

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026



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 JANUARY

Do you maintain an appropriate balance among work, service, worship, family, and recreation? Are you ready to rest if God asks it of you?

"ANOTHER MEETING FOR WORSHIP"

by Renita Romasco, originally published in October's Friends Journal
<https://www.friendsjournal.org/another-meeting-for-worship/>

David sniffs.
Liam sneezes twice, loudly.
Carol coughs,
Ellen sighs.
The rev of cars as they stream past on the busy road.
The bang of the outside door because someone is always and forever late.
The carillon from the Catholic church next door—its spires
rising to heaven while our ancient building sinks into the green grass.
A trill of laughter as the children make origami cranes in the other room.

We strain to listen for Spirit's voice,
frown at latecomers, coughers, cars and sniffers.
Yet Spirit is right here in my ear, so clear.
Audible over and under and through every other sound saying,
"Embrace every sniff and cough and bang,
the cars, the children, the bells.
Hear the still small voice of God in every sound.
Thank your ears.
Smile, your message has arrived."

**PLEASE HOLD
IN THE LIGHT:**

Victoria & Alice Holland
Claire Tanner
Ryll Matthews
Grace S's grandmother
Julia Ewen's sister Anne

*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,
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Administration: Jack Honderd, jkhonderd@gmail.com
Social Concerns: Karen Morris, karenth.1415@gmail.com
Care & Counsel: Georgia Lord, 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
Reparations, Reparative Justice and Right Relations:
Herb Edwards, herbmedwards@gmail.com
Religious Education: Amanda Gendreau, AmandaGendreau5@gmail.com
Young Friends Program Coordinator:
Asa Kramer-Dickie, afm.young.friends@gmail.com
Library: Derek Harootune Otis, dharootuneotis@gmail.com
Nominating: Elizabeth Lamb, gelds@comcast.net
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Bookkeeper: Jonah McDonald, afmbookkeeper1@gmail.com

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

OPPORTUNITY TO GET TO KNOW OUR MEETING'S TEENS

We have a growing group of teens coming to meeting on Sundays. We are seeking interested adults who would like to teach that age group once a month. Please consider getting to know these Young Friends as they grow into their unique gifts. If you are interested or have questions, contact Amanda Gendreau (amandagendreau5@gmail.com), Religious Education (RE) clerk, or Cathy Amanti (cbamanti@gmail.com), RE co-clerk.

LETTER FROM NICHOLAS BUTTERFIELD AND RACHEL OSBORN

is on the bulletin board by the patio windows at the meetinghouse or email Nina in the office for an electronic or paper copy.

NEW LIBRARY DISPLAY OF BOOKS FEATURING THE VOICES AND STORIES OF UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

The Quakers for Racial Equality Committee and the Library Committee have collaborated on a new book display focusing on the voices and experiences of undocumented immigrants. The display features Friend-in-Residence Anton Flores-Maisonet's book on welcoming and accompanying immigrants, including at the meetinghouse. The display also includes several books written by undocumented immigrants as well as two children's books about immigration and two books written by an anthropologist who has spent time on the migrant trail from Central America through Mexico. All of the books are catalogued in the AFM library and are available for checkout. They will be on display on a cart in the greeting room on Sundays for the next month or so. Follow this link to read a short summary of each book: <https://bit.ly/48o14r7>.

BRIAN GOLDSTONE'S BOOK IN THE MEDIA: *THERE IS NO PLACE FOR US*

The New York Times included attendee Brian Goldstone's book *There Is No Place For Us: Working and Homeless in America* in its list of ten best books of the year. The blurb read: "With uncommon precision, tenacity and grace, Goldstone, an anthropologist turned journalist, casts a shocking spotlight on the 'working homeless,' a term that should be an oxymoron but which in America defines hundreds of thousands of people. Following five Atlanta families for whom home is a car, a relative's couch or a squalid room in an extended stay hotel — often some rotating combination of all three — his book gives intimate human shape to a population uncared for by the government and largely invisible to the public, one that, owing to soaring rents, paltry wages and misguided urban policy, is barely surviving even with a paycheck." In addition, Barack Obama included the book on his list of favorite books for 2025. and on November 16, the book and people whose stories Brian documented were featured on CBS Sunday Morning with Ted Koppel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4louIWBN5Nw>. The book is available at bookstores and online.

