share info and a warm invitation with you to participate in the gun violence prevention training offered by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. Working on this issue for 20 years, the Peace Fellowship is a top provider of resources and training on gun violence prevention missions for congregations of all denominations. Two upcoming opportunities:

1. **Atwood Institute for Congregational Courage,** in-person annual Gun Violence Prevention training for lay leaders and clergy, **September. 15-18** near Kansas City, MO. See https://conta.cc/4wq9XK3. The deadline for registration is **August 25.** Scholarships are available. This is a wonderful event for learning, networking and more.
2. **Guns to Gardens Fall Action Circles October 8 - November 12,** one hour each Thursday on Zoom, plus one hour of preparation. See the noon ET option at: https://ppf.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/ppf/event.jsp?event=1996& or see the 7:30pm ET option at: https://ppf.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/ppf/event.jsp?event=1991&

OTHER RESOURCES ON GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION FROM DR. SMITH

https://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence/congregational-toolkit.
https://www.giffords.org
How to Host an Open Candidate Forum--Examples New Rochelle,NY.
https://www.lohud.com/videos/news/local/westchester/018/04/10/video-students-host-candidate-gun-violence-forum/501683002/

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS AND ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL – Sundays, August 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 August 2, Cate Tedford shared her Spiritual Journey. If you'd like to listen to Julie Foster's Spiritual Journey, shared July 5, go to https://tinyurl.com/486tv6a9. If you'd like to listen to other past Spiritual Journeys, contact Mary Ann Downey at madowney@mindspring.com.

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

On the second, third and fourth Sundays of the month, in August, Adult First Day School will be discussing the book *Walking with Faith: Southern Baptist to Quaker* by Mary Ann Downey. You are welcome to join the discussion even if you have not read the book.

Each fifth Sunday of a month, including August 30, Adult First Day School will consider a query using worship sharing. For more about worship sharing, visit https://friendsgc.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Worship-Sharing-Guidelines_1.pdf.

Adult First Day School meets at 9 am 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 or go to www.atlantaquakers.org.) For more details or questions, please contact Elizabeth Lamb.

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

The book group reading works by and about people of color meets at 1:30 pm on the first Thursday of the month in person in combination with Zoom. On August 6, the group will be discussing *New People* by Danzy Senna. All are welcome, and the group encourages any one interested in a particular book to drop in. Future books include:

September 3: poetry selected by members of the group
October 1: W*hiskey Tender by* Deborah Taffa
November 5: *Kin* by Tayari Jones
December 3: *Bad Bad Girl by* Gish Jen
January 7, 2027: *Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison

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

CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE -- Sunday, August 9

On First day, August 9, following the Meeting for Worship, the Social Concerns committee recognizes and celebrates the 20th century women's suffrage movement and women's right to vote. Enjoy conversation and advocacy in the Greeting room with a piece of cake decorated in women's suffrage colors. The committee acknowledges that voting rights for Women of Color was not secured in the U.S. until the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and that some provisions of this act have been stripped away by the Supreme Court over the years, making the right to vote ever more tenuous today. Sample letters to Congressional representatives will be available should you wish to bring forward this concern. A book table will be set up and F/friends are encouraged to bring books to give away related to voting rights for women and those identifying as women and non-binary Friends. Friends are also encouraged to write a monograph to share about a family member or friend who identifies/d as a woman and their contributions to the world.

NO SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE MEETING -- Sunday, August 9

Social concerns will not have a meeting on August 9 in order to celebrate voting rights for women and people identifying as female and/or nonbinary.

QREC CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION WORKSHOP -- in three sessions, August 10, 13, 17

Effective December 18, 2026, eligible males (assigned at birth) aged 18 to 25 will be automatically registered for the military draft pool using existing federal and state records, removing the need to register manually. How do we respond as Friends, and prepare the young people in our lives and communities? Join Quaker Religious Education Collaborative for a comprehensive, interactive workshop for all teens and young adults, of any gender, as well as all interested adults or mentors, of any age. Diversity of participants enriches discussion, and personal participation in war includes everyone, not just 18-year-old males. The online workshop covers Selective Service legislation, definitions of conscientious objection, activities to discern one's beliefs and articulate them, and finally some strategies to defend them. By the end, participants will have a better understanding of conscientious objection, a deeper grounding about the source of their convictions, and a "CO letter" articulating their beliefs. The workshop provides extensive materials, including a workbook to document personal reflection, activities, and discussion. More information and registration at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdnvO1VjVIDVg_KBJfa6DwWPbYRkxQRoSW1dP3GMdOYmDdaNg/viewform

