

## **Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business**

### **Asheville Friends Meeting**

**2nd Month 13th, 2022**

**Present via Zoom:** Bob Lackey, Clerk; Barbara Burke, Recording Clerk

Margaret Normile, Steve Livingston, Robin Wells, Pat Johnson, Ellie Cox, Beth Eddy, Mike Eddy, Margaret Farmer, James Barham, Ms. Bettie Council, Barbara Esther, Jim Cavener, Satchel Loftis, Sarah Thomas, Ellen Carr.

Meeting opened with Silent Worship

The Clerk shared a reading out of silence .

From *Quaker Process for Friends on the Benches* by Mathilda Navias.  
Page 131. Friends Publishing Corporation 2012

“We recognize a variety of ministries. In our worship these include those who speak under the guidance of the Spirit, and those who receive and uphold the work of the Spirit in silence and prayer. We also recognize as ministry service on our many committees, hospitality and childcare, the care of finance and premises, and many other tasks. We value those whose ministry is not in an appointed task but is in teaching, counseling, listening, prayer, enabling the service of others, or other service in the meeting or in the world. The purpose of all our ministry is to lead us and other people into closer communion with God and to enable us to carry out those tasks which the Spirit lays upon us.

(London Yearly Meeting, 1986, quoted in Britain Yearly Meeting *Faith and Practice*, 10.05).”

**Minute # 1:** The First Month business meeting minutes were approved.

## **Announcements:** Robin

Secret Pal Reveal February 20 will be held at Rise of Meeting for Worship on 2-20-22. Be sure to tune in if you are in the Secret Pen Pal program or if you want to see how the kids have grown. We hope to have a simple craft to share together. Some people have asked for an extension for the Secret Pen Pal, but second hour, for the next several weeks, has events scheduled, according to Robin.

## **Committees:**

### **Ministry and Counsel: Bob**

There was a proposal at First Month Meeting for Business for reading the Worship Closing Script and shortened AFM Land Acknowledgement, after Joys and Concerns and visitor introductions. Last month we were not in agreement. A Friend felt that it seemed natural to occur after Joys and Concerns and introduction of new people, and before announcements. The Friend who felt it might be too programmed at the beginning of meeting for worship is in agreement to move forward. Another Friend suggested it might be too lengthy to be read at each Meeting. Another also felt it was lengthy and wondered if this was the short version, or the entire version. A Friend affirmed that the AFM Land Acknowledgment Statement below is a shorter version of the short version. Some Quaker meetings and other organizations read the statement regularly, especially if Native Americans are present. A Friend would like to see it read at each meeting. A member said there will be further discussion in the Peace and Earth Committee in the next several weeks as to how the LAS is a first step for how our community will engage in reparative justice, and is a platform on which to build further actions. The P&E Committee will work on making the statement to be read, briefer. It is agreed that we will wait to hear a briefer

version. The meeting was in agreement that a briefer version should be read after introductions and before announcements.

### **AFM Land Acknowledgement for Gatherings**

The Asheville Friends Meeting acknowledges, with respect, that the land we are on today is ancestral land of the *Anikituwagi*, more commonly known as the Cherokee. We recognize the Cherokee as the native people and original stewards of this land. We also recognize all the varied Indigenous Peoples who have lived in and continue to live in and around these lands.

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and Asheville Friends Meeting seek to affirm our work together to ensure a strong relationship rooted in relevancy, responsibility, respect and reciprocity. Therefore, we have a responsibility to commit our efforts and resources to the health and priorities of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and all the varied Indigenous people who live in and around the land on which we are situated. As these words are spoken and heard, we renew and reaffirm this property as Cherokee homelands.