GULLAH-GEECHEE SONIC LIFE: RECORDINGS BY COURTNEY SICELOFF

If you tried to listen to the podcast about the recordings Courtney Siceloff (later a long-time AFM member) made in 1955 and 1956 while Director of Penn Community Services on St. Helena Island, SC, and were unable to access it, try again now at <https://blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2025/09/new-podcast-exploring-1950s-gullah-geechee-sonic-life-with-dr-eric-crawford/>.

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FLGBTQC OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORSHIP & COMMUNITY – January 3, 4, 26

At 5 to 6 pm, January 3, join FLGBTQC Friends online from all over the U.S. and Canada for an online meeting for worship with time for introductions and conversation from 6 to 6:30 PM. Please contact Jeremiah Gold-Hopton at jeremiah313134 at mac dot com for the international FLGBTQC Zoom link and to find out if there will be an opportunity to gather in person for this at the meetinghouse in January.

After this, AFM's local FLGBTQC (Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns) monthly game night begins at 6:30 pm at the meeting house. Conversation, games and potluck-style food. Allies welcome! Bring any board game or other tabletop game you'd like to share with the group. Just be willing to explain the game to new players, or (if it's your first time playing it) be willing to learn it along with the rest of us. For more information, contact Nina Gooch or Derek Harootune Otis.

On Sunday, January 4, we will also eat together at potluck (look for the queer flag).

On Monday evening, January 26 we will meet via Zoom to continue to discuss what we might like to do within the meeting and how we might like to organize ourselves to do that. We will begin with a brief period of worship. The Zoom link and more details will go out the FLGBTQC email list or contact Nina for more information.

For more information about these events or about FLGBTQC in general or about lgbtq+ issues, 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 & QUAKERISM 101 IN ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL

Sundays, January 4, 11, 18, 25

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 January 4, Dean Leeper will share his Spiritual Journey. If you'd like to listen to 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.

Adult First Day School starts each year with an introduction to Quakerism. Beginning in January, they'll read and discuss *The Spirit of the Quakers* by Geoffrey Durham. All are welcome whether you have read the book or not.

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.

DOORKEEPER INFORMATION & TRAINING – Sunday, January 4

During potluck on January 4, bring your food and join the Religious Education committee to find out more about being a Doorkeeper for First Day School. The session will last about an hour and there will be childcare. *What is a Doorkeeper?* Doorkeepers help teachers in Preschool thru Upper Elementary First Day School, greeting each child as they arrive and assisting the teacher during story time and art and other reflective work as well as playground time. The Doorkeeper is the first person a child encounters when coming to First Day School. To welcome and ask children if they are ready to join the circle allows each child a sense of belonging and sets the stage for a thoughtful lesson. The unspoken story the Doorkeeper is sharing is:

- You are safe, you are respected, you are trusted, your voice and work are valued, you are important to us
- This is a special place, it is different than the place you just came from
- This story is important and it is for everybody

BOOKS BY AND ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR -- Thursday, January 8

The book group reading works by and about people of color meets at 1:30 pm, usually on the first Thursday of the month in person in combination with Zoom, though they will be meeting on the second Thursday in January. On January 8, the group will be reading and discussing *Fools* by Njabulo Ndebele. All are welcome, and the group encourages anyone interested in a particular book to drop in. Future books include: 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; and June 4 -- *The Wilderness: a Novel* by Angela Flournoy. For questions or the Zoom link, contact Susan Cole (cole2544@bellsouth.net).

ONLINE DISCUSSION OF PENDLE HILL PAMPHLET: *HYPOCRISY, RACISM & SELF-INTEREST ON THE PATH TO REPARATIONS* -- Wednesday, January 14

On Wednesday, January 14, at 7 pm, everyone is invited to participate in a virtual discussion of the recent Pendle Hill pamphlet (489), *Hypocrisy, Racism, and Self-Interest on the Path to Reparations: Quaker Complicity with Slavery (1657-1776) and White Supremacy*. As we engage in anti-racist and racial reparations work, author Mary Watkins highlights the fact that "it is crucial to reject a false and incomplete narrative about our history." This pamphlet brings to light the erased history of Quaker participation in cultural, religious, and racial supremacy during the colonial period. Copies of the pamphlet are available from Karen Morris (karenth.1415@gmail.com). You can also purchase one from Pendle Hill at <https://tinyurl.com/5n8xp8be>. For more information contact Karen Morris, Susan Firestone (susanfires@gmail.com), or Cathy Amanti (cbamanti@gmail.com).