LEARN ABOUT FREEDOM SCHOOLS AT LEADING 4 JUSTICE GATHERING -- Tuesday, Aug 11

2 sessions to choose from: 12pm and 7pm. "Join us for an inspiring gathering centered around the legacy and impact of Freedom Schools: past and present. Together, we'll explore how these educational spaces have empowered communities, advanced social justice movements, and created opportunities for collective growth and liberation." The gathering will include:

- Learning the story of Septima Clark, one of the visionary leaders behind the original freedom schools.
- Exploring the history of freedom schools and how they have evolved over time
- Researching freedom schools in our own communities

Plus lots of time for listening, sharing stories, and building community! Leading 4 Justice is a community that brings youth and adults together to support one another in our work for racial healing and cultural justice. You can learn more and register at https://l4j.eventbrite.com

MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – Sunday, August 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. Last month's minutes are below
Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89686276751?pwd=M29EYlIFWEhSQUtZRVVPaIFFYmVDQT09
Meeting ID: 896 8627 6751
Passcode: 789456

ABOUT MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS

"Friends' decision-making is rooted in the spiritual oneness of a religious community.
We reject majority rule for the higher goal of reaching decisions in unity . . .
Our process . . . goes beyond democracy in that it does not rely solely on human will or ability. Participants are expected to put aside personal desires and allow themselves to be led by a Guide beyond the self."

(Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice 1998)

Atlanta Friends Meeting guidelines for meeting for Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business are at https://atlantaquakers.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines_for_Meeting_for_Business.pdf. https://www.friendsjournal.org/meeting-for-business-as-spiritual-rehearsal talks more about the spiritual side of Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. Another resource is Pendle Hill Pamphlet #307, *Beyond Consensus: Salvaging Sense of the Meeting.* The AFM library has two copies.

NEWCOMER WELCOME DINNER -- Tuesday, August 18

On the 18th of each month, Atlanta Friends Meeting hosts a home-based meal for newcomers! This is an opportunity for those new to Meeting to ask questions and get to know a few Meeting folk. Allegra Armstrong will be holding the next one at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, August 18, at her midtown apartment. Please talk to Allegra after Meeting (or Mobile: (610) 608-0691 or armstrongallegra@gmail.com) if you are interested in attending. All are welcome!

AFM COMMITTEE FAIR -- Sunday, August 23

Nominating Committee is hosting a Committee Fair after rise of meeting on Sunday, August 23. You'll be able to find out what the committees that do so much of the work of the meeting actually do as well as learn more about other groups in the meeting. (If Committee Clerks and contact people for other groups have questions, they should contact Elizabeth Lamb, Clerk, at gelds@comcast.net.)

HARAMBEE: A CELEBRATION OF BLACK QUAKER RESILIANCE – August 28 to 30

Harambee (Let's Come Together): A Celebration of Black Quaker Resilience at Unity Friends Meetinghouse and Homewood Suites by Hilton in Philadelphia, PA. Includes a celebration of the Black Quaker Movement from 1990 to present, panel discussion on Contemporary Black Quaker Activism, a chance to join plans to unify Black Quaker organizations for greater impact. Childcare provided. Meals and courtesty shuttle to and from the meetinghouse provided. Some funds for financial assisitance. (The meeting also has funds for full scholarships for Young Adult Friends (18 to 35) to gatherings like this in the wider Quaker world. Contact Folami Adams of Ministry & Worship.) More information and registration at https://www.unitymeeting.org/harambee.

FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE 2026 OUTREACH CONFERENCE -- September 25 to 27

Registration for the Friends General Conference 2026 Outreach Conference is open at https://www.fgcquaker.org/event/outreach-conference/. The conference is virtual by Zoom and will be Friday to Sunday, September 25 to 27. There will be two plenaries, four workshops, and a free resource journal for all registrants (full-color PDF). This conference is ideal for Friends who are interested in the growth of the Religious Society of Friends, invitational outreach in the local community, and best practices in visibility and communications.

