

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2020

EDITORS NOTE

As many of you know, based on governmental guidelines regarding COVID-19 and a deep and prayerful concern for the health of our entire community, meeting for worship at the meetinghouse has been suspended for the immediate future and the meetinghouse has been closed. Meeting for worship and other meeting activities are continuing virtually, either via the internet or by calling in. See below for more details and for other resources, including ways to connect to the meeting if you need help or can help others. The newsletter and the announcement sheet will continue to be posted on the meeting's website. If you would like to be notified when the newsletter is posted online or receive the announcement sheet via email, please see the final page of the newsletter for instructions. To join the meeting's Facebook page, search for Atlanta Friends Meeting and click the **+ Join Group button**. The Office Coordinator is working from home and checking email and voicemail.



Atlanta Meeting of the Religious
Society of Friends (Quakers)

All are welcome

Virtual Meeting for Worship
Each First Day (Sunday)
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

QUERY FOR APRIL

Are your meetings for church
affairs held in a spirit of worship
and in dependence on the
guidance of God?

-- Advices and Queries of
Britain Yearly Meeting

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS AND ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL

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 of spiritual journeys, stories where Friends describe their understanding of God and religion in their life. Adult First Day will meet virtually at 9:00-9:50 am in April using this link: [Join Zoom Meeting https://zoom.us/j/198773168](https://zoom.us/j/198773168). On Sunday April 5, Gordon Shippey will offer his spiritual journey. Each of the following Sundays in April, our meetings will focus on worship sharing with a query. We will close the class in time to be in meeting for worship in the separate zoom link.

Here are some links to previous Spiritual Journeys, recordings unless otherwise noted:

Don Bender, March 2020: recording <https://tinyurl.com/v43csxg>; as text: <https://tinyurl.com/v7xaj9z>

Rebecca Grant, February 2020: <https://tinyurl.com/qpwkatw>

Betsy Eggers: <https://tinyurl.com/wulbfhx>

Jack Honderd: <https://tinyurl.com/qlbcuo2>

Perry Treadwell: <https://tinyurl.com/wvcls6s>

Mary Ann Downey, August 2008: <https://tinyurl.com/u72pvyu>

Nan Pendergrast, 2008?: <https://tinyurl.com/y5roc3z8>

Bill Jenkins, November 2007: <https://tinyurl.com/yxkqje4e>

Alicia Rabideau: <https://tinyurl.com/ybxjuman>

TO WORSHIP ALONE by Mary Ann Downey

See below for opportunities to join in worship via Zoom (using your computer or by calling on your phone), but here are thoughts about worshipping alone:

There is no one right way to worship alone or with others; there is only what helps you find a time and place to be still, to be centered and to remember that you are not alone. God is a universal force of light and love, always within us and around us and there are many ways to renew this connection. Here are some of the ways that help me.

After breakfast, I take a cup of tea to a corner rocking chair by a window. I sit sipping tea, looking out the window, observing the day, giving thanks. Sometimes that's all I do. Sometimes I write in my journal. I enjoy composing haiku poems, finding a few words for my sense of connection to this moment, the world as I now see it. Some recent examples:

Spring is a place
A dwelling house of hope
Revival and joy

To keep Sabbath
Cease from doing the ordinary
Be still and wait.

I keep several books of poetry near the rocking chair and reading a poem silently and aloud, centers me. This is sometimes done in the manner of Lectio Divina that directs us to read, meditate, pray and contemplate.

Singing hymns was always a part of worship when I was a child and singing them now while I play the piano brings me joy and helps me worship as I used to do.

Walking mindfully, slowly, pausing with each step and breathing deeply, as the Zen master Thich Nhat Hahn taught, helps when I need movement and want to worship outside.

A small plaque on my wall reads, "Bidden or not, God will be present," and worship is often a simple prayer, "Heal me, Guide me." I imagine that I'm a small bird, resting on God's hand, gathering strength for the journey ahead.

Every day is an experiment made with the intention to find what I need now to be centered, guided and present.