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84089955578?pwd=kol2qQwfulYBF5ZnXjqSKUOUPgtetN.1>

Meeting ID: 840 8995 5578

Passcode: 734536

MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – Sunday, January 18

Stay after meeting for worship, whether in person or via Zoom. Minutes from last month are below. Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business will be held in a combined format about 11:45, using the Zoom coordinates for Meeting for Worship.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89686276751?pwd=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, through distinctive attitudes developed by Friends over the centuries. Our process is democratic in the sense that everyone is encouraged to participate. However, it also goes beyond democracy in that it does not rely solely on human will or ability. Participants are expected to put aside personal desires and allow themselves to be led by a Guide beyond the self." (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice 1998)

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

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

NEWCOMER WELCOME DINNER -- Sunday, January 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. For more details about the January Welcome Dinner, see later announcement sheets.

WORKSHOP: LOBBY LIKE A QUAKER -- Sunday, January 25

Lobby Like a Quaker! – Bringing our Faith and Practice to witness to our deepest concerns with policy leaders. Since our earliest times, Quakers have been involved in advocating for social policies to promote a more just society. On Sunday, January 25, beginning at 11:45 (after meeting for worship), members of the Atlanta Advocacy Team of the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) will conduct an experiential workshop sharing practices to conduct effective visits with policy leaders at any level of government. Rooted in practices of seeing that of God in every person, speaking our truth and building long-term constructive relationships with others, Quakers have engaged in long-term work of social transformation. Come join us and practice speaking your truth, telling your story and engaging in deep, respectful listening. General information about FCNL is at www.fcnl.org

CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR MARLENE JOHNSON – Saturday, January 31

There will be a celebration of life for Marlene Johnson late in the afternoon on January 31. She was a member of AFM from 2000 to 2012. See announcement sheet or contact Nina in the office for more details. For information about Marlene, <https://tinyurl.com/marlenejohnson>

HOW TO HELP CASA ALTERNA WITH GROCERIES

The new sign-up to volunteer to purchase groceries and other needed items for Casa Alterna guests is at <https://www.signupgenius.com/> with slots open from January to March 2026. Your support of this work is making a huge impact on the lives of asylum seekers as they find their way in a new country, and your help is greatly appreciated. If you have questions, please contact Joyce Lanternman at joyeuse13@gmail.com or Anton Flores-Maisonet at anton@casaalterna.org

HOLD THE DATE FOR FGC & SAYMA 2026 GATHERINGS -- summer 2026

Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA) is our yearly meeting, a regional umbrella for Quaker meetings in Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky. SAYMA also holds an annual gathering each year, this year June 18 to 21 at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky.

Friends General Conference (FGC) is a nation-wide umbrella organization for yearly meetings (like SAYMA) and monthly meetings (like AFM), mostly unprogrammed. FGC's 2026 Gathering will be held July 7 to 12 at the University of Vermont in Burlington. The theme will be ***A Window and a Door: A Prayer.***

There are scholarships available for both, with special funds set aside for Young Adult Friends (ages 18 to 35).

MINUTES FOR TWELFTH MONTH MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS
December 21, 2025, held in person and via zoom in a blended meeting
Minutes Recorded Pending Approval

Attendance: Folami Adams, Mike Aland, Richard Allen, Cathy Amanti, SY Boland, John Choe, Carolyn Coburn-Allen, C. Cowherd, Jennifer Crumpley, Tom Denham, Mary Ann Downey, Anton Flores-Maisonet, Jeremiah Gold-Hopton, Clive Gordon, Chad Heilig, Bill Holland, Bill Hooson, Kathy Johnson, Teri Key-Hooson, Elizabeth Lamb, Judy Lumb, Shannon McNeal, Ellen McQueen, John M. Michael, Caroline Morris, Ronald Nuse, Bob Place, Mary Place, Jay Roache, Bert Skellie, Grace Strymecki, Big Softy, Karen terHorst Morris, Myrna Trapp, Austin Wattles, Jackie Yates, David Small (Clerk), and Charles Hicks (Recording Clerk)

Worship

Query for the Twelfth Month: 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?