UPCOMING FLGBTQC EVENTS

Sunday, October 11, 2026, *Atlanta Pride Parade*; Friday, November 20, 2026, *Trans Day of Remembrance and Resilience*; Sunday, March 28, 2027, *Trans Day of Visibility forum*; October 1 to 3, 2027, *Regional FLGBTQC gathering.*
For more information about these events or about Friends for LGBTQ Concerns in general or about lgbtq+ issues or concerns, contact Nina Gooch or Jeremiah Gold-Hopton. To join the group email list and receive updates, contact Nina in the office.

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MINUTES FOR SEVENTH MONTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS
July 19, 2026, held in person and via zoom in a blended meeting
Minutes Recorded Pending Approval

Attendance: Guthrie Armstrong, Don Bender, Judy Bender, Jennifer Crumpley, Jennifer Dickie, Mary Ann Downey, Julia Ewan, Sally Ferguson, Susan Firestone, Julie Foster, Jeremiah Gold-Hopton, Clive Gordon, Maia Hallward, Chad Heilig, Bill Holland, Jack Honderd, Bill Hooson, Teri Key-Hooson, Martha Hutchins, Elizabeth Lamb, Alison Mawle, Ellen McQueen, Caroline Morris, Karen terHorst Morris, Katherine Ostrom, Jay Roache, Aaron Ruscetta, Barbara Seal, Stacey Sharer, David Small, big softy, Jim Tolmach, Myrna Trapp, Brent Wolff (Clerk), and Charles Hicks (Recording Clerk)

Worship

Query for the Seventh Month: Do you recognize divinely inspired insight? Can you distinguish between divine leadings and your own needs or desires?

Discernment

- **Social Concerns** — Bill Hooson presented on behalf of the Social Concerns Committee on Conscientious Objection regarding the selective service.

The proposed minute says: To bring Light to the recent change in the US Selective Service System's regulations, the Atlanta Friends Meeting, in support of our young men who are now automatically entered into the Selective Service System with no approved methodology to recognize their conscientious objection to war or to a draft, approves the following letters as templates to provide guidance to the young men who are faced with this dilemma. One template is meant to be sent to the appropriate Members of Congress and the other is to be given to the Clerk of Meeting for Business to be read into the Minutes of a Monthly Meeting for Business for documentation.

Draft Letter to the Meeting:

To _____Name_____Clerk of Atlanta Friends Meeting:

Since the registration for the Selective Service System is now "automatic," and since there is specific language in the Code of Federal Regulations that requests for conscientious objection classifications will not be filed unless conscription is reinstated, I would like to go on record, at this time, that I am a conscientious objector.

I have been attending Atlanta Friends Meeting since date , My beliefs stem from my attendance at Meeting, my attendance of Quaker gatherings, and my understanding of Quaker principles.

In some of the earliest Quaker declarations of faith dating back to the 1600's there were statements that all war is utterly incompatible with the Commandment that "Thou shall not kill", and the whole spirit of His Gospel, and that no plea of necessity or policy, however urgent or peculiar, can avail to release individuals from the paramount allegiance which they owe to him who said, "Love your enemies." And as referred to in the 2021 Southern Appalachian Yearly Meetings Faith and Practice on page 45:

"Denying the legitimacy of war, Friends support those led by the Spirit into conscientious objection to military service, resistance to conscription or a military draft, war tax resistance, or other acts of civil disobedience that witness against war-making. Friends do not recognize "just" wars, since war represents a refusal to pursue other ways of resolving conflict. We work to gain wider support for non-violent solutions."

I am further asking that this letter be read and become part of the minutes of the next Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, and that if conscription is resumed a Clearness Committee be convened to help me better discern my opposition to the armed forces and war.

Sincerely,

_____

Draft Letter to Congress:

Name
Address
City, state zip code

Date

Dear Senator/Representative:

As one of your constituents, I am saddened that registration for the Selective Service System is now automatic. It increases the likelihood of war and violates the privacy of U.S. citizens and residents. Given threats and actions by the current administration to intervene militarily in an increasing number of places around the world, it is concerning that, at this time, steps are now being taken to increase the number of people who could be facing the threat of conscription.

