

Atlanta Friends Meeting Newsletter

Atlanta Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). All are welcome.

Meeting for Worship
Each First Day (Sunday)
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
701 W. Howard Ave.
Decatur, GA 30030

January 2012

Query: Is meeting for worship held in expectant waiting for divine guidance?

Are both silent and vocal ministry rooted in a shared experience of the Light?

Are we regular and punctual in attending meeting for worship?

(Adapted from SAYMA Faith and Practice.)



John Woolman and Me

John Woolman has been looking over my shoulder for the past 40 years. Sometimes his spiritual presence has directed me. As often, I have ignored his spirit to my ultimate discomfort. That discomfort has caused me to wonder if he ever lost his equanimity. His writings suggest not.

Forty years ago, at my second or third Quaker Meeting experience in La Jolla, California, Gretchen Rudnick thrust John Woolman's Journal in my hands and declared, "You must read this!" I did and it changed my life.

Returning to Atlanta, I embedded myself in the Friends Meeting. As the Vietnam War progressed, I became more aware of Woolman's protests against paying for war. First, I donated one half of my university salary to the meeting to use for its social concerns, primarily draft counseling. With the return of the withheld taxes, I traveled to England and climbed Pendle Hill where I felt Fox's vision of light overcoming darkness. Returning, I experienced a strong leading to retire from my tenured position and let the way open. At the time, in my resignation letter, I said that I was going to north Georgia to start an environmentally aware community. The idea was too fresh to explain why I was reducing my taxable income. Way did open to lead a life of varied service in various Quaker capacities as well as in my community.

Through these years I have refused to willingly pay at least one half of the income tax. At times I have lived simply, below the taxable level. Recently, I have been led to reread the journal again, particularly the sections on paying the taxes for the French and Indian War. While I remembered the impact on me at the time, I had forgotten the details. In spite of Friends much more weighty than he, Woolman "...could not see that their example was a sufficient reason for me to do so, while I believed that the spirit of Truth required of me as an individual to suffer patiently the distress of goods rather than pay actively."

Woolman dates his action on his concern to April, 1748, when the Pennsylvania Assembly took up the request for money for defense. He was allowed to address the Assembly many of which were not Friends. He pointed out that God was their protector: "May it with gratitude be ever remembered how remarkable we have been preserved in peace and tranquillity for more than fifty years: no invasion by foreign enemies, and the treaties of peace with the natives, wisely began by our proprietor William Penn, preserved inviolable to this day." (While Pennsylvania experienced this tranquility, more northern colonies and Europe fought King William's War, Queen Anne's War and King George's War from 1690 to 1748.) The war began over the massacre of French soldiers near Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh today), with the greenhorn George Washington complicit. (At the time the Virginia grant claimed the territory all the way to Illinois.) The next year a ragtag militia led by Washington was routed by a French force and the war began. The war on the North American continent morphed into the Seven Years War in Europe.

As described by Woolman, Pennsylvania was instructed to send taxes to England to support the British troops protecting the frontier. Militia was called up to rescue Fort William Henry in New York. In November, 1755, a petition was presented to the Assembly signed by 20 “weighty Friends” including Woolman. The document declared in part: “We shall at all times heartily and freely contribute according to our circumstances, either by the payment of taxes or in such other manner as may be judged necessary, toward the exigencies of government, and sincerely desire that due care may be taken and proper funds provided for raising money to cultivate our friendship with our Indian neighbours (sic.), and to support such of our fellow subjects who are or may be in distress and such other like benevolent purposes; yet as the raising sums of money and putting them into the hands of committees who may apply them to purposes inconsistent with the peaceable testimony we profess, and have borne to the world, appears to us in its consequences to be destructive of our religious liberties, we apprehend many among us will be under the necessity of suffering, rather than consenting thereto by the payment of a tax for such purposes.”

This is what I have stood for for 40 years. It was very clear that the intent of the Friends put here and in the Epistle from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of December, 1755, was that Friends willingly pay taxes for the community’s needs.