Discernment

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

Memberships of Anton Flores-Maisonet and Charlotte Flores

In eleventh month, Ministry and Worship reported that we had received applications for membership from Anton Flores-Maisonet and Charlotte Flores. After separate clearness processes for Anton and Charlotte, we found them clear for membership. We shared their letters requesting membership at that time. These two Friends are wonderful additions to our meeting contributing in many ways. Today we recommend the meeting approve these applications.

Minute-12-21-25:01: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting joyfully welcomes Anton Flores-Maisonet as a member of our Meeting and the Religious Society of Friends.

Minute-12-21-25:02: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting, joyfully welcomes Charlotte Flores as a member of Atlanta Friends Meeting and the Religious Society of Friends.

Clive said there was a practice in his childhood meeting that when someone became a member that the person would stand onstage and everyone in the meeting would shake their hand, offering the hand of fellowship. He subsequently shook Anton's hand.

Affirming continued support for ministries Under Our Care

Atlanta Meeting has a process for recognizing and taking under our care the ministries of Friends who have gifts and leading. We appoint anchoring committees to support these Friends in remaining faithful to their leadings and discerning their call. Each year we ask Friends with ministry and their anchoring committees to discern if the ministry remains vital and alive and report to meeting on the state of the ministry. Each year the meeting affirms our continued support for these leadings.

We are happy to report that we have received reports from Mary Ann Downey, Anton Flores-Maisonet and Christina Repoley. All these ministries are continuing to grow and be grounded in spirit. Today we ask the meeting to minute our continued support for these ministries and to appoint anchoring committees to continue to support their faithfulness.

Minute-12-21-25:03: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting affirms our continued support for the ministries of Anton Flores-Maisonet, Mary Ann Downey and Christina Repoley. Our meeting is enriched by the faithfulness of these Friends.

Reappointment of anchoring committee

Minute-12-21-25:04: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves David Small, Mary Ann Downey, Bill Holland, Dean Leeper, Clive Gordon and Claire Hannapel to anchor in faithfulness the ministry of Christina Repoley.

Minute-12-21-25:05: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves David Thurman, Nan O'Connor, Lewis Fuller and Bill Holland to serve as the anchoring committee caring for the ministry of Mary Ann Downey.

Minute-12-21-25:06: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Christina Repoley, Cathy Amanti, Don Bender and Charlotte Flores to serve as the anchoring committee caring for the ministry of Anton Flores-Maisonet.

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

Nominating is bringing the following names forward for consideration by the Meeting. All except Brent Wolf's nomination will be brought forward next month for approval:

Anton Flores-Maisonet, as a member of Ministry and Worship for a 3-year term, from January 2026 through December 2028.

Herb Edwards, for an additional 3-year term on Ministry and Worship, from January 2026-December 2028.

Devon Lenz for Young Friends Support Committee, for a 2-year term, January 2026-December 2027.

Mike Aland, for an additional 3-year term as a Ferguson Cabins Steward, January 2026-December 2028.

Brent Wolf, as Clerk of Meeting for a 2-year term, upon approval, through December 2027.

Nominating Committee thanked people rotating off of committees or clerkships for the end of the year, including David Small, Brent Wolf, Mary Ann Downey, Bill Holland, Teri Key-Hooson, Jennifer Crumpley, Greg Johnson, Lisa McGee, Folami Adams, Joan Thompson, Martha Hutchins, Asa Kramer-Dickie, Ellen McQueen, and Clive Gordon.

Nominating is bringing back the following names for discernment:

Minute-12-21-25:07: On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Brent Wolf as Clerk of Meeting for a term of 2 years, from January of 2026 through December of 2027.

The Nominating Committee reported there was some confusion about whether the Assistant Clerk automatically becomes the Clerk. A Friend said the Assistant Clerk does not automatically become the Clerk and that each person should be discerned for each role. However, he said he had no issue supporting Brent's nomination in this case to ensure there was a Clerk.

Minute-12-21-25:08: On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Sallie Mykel Carpentier as Ferguson Cabins Steward for a term of 3 years, from January of 2026 through December of 2028.