Since the registration for the Selective Service System is now "automatic," and since there is specific language in the Code of Federal Regulations that requests for conscientious objection classifications will not be filed unless conscription is reinstated, I would like to go on record, at this time, that I am a conscientious objector.

I have been attending Atlanta Friends Meeting since *date*, My beliefs stem from my attendance at Meeting, my attendance of Quaker gatherings, and my understanding of Quaker principles.

In some of the earliest Quaker declarations of faith dating back to the 1600's there were statements that all war is utterly incompatible with the Commandment that "Thou shall not kill", and the whole spirit of His Gospel, and that no plea of necessity or policy, however urgent or peculiar, can avail to release individuals from the paramount allegiance which they owe to him who said, "Love your enemies." And as referred to in the 2021 Southern Appalachian Yearly Meetings Faith and Practice on page 45:

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I am further asking that your office file this letter so that if conscription starts again, I have a paper trail that demonstrates I held these beliefs before the draft resumed or that I was drafted.

It is indeed unfortunate that the 20th and 21st centuries have been marked by near-constant military involvement of our United States.

Sincerely,

_____

A Friend asked whether "Quaker" was a category recognized by the Defense Department. Another Friend said we are but clarified the Department of Defense recognizes "Christian - Quaker".

A Friend suggested we have a non-theist version of this letter for young men who are non-theistic.

A Friend commented when her son turned 18 and sought guidance from the Meeting on whether he should register for selective service that the Meeting told her to advise him to go ahead and sign up.

There was discussion of whether the minute should say "young men" or "young people." A Friend said her daughter was required to register for the draft as a result of being a trans person and that regardless of how our government recognizes young trans people should not affect how our meeting recognizes young people.

The Clerk requested the social concerns committee to reconvene to discuss proposed edits to the minute and to bring the minute back next week. The social concerns committee agreed.

- **Memorial Committee** — Mary Ann Downey presented the report to Meeting for Business, which Friends approved.

  Minute-07-19-26:01: Janet Minshall died peacefully in Atlanta, GA with home hospice care on April 28, 2026, attended by her son Jay Roach and Friend, Judy Lumb. Janet Hemphill Minshall was born Janet Lane Minshall on October 30, 1939, in Charleston SC to Frederic M Minshall and Peggy Woods Minshall. The family moved to Louisville KY in 1940 for her father's work as a journalist. Janet attended Washington Square College of New York University and graduated in 1959 from University of Louisville, Kentucky. In 1962, she married Joel H Roache III in Louisville and their son, Joel IV, (Jay) was born in 1963. Joel received his PhD from University of Pennsylvania, and taught at University of Wisconsin, where Janet was co-director of the University YMCA. In 1969 they adopted a son, Matthew and six months later gave birth to their son, Eric.

  Janet and Joel separated in 1976, and Janet moved to Cambridge MA to go back to school at Cambridge Goddard Graduate School. While in Cambridge Janet began attending Beacon Hill Friends Meeting. All three children lived with Joel during Janet's first year of study, then Eric lived with Janet in Cambridge. After completing her graduate degree, Janet worked for the MA State Health Department managing maternal and child health programs. In an article for Friends Journal, "Living Our Quaker Values at Work" she reflected on a "crisis of conscience" about how her work related to her beliefs and expressed gratitude for help from a Friend at meeting in discerning her choice to resign.

  Janet and Eric moved to Atlanta GA, and she worked for Lutheran Ministries of Georgia, finding jobs for refugees. She began attending Atlanta Friends Meeting and became a member in 1981. She also began attending Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting, and Friends General Conference annual gathering. In 1982, after she and Joel divorced, she changed her name to Janet Hemphill Minshall. In 1983 son Jay joined Janet and Eric, and they became close friends with neighbors Judy Lumb and her sons Tim and Jeff. Janet met Free Polazzo at Atlanta Meeting and in 1986, Janet and Free requested approval for "right joining," a term used by George Fox in the 17th century, when Quaker "marriages" were not sanctioned by the English courts. Janet and Free did not want to file a county marriage license and to use "right joining". Janet explained their position in an article in Friends Journal (July 15, 1987): "We wanted to make as full and deep a commitment to one another as two people could make—a spiritual commitment in the presence of God and our Friends to remain loving and faithful to each other. Both of us felt that State sanction or license was irrelevant to that commitment and right joining in marriage was God's work alone and could not be accomplished by priest or magistrate or anyone else." In February 1987, meeting approved the right joining under the care of the Meeting, and, at the same time reviewed meeting's process for marriage. The review led to accepting unions for gay and lesbian friends. The right joining, held March 21, 1987, was a ceremony blending Quaker unprogrammed worship, Jewish prayers, and ancient women's traditions.