Finance: Satchel, Ellen

#### Operating Activity Income.

Satchel presented the 2021 budget on a shared screen, which showed the original budget that had cut our Outreach budgets from \$3000 to \$1645. If contributions were strong in 2021, it had been agreed the Meeting would revisit what could be done to restore the three Outreach budgets to their previous \$3000 amounts. As there were a lot of end of year donations, we ended up with a greater than \$4000 surplus, enough to return General Outreach, Racial Justice Outreach, and Quaker Outreach budgets to \$3000 each. Satchel suggested the surplus amount be put into a temporary fund that could be drawn on immediately by the Peace & Earth and Racial Justice Committees. . A Friend asked if it could be put in the 2022 budget instead. A different Friend felt the surplus from last year's budget, if added

to this year's budget, would still appear as a surplus on the 2021 budget and should instead be spent now, instead of it being rolled over into the 2022 budget, and supports the concept of enabling discernment at committee level, but also feels surplus could be put into a fund that could be drawn upon immediately. A member pointed out that money was moved from Quaker outreach to General outreach because some local organizations were hurting during the Covid epidemic and asked if the money received by these two outreach groups could be moved between the two, as decided by the P&E committee. A Friend asked if this surplus amount should be determined by the committee overseeing them and not brought back to Meeting for Business and it was agreed the decisions could be made within the committees.

**Minute # 2:** The final 2021 budget report on Operating Activity accepted

**Minute #3:** The committees involved will meet to decide how the restored funding will be distributed. The remaining \$71.12 from the surplus will go to the Meetinghouse improvement fund.

Updated budget proposal for 2022 presented for approval

The updated 2022 budget was presented on a shared screen for all to see. In it, the Outreach budget returned to full \$3000 levels, the SAYMA assessment decreased and contribution income, generally from unrestricted donations to the Friends Meeting, is budgeted the same as 2021. A Friend asked what fund the budgeted TV will come out of. Satchel thought it was coming out of House and Grounds or Meetinghouse Improvement funds. [According to Minute #2 of the 12th month Meeting for business the TV funds will come out of the Meeting's general fund] Does the Communications fund need any money in their fund as it appears to have no budget? The clerk of the Communications committee was asked if a budget was needed. He stated \$12 a year is needed to register the domain name, Ashevillefriends.org, and the website is running on a free tier.

SAYMA assessment decreased to \$4050 from \$5025. The assessment is based on the number of active adult members and regular attenders, based on a yearly census. Due to COVID we have fewer active attenders and members. The suggested amount is \$75 per adult. So the assessment was based on the current number of active participants of adult age.

#### **Minute #4: 2022 budget approved**

Reparations Fund Caretakers: Steve Livingston

On 1/21/22, four Friends met to begin creating a framework for the Meeting's nascent Reparations Fund: Pat Johnson, Mike Eddy, Barbara Esther, and Steve Livingston (convener). We decided we would like to be called "the Reparations Fund Caretakers."

Initially, the Fund will provide compensation to BIPOC who bring their experience and/or expertise to our Meeting to help us advance in our journey toward becoming a more anti-racist, multicultural faith community. As we learn more about how faith communities use reparations funding, we may recommend other uses for the Fund.

We have three initial requests for use of Reparations Fund: Ms. Bettie Council, who presented to the Meeting about her projects on 1/16, Asheville Racial Justice Coalition, which will present a panel discussion of "Reparations" on 3/6, and Tanya Rodriguez, a Taino Indian woman who will present on 4/3 on "Decolonization and Uncolonization." We decided to do some research on customary honoraria in this context to help us decide how much to offer in compensation to these presenters.

We intend to develop guidelines for disbursement, but we feel we need to learn more before we recommend any specific guidelines other than

ensuring that any outlays from the Fund are in accordance with 501(c)3 guidelines.

We recommend that at any program being presented by a recipient of Reparations funding, we ask attenders to consider making a "love offering." The Fund will accept donations at any time directly from Meeting attenders, by check written to the Meeting, with "Reparations Fund" in the memo line. We are working with the Treasurer to establish the means by which Friends may donate to the fund through the JustGiving website.

We suggest that attenders be shown a list of Meeting's various restricted funds and encourage them to donate to whichever they prefer. We recommend that we invite Friends in other nearby Meetings such as Swannanoa Valley or Celo to any program being presented by a Reparations Fund recipient. We suggest that we could invite other like-minded faith communities to such presentations as well.