Minute-12-21-25:09: On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Mark Smith as Ferguson Cabins Steward for a term of 3 years, from January of 2026 through December of 2028.

Minute-12-21-25:10: On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Barbara Seal as Admin member at large, for a term of 3 years, from January of 2026 through December of 2028.

Minute-12-21-25:11: On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Erin Donohue-Koehler as a member of the Young Friends Support Committee for a term of 2 years, from January of 2026 through December of 2027.

Minute-12-21-25:12: On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Blake Williamson as co-clerk of the Meetinghouse and Grounds Committee, for a term of 3 years, from January of 2026 through December of 2028.

Minute-12-21-25:13: On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Mark Taylor as co-clerk of the Meetinghouse and Grounds Committee, for a term of 3 years, from January of 2026 through December of 2028.

Minute-12-21-25:14: On the recommendation of Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Folami Adams as clerk of Ministry and Worship, for a term of 1 year, from January of 2026 through December of 2026.

Reports

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

When a Friends dies who is close to this community, we celebrate their life and record their gifts for our appreciation and education. We do this in the form of a minute that is approved by meeting. Today we bring the Memorial Minute for Dee DeBra

Agnes "Dee" Dawson DeBra

Dee (or Deedie, as she was called in childhood) was born Agnes McGrew Balloch Dawson in Washington, D.C. on June 20, 1941, to Edward B. and Susan L. Dawson, and graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School. She received a B.A. in French from Wellesley College in 1963, and married Don William DeBra, Jr. that June. She began her career teaching junior high school French in Cleveland Heights, Ohio while Don was in medical school at Case Western Reserve. Her son Ted was born in 1967 in Chapel Hill, and her daughter Elizabeth in 1969 in San Francisco during Don's service in Vietnam. They moved to Atlanta (Don's hometown) in 1973.

She volunteered at the Atlanta Council for International Visitors, then taught at Yeshiva High School, and finally volunteered with Fulton Atlanta Community Action Authority as a tutor of adults earning their GED's. She retired when Don was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 1999, becoming his guardian and caring for him at home for 12 years prior to his passing in 2013.

Dee attended Florida Avenue Meeting in high school, Wellesley Meeting in college and participated in some Quaker work projects in Boston. She joined the Rochester NY Meeting when she and Don lived there and transferred her membership to Atlanta Friends Meeting in 1974. She attended regularly with Ted and Elizabeth when they were young. In telling her spiritual journey, Dee said that teaching at Yeshiva, the Orthodox Jewish high school, working with the Rabbis and students, spirituality was part of her daily life. She retired from teaching to become Don's caregiver and when Don passed, she worked with Friends to hold a celebration of his life at meeting. She said the Atlanta Meeting has always been the mainspring of spirituality in her life.

Dee was multi-talented, with an amazing gift for languages that was nurtured by her step-grandfather William Dawson, a diplomat. Her interests include gardening, playing guitar and ukelele, playing in the Atlanta Balalaika Society, reading French and Russian, quilting, knitting, and embroidering, playing tennis, researching her family ancestry, and caring for her two grandchildren—not to mention working in the nursery at the Atlanta Friends Meeting, which she joined in 1973. She was initially drawn to Quakerism as a college student; her opposition to the war in Vietnam solidified her commitment to Friends' testimonies.

She loved the coast of Maine, springs in Druid Hills, spending time with in-laws Susan and Bill Smart at Lake Burton, and especially her grandchildren. Natural and close companions, she and Don celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in June of 2013, months before he died. Dee will long be remembered for her thoughtfulness and compassion, down-to-earth humor and sense of fun, intellect and love of teaching, inexhaustible curiosity about history, love of spy novels, devotion to her family, and passion for education and justice. She is survived by her son Ted and his wife Leah Melvoin, daughter Elizabeth, and grandchildren Bishop Pelot and Ursula DeBray, her sister Puckie Gries, and eight nieces and nephews.

Minute-12-21-25:15: Atlanta Friends Meeting united with the memorial minute celebrating the life of our member Dee DeBra.

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

Bill thanked the meeting for the Meeting's patience as he transitioned into Clerk of Finance Committee while he assumed the position of Clerk of Finance Committee after Paul M. had served as Clerk for 17 years. He thanked Jonah McDonald and Nina Gooch for their help in finding certain information.