The journal follows this petition with a history of Friends suffering in England and a falling away from this testimony by some contemporary Friends, “having their religion chiefly by education and not being enough acquainted with that cross which crucifies to the world, do manifest a temper distinguishable from that of an entire trust in God.”

Some paid the tax; some did not. Some wanted the payers to be examined and the suggestion was brought before a group of weighty Friends, including Woolman. The committee felt that public discussion at the yearly meeting was not proper because of the “diversity of sentiments.” As was the custom, Woolman was told to house soldiers. He refused payment and eventually explained to the officer why. His description of a conversation with a Friend who was a justice of the peace about paying for war laid out the opposing views that have lasted until today – to pay or not to pay, even if not to pay means suffering: “But when from a clear understanding of the case we are really uneasy with the application of money, and in the spirit of meekness suffer distress to be made on our goods rather than to pay actively, this joined with an upright uniform life may tend to put men athinking about their own public conduct.”

In the spring of 1755, Woolman was again signatory to an Epistle from the Yearly Meeting which expressed the admonition that “...let us constantly endeavour to have our minds sufficiently disentangled from the surfieting cares of this life and redeemed from the love of this world that no earthly possessions nor enjoyments may bias our judgments or turn us from that resignation and entire trust in God to which his blessing is most surely annexed...”

(I have used The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman edited by Phillips P. Moulton as my source. He points out that he has included passages that were not included in other editions.)

Postscript: “Retirement” has opened a wide variety of experiences beginning with volunteering on AFSC programs and the board of the Southern Regional Office of AFSC; member of the Movement for a New Society and presenter of Simple Living workshops. Formed a city-wide men’s support group and presented workshops on making friends from which a book was published. Helped improve and preserve neighborhoods. Experimented with alternative energy, owned a solar energy firm and preserved rural land from development. Writer of news and magazine articles and books on a variety of science and community stories. Active in several positions in Monthly and Yearly Meeting and on the Central Committee of FGC. Hospice volunteer, AIDS buddy, served on a AIDS ministerial committee, and in a health care clinic for the homeless. Forced to pay penalties and interest on funds withheld from IRS.

Submitted by Perry Treadwell

Meet Our Librarian

An unsung volunteer of the Meeting is our Library Clerk, Cal Cough. Cal took over the job many years ago as a way of honoring his friend, librarian colleague, and previous Meeting librarian, Bill Meneely, after Bill died of AIDS in 1996. Cal's day job is managing the Peachtree Branch Library of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System, where he has worked in various capacities (and facilities) since the early 1980s; before that, he worked at the Georgia Regional Hospital at Atlanta's Alcohol & Drug Treatment Unit. Cal's undergraduate degrees are in psychology and philosophy (with a minor in the history of Christianity). His hobbies are reading, gardening, and overseas traveling. He is also an avid calligraphy and Tai Chi student.

When asked about his plan for our presently overflowing collection, Cal responded: "My long-range plan for the Meetinghouse library, which will probably remain thwarted until I retire from my full-time job, is to streamline the current classification system which will involve relabeling every book in the collection. Other plans include: obtaining replacement copies of the 300+ books currently missing from the library; finding a volunteer to build some badly-needed additional shelving for the library; getting the collection's catalog posted online so Meetinghouse members and attenders with Internet connections can search the library's catalog from their home; finding a suitable home for the Meeting's collection of several hundred rare Quaker books; and contributing more lists of recommended reading on various topics to the Meeting's monthly newsletter."

A Users' Guide to the Meetinghouse Library

1. To check out a book, place your name and phone number on the card in the back of the item and leave it in the checkout card box located on the desk in the library.
2. Please return books within a reasonable time, preferably within a month or so. Put the returned item in the basket on the library desk.
3. Check your home libraries to see if any of the 300 missing items have found a new home on your shelves. You can return these with no questions asked! Our library budget is small and replacing these will cost a great deal.
4. Donated items are reviewed for their relevance to our Quaker Meeting and to avoid duplication.