CARING CONNECTIONS AT AFM

In January 2020, the Care & Counsel Committee of the Atlanta Friends Meeting brainstormed ideas to avoid losing track of members / attenders. Gordon Shippey set up a spreadsheet to maintain a volunteer list of those willing to deliver meals, drive people to appointments, run errands, or visit people at home or in hospital. As we all respond to COVID-19 concerns, this seems the perfect time to use the method Gordon devised to link those in need with those able to provide service. We've expanded this so that if you would like someone to check in with you on a regular basis, you can request this as well: You can request help or volunteer to help at the meeting's website, atlantaquakers.org (under Members and Attenders) or call or email Karen Skellie at kskellie@gmail.com or 404-680-4524 or Nina Gooch at atlantaquakers@gmail.com or 404-377-2474 (leave a message). A committee will work to link those in need with the appropriate assistance. We welcome all suggestions; you can contact Karen or Nina with suggestions.

MEETING VIRTUALLY THIS MONTH

See announcement sheet in your email inbox or on our website for more detailed instructions for connecting using the internet. To connect using your phone, call 1-253-215-8782 or 1-301-715-8592 and enter the meeting ID when prompted. **If you have a mute button on your phone, mute it when you enter the meeting and unmute to speak.**

ADULT FIRST DAY SCHOOL will meet at 9:00-9:50 am in April.

Meeting ID: 198773168. Link: <https://zoom.us/j/198773168>

On Sunday April 5, Gordon Shippey will offer his spiritual journey. Each of the following Sundays in April, our meetings will focus on worship sharing with a query. We will close the class in time to be in meeting for worship in the separate zoom link.

FIRST DAY MEETING FOR WORSHIP will meet at 10 am on Sundays

(organized by Nan O'Connor and clerked by Mary Ann Downey)

Meeting ID: 793 083 374. Link: <https://zoom.us/j/793083374>

FIRST DAY SCHOOL VIA ZOOM for Little Ones and their families at 10:15 am on Sundays

With Laura MacNorlin. Meeting ID: 727 996 1727. Link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/7279961727>

FRIDAY MORNING MIDWEEK WORSHIP at 11 am WHEN RAINY, COOL, TOO MUCH POLLEN

Meeting ID: 582 056 274. Link: <https://zoom.us/j/582056274>. Password: 513844.

Contact Bert Skellie at 404-680-4799 for more information. On nice days, this will be outside at East Lake Commons instead of on Zoom.. Check the discussion or announcement email list for details each week.

THE FUTURE OF QUAKERISM April 15 at 6:30-7:30 p.m. Eastern time

How are everyday Friends are opening to the Spirit, deepening their connection to prophetic vision, and rekindling our history of radical witness in these times of unease, injustice and inequity. What gifts do we Quakers have to share with others in these harrowing times of injustice? How do we practice listening and attending to the Spirit within? Join Marge Abbott and Liz Nicholson as we discuss what Friends' meetings and organizations are doing to help individuals recognize and encourage the inward transformation so essential to growing prophetic ministries. Together we will investigate how contemporary Friends are lifting up and sustaining love and witness in our public lives. Please pre-register to join us online on April 15 from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

<https://www.fcni.org/updates/the-future-of-quakers-with-marge-abbott-and-liz-nicholson-2673>

QUESTIONS from Folami Prescott-Adams in HTI Catalysts March 2020 newsletter

1. Where do I lead and how can I model composure and compassion in the midst of the unknown?
2. What is my responsibility in influencing the actions and mindsets of others?
3. How do I find a balance between staying informed and avoiding frenzy and fear?

SAYMA YEARLY MEETING AND FCG GATHERING CANCELLED FOR 2020

Currently, no further details from Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association, www.sayma.org, but see below for info from Friends General Conference, www.fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering/coronavirus-and-2020-gathering. Continue to check both websites for updates, particularly FGC.