Bill said that Stacey Sharer, our new treasurer, was depositing checks every other Saturday.

He shared we are in good financial stead through November 2025, and we are happy about this. As we move into the budget, last month, he shared we were looking at a deficit. The finance committee revisited and worked on this.

He noted two updates to the budget as circulated:

First, SAYMA changed its rule for contributions to give either a fixed amount per attendee or a percentage of contributions. Going into 2026, our intent is to take the lesser amount to donate to SAYMA as a result of our prospective shortfall.

Second, the Religious Education budget has gone down because some of the requested items were furniture which Finance said should come out of the permanent improvements fund.

One thing Finance requested was that committees who gave money to other organizations to hold off until the end of the year so that we would have a better sense of what contributions would be throughout the year.

Finance suggested having a threshing session in the new year on how we as individuals pledge money to the meeting so that finance has a better sense of how much money the meeting would have in the upcoming year and frequency in which the donations would be given.

A Friend asked the SAYMA breakdown for percentage of contributions versus per/person. Bill said we do an annual census about how many people we have, and last year we did that based on people who attend. Alternatively, we are permitted to give based on a matter of percentage of amount given. Bill said if our contributions are greater than anticipated than we could revisit this in the future. A Friend mentioned that we are still contributing the most to SAYMA. A Friend who served

on the SAYMA finance committee said they wanted to schedule some time to talk to Bill to make sure that all were on the same page.

A Friend asked what percentage of the meeting gave automatically. Bill said he did not have that information. Another member of the Finance Committee said that the automatic contributions also did not account for the different frequencies in contributions (some people give weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, or sporadically).

- **Mary Ann Downey's Ministry** — Mary Ann Downey reported on the status of her ministry under the care of the Meeting. Her words were:

Looking at the color of maple orange and gingko yellow leaves today reminds me of lines in a favorite poem of Mary Oliver "When I Am Among the Trees": "It's simple," they say, "and you too have come into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled with light, and to shine." When I think of a year-end summary of my ministry these lines remind me that the challenge is to be grounded every day in the moment open to the light ready to be a channel for Spirit. I also meet monthly with my anchoring committee, Bill Holland, Nan O'Connor, Dave Thurman and Lewis Fuller to help me consider is what is mine to do and I'm grateful for their help.

The strength and resilience of the trees inspire me to write reflections in my journal or to just sit and absorb their beauty every day. The written reflections sometimes lead to messages in meeting, or articles in Friends Journal. This year I created a book, Walking with Faith: Southern Baptist to Quaker that is a collection of articles both published and new that I hope to share with meeting and others soon. This has been exciting and challenging, another way to offer my spiritual journey and to continue the early tradition of Friends to publish journals of faith.

This year I served as clerk of a clearness committee to recognize, record and celebrate the ministry of Christina Repoley. My ministry to support her leading in ministry began in 2010 when she became the founder and director of Quaker Voluntary Service and continues through ongoing spiritual nurture of Christina and several former QVS friends. The meeting approved the recording and celebration of her ministry, and I serve as clerk of her anchoring committee. The meeting celebration we planned connected our meeting to friends in ministry with the Forum for Theological Exploration where she works, other Quaker organizations and a wide circle of friends.

A concern for how we recognize and support young families in our meeting led Christina to organize a 'baby blessing' for Hope and Andrew Lambert, a couple expecting a baby in April. I supported the model she created and arranged one for Jake and Janelle Franklin in June, as well as Erin Daniel and Payne Midyette in October. We now have three babies born this year coming to meeting with parents who feel supported in this transition. I want to find a way that we continue to support all young families and recognize important life stages.

Bill and I led a retreat in July for Columbia Friends Meeting on individual and group discernment. We were aware that conflicts among members in this meeting created tension around the responsibilities of the clerk. Friends, both members and attenders there were glad to learn guidelines for the clearness process and to practice using it.

I continued serving on our Gathered Meeting Retreat Committee and we also decided to focus on discernment. I worked with Lisa Magee and our retreat leaders, Folami Adams and Christina Repoley to plan and organize accommodations for more than 50 adults and children of our meeting. This annual event is a time of gathering that helps us build community, making new connections and strengthening old ones. I agreed to be a focus person for clearness process, and it was a gift to me and those who sat with me to explore my concern.