Reading Recommendations for those new to Quakerism:

230.C15 A Living Faith: A Historical study of Quaker Beliefs by Wilmer A. Cooper
242.K5 A Testament of Devotion by Thomas R. Kelly
248.4.S20 Quaker Spirituality: Selected Writings, Ed. Douglas Steere
248.4.W8 Plain Living: A Quaker Path to Simplicity by Catherine Whitmire
254.H9 Quaker by Convincement by Jeffrey Hubbard
289.6.B9 Silence and Witness: The Quaker Tradition by Michael L. Birkel
289.6.B18 Friends for 300 Years: History and Beliefs of Friends by Howard Brinton
289.6.G9 A Light that is Shining: An Introduction to the Quakers by Harvey Gillman
289.6.P25 Listening to the Light by Jim Pym
289.6.Qu4 The Quaker Reader, Ed. Jessamyn West
J289.6.W5 The Quakers by Jean Kinney Williams (for Young People)

Submitted by Judith Greenberg

Atlanta Friends Meeting
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
December 18, 2011
Recorded Pending Approval

Query: Georgia Lord presented the Query: “Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak.”

In attendance were: Folami Adams, Micheal Allison, Don Bender, Steve Collins, Julia Ewen, Sally Ferguson, David Foster, Jenny Foster, Judith Greenberg, Roland Heath, Kathy Johnson, Suzan Kenworthy, Tom Kenworthy, Elizabeth Lamb, George S. Lamb, Lynn Leuszler, Paul Mangelsdorf, Alison Mawle, Hannah McDermott, Karen terHorst Morris, Laura Norlin, Ronald Nuse, Margie Rece, Peter Sederberg, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Ellie Soler, Jim Tolmach, Myrna Trapp, Perry Treadwell, Denny Webster, Pat Williams, Maggie Wise, Caroline Noyes (Recording Clerk), Georgia Lord (Clerk), (35 Friends)

State of the Meeting Report: Georgia Lord solicited discussion items for the 2011 State of the Meeting report. Friends mentioned a number of joys and challenges that the Meeting faced in 2011. Atlanta Friends Meeting has made strides in the planning of Quaker Quest and is playing a key role in the development of Quaker Voluntary Service. When newcomers rise and introduce themselves, they frequently say that they are impressed with Meeting for Worship. Our Burundian Friends continue to find ways to live and maneuver around Atlanta with increasing self-sufficiency, and the Ferguson Cabin retreat has undergone significant changes and expansion. There is increased use of nursery services on First Days, and throughout the week the meetinghouse is being well used by both long-term and short-term rentals. Friends have been nourished by the spiritual biographies offered in Adult First Day School, while young Friends are benefiting from depth in the Godly Play curriculum. Movie nights are fostering engagement, and Young Adult Friends are fostering connections through a variety of dedicated activities. It seems that everyone is participating in the life of the Meeting in some way, although there is concern that with challenges in scheduling we may shortchange ourselves with all of our business.

The Meeting was challenged in 2011 with the loss of a number of Friends, and an unusual number of Friends struggle with illness. There is a sense that the Meeting is facing these challenges, and these losses foster a sense of the gift of each Friend and the relative shortness of life. There is a sense that the quality of Meeting for Worship and vocal ministry has deepened in 2011. Any further thoughts should be passed on to Georgia.

Ministry and Worship: On behalf of Ministry and Worship, Denny Webster brought forth the membership of Alex Zinnes for final approval.

Minute 12-18-01: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, we approve and welcome Alex Zinnes into our membership. We look forward to the gifts she brings and our journey together.

Mark Wutka’s Care Committee asks to be laid down now that Mark’s study with School of the Spirit is completed and his relocation to Nashville, Tennessee.

Minute 12-18-02: Atlanta Friends Meeting lays down the Care Committee for Mark Wutka, thanking Bill Holland as Clerk, Tim Tolmach, and Daphne Clement.