“We are clear in this decision [to cancel FCG Gathering], even as we reflect on the thousands of hours of planning so many Friends have invested, the loss of sharing in-person fellowship, and the financial strains cancellation of the in-person Gathering will cause for FGC. Why make the decision now, when so much is unknown? Both because so much is unknown, and because it’s already clear that even if the threat subsides by June, many Friends will be unable to participate in an in-person Gathering this summer due to Covid-19 related financial, family, work, and school challenges. Acknowledging this reality and making this decision now will give FGC more capacity and time to plan alternative ways to speak to the needs of Friends now and in the months to come.”

“FGC staff & volunteers are beginning to plan a Virtual Gathering for this summer. There are many options for how we can create a shared space - we want to know what you would value. We’ve created a **Virtual Gathering survey** to help us gather your input on how to shape our time together this summer. Please **submit your feedback** by Sunday, April 5!”

THE EMPTY BUCKET by Mary Ann Downey

From the editor: Mary Ann sent this early in the month before we closed the meetinghouse, and it continues to speak to me. I hope it will speak to you as we navigate this stressful time.

From Mary Ann: “I’ve been giving periodic vespers messages since 2017 at Clairmont Oaks retirement community thanks to Julie Hliboki the chaplain there. The one I offered March 8 about the blessings of giving and receiving seemed especially important now and wanted to send it to the meeting too. It grew out of a message I offered in meeting for worship a few months ago.”

In Acts 20:35, we find these words, “I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” When I was growing up, this was one of many Bible verses that I heard often along with lessons about the need to be generous. My mother liked to bake egg custard pies for people in our church who were sick, just one example of gifts she gave. And I believe that as the prayer of Saint Frances says, “It is in giving that we receive.”

Today, however, I want to tell you about lessons I’ve learned about the need to receive so that there is a balance between giving and receiving.

Virginia Satire tells the story of growing up on a farm in Midwest during the depression. Everyone had chores and she enjoyed how she felt needed even as a child. As soon as she was strong enough to carry a bucket of water, one of her chores was to keep the kitchen supplied with water. This usually meant several trips a day but in harvest time she ran back and forth all day. Neighbors came to help, sometimes bringing other children her age who helped carry water. It was a clear early lesson: You can’t dish out of an empty bucket. When the bucket’s empty, you go back to the well.

She grew up to become a therapist, writer and teacher who led workshops on burnout for other therapists based on her book, *People-making*. Her experience of carrying water, an act of caregiving, taught her that in order to offer the gift of water or any kind of care, you have to find ways to keep filling up your own bucket. Offering help is like dishing out of our bucket of care. Burnout occurs when we try to give out of an empty bucket.

I was a young therapist sitting with others in this weekend retreat on burnout learning the importance of self-care, how to receive the help we need in order to keep giving. I began to identify the wells that I had or could develop along with signals that help me realize when I needed to find a well. She taught me the importance of finding the right balance of giving and receiving. I still hear her saying “You can’t dish out of an empty bucket.”

These lessons were not new. My mother was a nurse and taught her 3 daughters that you need to get plenty of sleep, eat a balanced diet and exercise. Even after I left home, I found time to follow her advice for myself and my family. I also knew that my career as a therapist made this more important. And I realized that we wouldn’t expect to get very far in a car with an empty gas tank, but we often expect to be able to do that with our life and sometimes discover the results. For me that came about as a stroke when I was 56.

My sister Carolyn, also a therapist, said, “You and I were taught, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’ and took it to mean you can’t receive. You know it doesn’t say that. And now you need to receive. This is a step beyond self-care to allowing others to care for us.”

The stroke affected my balance and vision. I needed help to walk, my vision blurred and the room moved when I turned my head. I had to be cared for by others and received what I needed in many ways. The day after I was admitted to Emory, the attending doctor, a woman about my age, came by to ask how I was doing. I told her I still had a severe headache and was dizzy but needed to know if I should cancel a retreat that I was scheduled to lead in SC in 2 weeks. She laughed and said, “You know you have a really good excuse.” When my husband called to cancel the retreat, the organizer said, “Tell her we’ll be waiting when she recovers.” Care I gratefully received.