  With a minute of support and financial aid from meeting, Janet traveled to Kenya in 1986 and 1988 to support and promote women's self-help projects in Elgon Yearly Meeting. Affirming

this ministry, Atlanta Meeting recorded: “With Janet’s strong commitment to these concerns and her ability to carry them forward, we believe that the fruits of the Spirit will be plentiful. Through her openness and love for others, we know that she will grow in her ministry as well.”

Janet served as clerk of meeting 1988-1989 and facilitated our discernment to sell our beloved but inadequate meeting house, and to rent temporary meeting space trusting Spirit to lead us. When we broke ground for a new meeting house in 1990, Janet wore a dress and bonnet worn by her Quaker Minshall forbears who came with William Penn to Pennsylvania. At our new home, Janet served as meeting secretary and, from 1992-1994, SAYMA’s first administrative assistant. Janet and Free moved to Douglasville GA in 1998 and started Anneewakee Creek Friends Worship Group. In Douglasville Janet loved gardening, reading, birdwatching and playing with her dog Tashi. In 2007 Janet and Free were legally married. They collaborated with others for an article in Friends Journal, April 2010, addressing concerns with the words we sing in “Lord of the Dance” and the connection to anti-Semitism. In 2014 Janet's health declined and she had a stroke in 2018. They moved back to Atlanta and Free died in October 2023. Jay cared for Janet with the help of an assistant until her death in 2026. Janet is survived by her sons Joel (Jay) Roache in Atlanta, GA and Matthew and Eric Roache in Salisbury MD.

- **Administration** — Jack Hondard reported for the administration committee on the Atlanta Friends Meeting's Sign Policy.

A Friend suggested for Jack to present the general summary of changes to the sign policy. Jack said that the main changes regard banners to ensure that they do not stay up for more than thirty days with approval from the admin committee. The administration committee will have a pole available on which to hang the banners. The discernment process and decision will be moved to the August MfB to allow more time to reflect. *[EDITOR'S NOTE: New sign policy can be found below.]*

- **Nominating** — Elizabeth Lamb reported for Nominating Committee.

  Minute-07-19-26:02: On the recommendation of the Nominating Committee Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Joe Manganelli as clerk of the Meetinghouse and Grounds Committee for a term from this date through December 2026.

  Minute-07-19-26:03: On the recommendation of the Nominating Committee Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Julia Ewen as a member of the Ministry and Worship Committee for a term from this date through December 2028.

  Minute-07-19-26:04: On the recommendation of the Nominating Committee Atlanta Friends Meeting approves El Sayed Elbaz as a member of the Ministry and Worship Committee for a term from this date through December 2028.

  Minute-07-19-26:05: On the recommendation of the Nominating Committee Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Karen Gold as a member of the Ministry and Worship Committee for a term from this date through December 2028.

Reports

- **Nominating** — Elizabeth Lamb reported for Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee brings forward Julie Foster to serve as a member of the Ministry and Worship Committee for a term from now through December 2028. We will bring her name forward next month for approval.

The Nominating Committee brings forward Chad Heilig to serve as clerk of the Library Committee for a term from now through December 2028. We will bring his name forward next month for approval.

- **Library Committee** — Chad Heilig reported for the Library Committee.

This was originally presented by Chad Heilig from the library committee under the discernment section of the agenda. Friends in attendance suggested it belonged under the reports section since it was intended to inform the meeting without requiring a formal decision. The clerk agreed.

I take some responsibility for the welfare of the Atlanta Friends Meeting. No one has asked me to. I have clearer ideas about how I might continue to contribute to AFM's digital life — in the library, through the spiritual journeys archive, and in the file room archive. Atlanta Friends should be able to tap their living history and to revisit witnesses. I want to help build the door and open it. My spiritual journey is in the archives, I have tended the library, and I have professional experience gentling meaning from the stored record while protecting and honoring the sovereignty of those in the record. I did that for Covid data while I was at CDC, and I can do that with AFM.