A Friend asked what the advantage was for using JustGiving. Steve explained in the age of Covid where we are meeting virtually rather than in person, this site can help with people attending via Zoom to make donations immediately. A Friend had a question: Will the 3 different groups have targeted funds? Steve said it may be possible to do this, but initially, it is a direct donation to the Reparation Funds, benefiting speakers who advance our understanding of BIPOC issues, by providing an honorarium for the speaker. Ms Bettie Council has asked the Meeting to fund her projects and a Friend asked if donations to the Reparations Fund could be earmarked for a particular recipient or project. The Treasurer suggested that Friends write checks directly to Ms.Bettie for her projects, or purchase and donate requested items, as the Meeting cannot make such donations unless the recipient is a 501(c)3 non-profit. It was asked if a separate fund could be set up specifically for Ms Bettie Council's proposed projects, but the Treasurer pointed out that that would make us an umbrella group for her and this could lead to complications. A Friend indicated that he would like to see his donation go to a specific project and would like to know that it goes there. As the Reparation Funds Caretakers have only met once, there is still work to be done, but at this time donations

made to the Reparations Fund cannot be directed. A member asked what the fee is for using JustGiving to receive donations and it is thought JustGiving charges about 6%. Another Friend pointed out that a check can be written to Ms Bettie Council directly with a specific project designated, as long as the individual does not plan to use the donation as a tax deduction on their income tax form. That is, if someone does not plan to use the donation as a tax deduction, they can direct the donation anywhere.

The reparations fund caretakers is asking for approval from the Meeting that anytime we have a program that is being presented by a person who will be a recipient of Reparations funds, as an honorarium, we will ask at the time the program takes place for donations which would go to the Reparations Funds, not directly to the speaker. These funds could then be used for subsequent recipients. A Friend felt this might be confusing to people making the donation...they might think the money is going to the speaker only. Another Friend agreed. The honorarium for the speaker would be established beforehand, and any amount donated to the Reparations Fund exceeding the honorarium amount would be used by the Reparation fund for subsequent speakers. A member of the caretakers pointed out that the group has only met once, and the way the request is made may be phrased differently, so people would understand where their donation is going. A member of the Reparation Funds Caretakers said it is important to have the funds ready, for opportunities that arise to have speakers enlighten us in our journey towards reparative justice. The speaker would know and accept the honorarium beforehand, and the donations would go to the reparation work being done and not just to the individual. A Friend said that we could transfer funds within the 2023 budget to go to Reparation Funds, so it can be funded intentionally. Attenders at these programs can also be informed that they can make directed donations to any other restricted fund.

**Minute #5:** The request by the Reparations Fund Caretakers to be allowed to ask for donations (love offerings) from attenders of programs that are offered in the second hour of spiritual enrichment, with the donations going to the Reparations Fund was approved.

Steve also asked the group's permission to invite Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting and Celo Friends Meeting to any second hour spiritual enrichment program being presented by a Reparations Fund recipient.

A Friend said other meetings are doing this and feels it is good practice

**Minute #6:** Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting and Celo Friends Meeting will be invited to second hour spiritual enrichment programs that are being presented by a Reparations Fund recipient.

#### **Racial Justice Committee:** Steve Livingston

Racial Justice Committee met 2/7/2022, present were Margaret Farmer, Gita Larson, Morgan Murray, and Steve Livingston (interim clerk). RJC intended, but failed, to report last month that at our December 2021 meeting we decided to put the additional funds that were made available for community outreach into our Meeting's Reparations Fund. We didn't have a lot of time to discern how to distribute it among the various community organizations supporting equity and anti-racism work, but we felt very clear about putting it into the Reparations Fund. The Tuesday Night Discussion Group has resumed meeting and begun its study of and sharing around Layla Saad's *Me and White Supremacy*. A dozen Friends are committed to this difficult but rewarding work, which was begun two weeks ago and will probably take us through the next several months. The Committee is mindful that the Meeting has joined in wholehearted and joyful support of the Friends Center for Racial Justice's Conflict Transformation work with SAYMA. Morgan has contacted them to reiterate our support and has received an update on the status of this work.

Dear SAYMA Friends ,

The Friends of FCRJ met following the occurrence of several incidents at SAYMA gatherings which resulted in deep concerns by our community.

While SAYMA leadership is aware, there is much that is not known or understood by the Body of SAYMA.

The FCRJ Executive Director and the FCRJ Coordinating Committee has responded to the expressed concerns of the SAYMA body throughout the FCRJ/SAYMA relationship.

The last query being :

“Is FCRJ going to refuse to work with us after so many offenses?”

After much discernment and consultation, we reaffirmed that FCRJ feels led to working with SAYMA. It is our policy not to let one individual dismantle work being done; however, the situation at SAYMA has been unique. Yet, still we will not let one person derail our work together.