Quaker Quest: On behalf of the Quaker Quest committee, Bert Skellie reported that practice sessions will be on Second Sundays from 11:45am – 1:45pm for the upcoming few months. These practice sessions will start on January 8th with ‘Quakers and Equality.’ The Quaker Quest committee will meet on First Sundays at noon, and anyone who is interested is welcome to join the discussions.

Administration: On behalf of the hiring subcommittee, Karen Morris reported on the search for a cleaning staff to replace Joe Clay, who is retiring at the end of December, 2011. There were approximately nine proposals, four of which were selected for in-depth interviews. The hiring subcommittee selected Dieudonne Ntibayazi whose business is Don Quaker, Handyman and Yard Service, “Honest Work, Well Done.” Dieudonne currently handles the landscaping contract for AFM.

Finance Committee: Paul Mangelsdorf presented the 2012 budget for final approval.

Minute 12-18-03: Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the 2012 budget as proposed.

Nominating Committee: Steve Collins brought forth for final approval the following Friends: David Foster (Clerk), Caroline Noyes (Ministry & Worship), Terri O’Neil (Clerk, Hospitality), Mena Rhea (Co-clerk, Fundraising), Bill Holland (SAYMA representative), Susan Cozzens (Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition representative), Mark Smith (Ferguson Cabin Steward), Mark Bryans (Ferguson Cabin Steward).

Minute 12-18-04: Atlanta Friends Meeting approves each of these Friends for their respective role. Approval of Mark Bryans as Clerk of the Ferguson Cabin Committee will be sought in First month.

Jim Tolmach presented for final approval the revised handbook text for the job description of the Nursery Caregiver.

Minute 12-18-05: Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the text of the job description for the Nursery Caregiver.

Care and Counsel: On behalf of Care and Counsel, Laura Norlin presented a minute of appreciation for Nan O’Connor.

Minute 12-18-06: Care and Counsel would like to minute our appreciation for Nan O’Connor’s membership on the committee for the last five years. We note her deep commitment to the life of the Meeting in her way of compassion and her overflowing caring gifts. Her wisdom on the human condition contributed profoundly to our committee’s functions. We thank her for her commitment, and know the Meeting will continue to be blessed by her presence in our community.

Fundraising Committee: Folami announced that the fundraising committee is proposing Saturday March 24th for our annual concert.

Clerk’s Items: Georgia Lord read a Minute of Remembrance for Alex Horsley.

Minute 12-18-07: Meeting member Miles Alexander Horsley passed December 1, 2011. The Atlanta Friends Meeting, together with others, plans to conduct a memorial service in celebration of his life on January 14th, 2012.

Approval of Minutes of Eleventh Month Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business:

Minute 12-18-08: Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the minutes of Eleventh Month Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business with corrections.

Meeting closed with silent worship.

Respectfully Submitted, Georgia Lord, Clerk; Caroline Noyes, Recording Clerk

Please Join Us for Alum Night at Friends School of Atlanta
Wednesday, January 4, 2012
5:30 to 7:00 pm

Join with Old Friends and Teachers to Have a Slice of Pizza and Share a Memory or Two! We love seeing our alums and their families! So mark your calendar and plan to come on Wednesday, January 4, to have a slice of pizza and share the news of your life with the friends who knew you when! We look forward to catching up with you!

862 Columbia Drive
Decatur, GA 30030

RSVP: Email Nancy Bent at nancy.bent@friendsschoolatlanta.org or 404-373-8746 x8135

SAVE THE DATE.

On Thursday, January 19, the American Friends Service Committee will host an engaging, creative, and interactive event honoring Martin Luther King's peace messages. The event will be 7 - 8:30 pm, with a reception following. If you would like to organize a group of Meeting members to help with the event, please contact Bert Skellie (bertskellie@gmail.com).

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Another Movie Night at the Atlanta Friends Meeting (Quakers)!
Friday, January 27th at 7:00.

On the last Friday in January, join us for an incredible movie about a revolution accomplished by nonviolent resistance: “**Gandhi.**”

The movie will be shown on the big screen in the Meeting Room. Attenders will be asked to donate whatever admission price they can afford and feel to be appropriate. Free Popcorn! You are welcome to bring snacks and drinks.