What I propose:

- Clerk the library committee, continuing and building on work that we have achieved over the past year
- Scope options for AFM's physical archives, taking no permanent action without the meeting's engagement
- Demonstrate options for managing spiritual journey recordings as sensitive, shared, findable truths
- Offer ways to index and find past AFM newsletters
- Liaise with other Quaker archival interests

What I do not propose:

- Manage AFM's web presence
- Produce newsletters, announcements, or the AFM directory
- Manage AFM's Zoom
- I would remain in dialog with those who tend these other portions of AFM's digital life.

Why I propose:

- Ensure that AFM's history remains durable and is preserved faithfully in paper, recordings, and digital media
- Open AFM's history to be both accessible and protected as a shared resource
- Provide principled ways to discern how to allocate resources for preserving physical media, converting to digital or other media, and sustaining all media
- Situate AFM's library and digital archives among the wider Quaker world

How I propose:

- Widen the library and digital archives committee (proposed) to include advisors who will help shape and steer the work of preserving AFM's legacy
- Include diverse perspectives with varied expectations and experiences for both preservation and for digital life

I offer my time, skill, and care for the nominating committee's consideration.

A Friend asked what Chad meant about remaining in dialogue with the other committees. Chad said that would be worked out but he didn't want to suggest to anyone that he was taking over anything.

Alison Mawle suggested that Chad may want to consider being nominated for Archivist.

- **Finance** — Bill Hooson reported for Finance Committee.

We are behind our net compared to last year. Recall, we decided to budget a deficit for the year. However, we are down about $18,000.00 in contributions compared to last year. We need to be mindful of contributions, and Bill will have more specific numbers to be highlighted at our next meeting.

A Friend asked whether Bill was very concerned. Bill said he was concerned but not very concerned. He said the Finance Committee was considering a forum for clerks on budgeting.

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

Jack proposed taking some action on updating the Meetinghouse WiFi. Guthrie Armstrong has agreed to take on this project.

The Meetinghouse and Grounds Committee has been reformed. Joe Manganelli is clerk of the Meetinghouse and Grounds Committee, and John Adams, Myrna Trapp, Mike Aland, and Jim Tolmach.

Clerk's Items

- **Ad-hoc Committee on Support of SAYMA** — Brent Wolff said he will appoint the clerk and committee and will appoint members. He said that he has not yet appointed members but he hoped to have an inclusive process to begin after the summer is over. He said that he wanted to spend the next month putting together.

Announcements

- None.

Approval of Minutes from 5th month 2026

Minute-07-19-26:7: The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the 5th month 2026 minutes.

- The Minutes were updated to reflect that SY Boland was present in the May 2026.

Events in the Life of the Meeting

- Derek Harootune Otis and Arianna Rodriguez were married under the care of the Meeting on July 11, 2026.

Closing Worship

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Atlanta Friends Meeting External Sign Policy
approved by Administration Committee on 5/10/2026

1. General Information
   a) All signs will be reviewed by Atlanta Friends Meeting (AFM) Administration Committee before they can be approved and placed on Meeting grounds. Factors that the committee will consider in its review include size (number of square feet), general design, location (such as distance from street), length of time to be installed, materials to be used, other relevant factors listed in the current City of Decatur sign ordinance, and compliance with basic Quaker “SPICE” principles (Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, and Equality). In the case of a sign that includes a statement of faith, belief, or promotion of cause, the Administration Committee may decide to refer approval to AFM for Business.
   b) No signs for political candidates allowed.
   c) All signage is subject to periodic review by the AFM Administrative committee.
   d) Some signs may not need reviews by the AFM Administration Committee but must be reviewed and accepted by the Office Coordinator. Some examples are noted:
      1) Weddings approved by AFM.
      2) Memorial services sponsored by AFM.
      3) Other AFM sponsored activities
   e) Any Signs not specifically described in this policy can be brought to the attention of the AFM Administration Committee for discussion and review.
2. Permanent Sign
   a) A Permanent Freestanding Sign to be used by AFM must meet the present City of Decatur Sign Ordinance unless grandfathered in via previous sign ordinance. This design shall be reviewed by AFM for business and acquired consent by such meeting.
3. Tenant Sign
   a) For signs to be placed by renters on the permanent metal sign near the parking lot entrance, the renters must submit a Sign application for their sign to be considered by the AFM Administration Committee. This Sign application is available by contacting the Office Coordinator
   b) For signs to be placed by renters on the permanent metal sign near the parking lot entrance, the AFM Administration Committee will use the following criteria to determine which renter(s) may hang a sign there, assuming space is available: average number of days per month Meetinghouse space is rented by renter, average monthly rent paid by renter, and the length of time that renter has been renting space at AFM.
   c) Installed renter signage will be reviewed by the Administration committee prior to the beginning of the rental periods for each group’s rental contract to determine if the signage will remain.
   d) Renters must pay for the design, fabrication, installation and maintenance of any signs they request, after first obtaining AFM’s written approval.
4. Temporary Banner
   a) All meeting groups requesting to install a temporary banner must submit a Sign application. This Sign application is available by contacting the Office Coordinator
   b) All Temporary Banners must be reviewed and approved by AFM Administration committee prior to installation, unless otherwise noted in this Policy.
   c) All Temporary banners must meet SPICE principles, have a backside that is blank, and be 4X6 sq ft.
   d) All Temporary banners must be maintained in good condition by the applicant.