Other Friends from meeting visited, bringing food, laughter and the ‘Care Quilt’ made of squares stitched by Friends, and passed around to those in need. It didn’t occur to me when I helped make the quilt that I would need it, but the experience of resting and recovering under it was a daily dose of wonderful medicine. The ‘Care Quilt’ also brought compliments and questions from the hospital staff and gave me a chance to tell them about the loving support I had from our Quaker community.

My husband Bill was always there reassuring me that we could take this journey together. When my daughter, Lisa, came with her one-year old daughter, Zoë, I realized not only how much I wanted to recover and watch Zoë grow, but also how much like this toddler I was as I tried to learn to walk again, unsure when to hold on and when to let go.

Recovering from the stroke taught me the gift of receiving care and reminded me of the importance of self-care. Some of the wells I discovered then in my twenties continue to be the ones I return to now more than 50 years later. They include, everyday thanksgiving, walking outside and a faith community.

Every morning after I get out of bed, I look out the window and say, “This is the day the Lord hath made. Rejoice and be glad in it.” The more these words come from my heart and feel like my own words, not just a memorized Bible verse or a ritual, the better able I am to begin the day with deep gratitude. My mother often told me to count my blessings, sometimes singing the hymn with that title when I least wanted to hear it. It did, however teach me that even in the midst of trouble there is always much to be grateful for. In fact, paying attention to the gifts of the present helps me find ways to cope with problems, another quick way any time anywhere to go to the well within.

There is a healing power in simply looking at nature. Whether the wind is blowing a hard rain or there’s a clear blue sky and bright sun, my spirits are lifted. Sitting or walking outside even briefly is even better. After a stroke as I learned to walk again one of my first requests to my physical therapist at the rehab center was to walk outside. When she helped me do that I knew that I would

recover. Being outside, seeing, smelling and feeling the garden was a powerful medicine. It renewed another early lesson from my mother who said, "You need to go outside and get some fresh air." A walk outside always fills my physical and emotional bucket.

In meeting for worship recently I realized that sitting with my Quaker faith community in stillness every Sunday is one of the ways to keep going back to the well to replenish my spirit. Just walking into the room at meeting and taking my usual seat begins the process. Settling into the stillness, breathing deeply, and letting go is a way of letting the bucket of spirit down into the living water of faith, of healing. Being there, renews me so that I am able to walk out of the room filled with strength, ready for the journey ahead, better able to care for myself as I care for others.

With prayers of gratitude, the healing beauty of nature and a faith community I find ways each day to balance the blessings of giving and receiving. Where do you find the help you need in the form of self-care and care from others, how do you balance giving and receiving? I encourage you to find the wells you need, return often and don't try to dish out of an empty bucket.

HOLDING IN THE LIGHT:

Suzanne Cole Sullivan
Teri and Bill Hooson
Beth-Ann Buitekant
Freer Jarvis

Those wishing to have requests for holding in the light included in this monthly newsletter may give the names to a member of Care & Counsel.

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ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

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Atlanta Friends Meeting has three email lists:

When asked, select the option to confirm by email.

To receive the announcement sheets and other announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting, send a blank email to

afmannouncements-subscribe@yahogroups.com.

To receive announcements AND posts about a broader range of topics relating to being a Quaker, send a blank email to

afmdiscussion-subscribe@yahogroups.com
To receive the newsletter by email, send a blank email to

afmnewsletter-subscribe@yahogroups.com.

Would you like to appear in future AFM Directories?

Send your name and contact information to Brent Wolff at afmdirectory@gmail.com.

What does investing in your spiritual community look like for you and your family?

Atlanta Friends Meeting accepts contributions of your time, resources, and money! You can mail a financial contribution to the Treasurer at our mailing address. To donate online with a credit card, visit atlantaquakers.org/contact.htm.

Thank you!

THE DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS IS THE 20TH DAY OF EACH PRECEDING MONTH to atlquakerltr@gmail.com. Submissions may be edited for length and format.

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