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Holiday Greetings and a thank you for all our support from Maria Ladd.

Pete and Renda McCaughan have sent a page of news. Pete and son built a great kitchen. For anyone who knew the one in Georgia it sounds even more, more. Renda is planning raised bed vegetable plants in the back yard for the spring. It has an electric deer fence. Grandchild Samantha, is probably tall enough at 7 years to jump over it. Both grandparents are involved in Wilton Friends Meeting, Pete as Treasurer and Renda as record keeper for the meeting (sound familiar?). They both drove from the beginning of the Mississippi River to Minneapolis this July while visiting their son. (That's from a spring in northern Minnesota.) They add, “We do miss Atlanta Meeting and all of you!”

Calendar for 1st Month (January) 2012

Area Meetings for Worship

- Every First Day (Sunday), 10:00 a.m. -- Meetinghouse, with a smaller group in the Library.
Every 2nd and 4th First Day, 10:00 a.m. -- Canton Friends Worship Group.
360 E. Marietta St, Canton; 779-720-4669 or wrldpeas@mindspring.com
Every 4th Morning (Wednesday) Worship, 8:30 a.m. -- Library.
Contact Jonah McDonald, 404-377-2474, afmquakers@hotmail.com
Every 4th Evening (Wednesday), 7:00 p.m. -- Meeting Room.
Contact Christina Repoley, 404-840-3005 or christinarepoley@gmail.com
First 5th Morning (Thursday) – AFSC office, 60 Walton St. NW, Atlanta.
5th Day (Thursday) (except 1st of the month), 12:10 pm – East Lake Commons, Decatur.
Contact Bert Skellie, 404-378-5883, bertskellie@gmail.com.
6th Day (Friday) (2nd week of August through May), 8:45 a.m. -- Friends School of Atlanta.
Community Meeting Room, 862 Columbia Dr., Decatur, 404-373-8746

Weekly Events at the Meetinghouse

- Every First Day (Sunday)
9:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education
9:15 a.m. Singing, Classroom A/B
10:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship
Every Fourth Day (Wednesday)
8:30-9:00 a.m. Morning Silent Worship, Library
Every Second-Fifth Day (Monday-Thursday)
8:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m. Smart Toddlers, Nursery playground
Every Third Day (Tuesday)
7:30 p.m. Silent Meditation, Meeting Room
7:30 p.m. Bible Study, Library
Every Fourth Day (Wednesday)
7:00-8:30 p.m. Semi-Programmed Worship, Meeting Room

Clerk of the Meeting: David Foster, 404-941-7337

Recording Clerk: Caroline Noyes

Treasurer: Peter Sederberg, 404-968-9309 Ministry & Worship: Bill Holland, 404-692-2358
Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280 Social Concerns: Al Natanagara, 404-797-1677
Care & Counsel: Laura Norlin, 404-762-3540 Office Coordinator: Jonah McDonald
Religious Ed.: Alison Mawle, 404-944-9142 Friend in Residence: John Roberts, 917-902-3719

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If you would like to have a permanent nametag made, leave a request in one of the baskets on the front table. Indicate whether you prefer one that hangs around the neck or that pins. When Carol Gray has made one for you, it will be placed in the black file box on the greeting table.

If you would like to be included in the AFM database and receive the Newsletter by mail and/or appear in future AFM Directories, please send your name and contact information to Nina Gooch at ninagooch@gmail.com or 404-371-9873. Please indicate if you want to be in the directory, receive the newsletter by mail, or both.

Contributions to the Atlanta Friends Meeting may be placed in the slot marked “Contributions” in the greeting area of the Meetinghouse or mailed to the Treasurer at the above address. Thank you!

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

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**DEADLINE FOR 2ND MONTH NEWSLETTER:
FEBRUARY 17**

Readers are encouraged to submit letters, articles, notices and anything else of interest to Friends. Items should be sent directly to atlquakerltr@gmail.com in plain text in the body of the email. Texts may be edited for length and format.