e) All Temporary banners will be installed no longer than 30 days. If the Temporary banner is not removed by the 30-day deadline the banner will be removed and the AFM Administration committee will consider this action during the review of any future requests.
f) Temporary Banner Signs may be placed on a rotational schedule without prior approval by AFM Administration Committee if all the following conditions are met:
   1) If the banner design previously met with AFM Administration Committee approval.
   2) The banner is well maintained and does not show any signs of gross neglect or dilapidation.
   3) Verbiage has not changed since the approval by AFM Administration committee
   4) Banner does not go up prior to its scheduled installation date.
   5) Banner is removed by its scheduled removal date.
g) There will be permanent posts for Temporary Banners.

5. Temporary Signs for Days of Events – This sign type is intended for use during events that are of limited duration, usually no more than one day.
   a) All parties requesting to install a Temporary Sign must submit a Sign application. This Sign application is available by contacting the Office Coordinator.
   b) All Temporary Signs must be reviewed and approved by AFM Office Coordinator (OC) unless the OC determines that the AFM Administration committee needs to review/approve the sign.
   c) All Temporary Signs must be maintained in good condition by the applicant.
   d) Installation of the Temporary Sign must be no earlier than the day of the event and removed at the end of the event.

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ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

Office Coordinator's usual hours: Monday thru Thursday, 10 am to 1 pm and Friday, by appointment
web and email: atlantaquakers.org, atlantaquakers@gmail.com voicemail/phone: 404-377-2474
Clerk: Brent Wolff, afmclerk1@gmail.com Treasurer: Stacey Sharer, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com

Ways to communicate and receive information:

- You can receive the announcement sheets and other announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting. This is the announcement email list. (The announcement sheet is also posted online.)
- You can receive announcements AND posts about a broader range of topics relating to being a Quaker via email This is the discussion email list.
- You can receive notification that the newsletter is online. This is the newsletter email list.

To join any of these email lists above, please email the office at atlantaquakers@gmail.com.

To join the meeting's Facebook group, search for Atlanta Friends Meeting & click the ***+ Join Group*** *button.*

Do we have your (correct) contact information so we can reach you? Please send your name and (updated) contact information to atlantaquakers@gmail.com.

Do you need a directory, printed or electronic?
Email atlantaquakers@gmail.com or call 404-377-2474

What does supporting your spiritual community look like for you and your family? Atlanta Friends Meeting accepts contributions of your time, resources, talents, and money! Place a financial contribution in the slot marked "Contributions" in the greeting area of the Meetinghouse or mail to our mailing address. Or donate online at atlantaquakers.org/contact-donate/ with a credit card or paypal. Sign up to volunteer on Sunday morning at http://tinyurl.com/afmvolunteers. Contact the Nominating Committee to serve on a committee. *Thanks!*

Want to submit an announcement, letter, article, etc to the newsletter? Email atlquakerltr@gmail.com. Submissions may be edited for length and format.

THE DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS IS THE 20TH DAY OF EACH PRECEDING MONTH

This newsletter is a publication of the Atlanta Friends Meeting.
Views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily that of the Meeting