FCRJ Friends received the information from FCRJ Coordinating Committee, and we began with an enlarged group praying on behalf of SAYMA Friends.

We at FCRJ operate on “Spirit time.” We will take the time as needed. Figuring out a “rightly ordered“ way forward has been challenging due to the relational structure of SAYMA and the incidents of concern that continue to manifest.

Reaffirming our commitment to the SAYMA body was easy, it is our ministry.

The “initial listening“ call fell to me these past years; however at this time, that role is shifting to others in FCRJ as well.

1. All SAYMA Friends will receive a report of the concerns that were raised.
2. SAYMA Friends reported inter-sectional concerns regarding race, class, sex, and location.
3. As part of next steps in 2022, FCRJ is inviting SAYMA Friends to join us to address our common concerns. You will receive an invitation. Please note :

It is suggested that there be at least three people present during all future conversations.

The groups will meet for one or more times according to their schedules.

They will determine if, when, how, and how often they want to meet. Some know this as caucusing or affinity group work.

All FCRJ programs will be available, including Antiracism Analysis Trainings arranged by FCRJ.

All SAYMA Friends will receive the FCRJ Antiracism Analysis Training Interest Form which gathers information regarding each Friend's availability, previous trainings, and concerns -- i.e. what can we help you with, so that you are free to follow this leading. No one should hesitate attending due to cost, FCRJ is a pay as led and able Friends Organization.

Have a good week Friends

Angela Hopkins

Please text reply: 607-592-0049

Please note that this is a new number

RJC feels led to reach out to other monthly meetings in the region to share experiences doing anti-racism work in our meetings, with an eye toward more understanding, solidarity, support, and collaboration on the regional level. We intend to invite Friends from Celo and Swannanoa Meetings to participate in the upcoming panel discussion on "Reparations" scheduled for second hour on 3/6 sponsored by the Racial Justice Coalition of Asheville.

Ministry and Counsel: Bob Lackey

First Draft State of the Meeting 2021 document

Second Draft will be presented at March Meeting for Business.

The State of the Meeting report needs to be sent to SAYMA by March 31. Any recommended changes should be sent to Bob as soon as possible, so they can be incorporated and presented at the next business meeting.

### Asheville Friends Meeting State of the Meeting - 2021

The year began with the shock of the violent assault on the capitol. Through the year our country experienced progressive polarization as our interpretation of the significance of January 6 steadily emerged. Police violence against people of color and violence in general continued unabated. Our city and county have provided enticements and accommodations for an enormous new Raytheon plant producing jet fighter engines despite protests and other pushbacks.

It is impossible to reflect back on 2021 without viewing the year through the lens of the pandemic with its traumas and opportunities.

Many of us felt relief at finally receiving our initial two vaccinations by spring, and were hopeful that we would soon experience some degree of normalcy. Through the spring as vaccination rates steadily increased, infection rates were improving. Many of us were wanting to again experience in-person Meeting for Worship. We proceeded with a plan in June for a hybrid model of virtual and outdoor meeting with face coverings, at first on the lawn, and later on the porch. Our attendance of members and visitors grew steadily. In September, we opened the Meetinghouse for indoor worship, but most were more comfortable meeting on the porch, or remaining virtual.

Reduced COVID-19 incidence and deaths were followed by new variants that brought new challenges. Business and government attempts to implement mandates of public health measures resulted in endless litigation up to the Supreme Court. Infection rates skyrocketed, and out of concern for the safety of our more vulnerable attenders we had to abandon plans to resume indoor meetings in the Winter months.

Our families have been handling the stress of isolation, illness, caregiving, and recovery. Some of our children were suffering from Zoom fatigue. Some of the kids and the adults do not feel that they learn or communicate well on Zoom. First Day virtual check-ins which had been occurring since March 2020, have allowed for some pain and frustration to be talked about. Statements such as “everyone’s bandwidth is so limited” and “not much flexibility to bounce” revealed the fragility of some of our families and children now. We have made mistakes in addressing the space for First Day attendees, our children, safety concerns of members being in close proximity to unvaccinated children, and making sure our young parents had their spiritual needs met. We eventually offered in-person First Day School, with some children not vaccinated, in the back of the meeting house. This allowed the children to be free to make noise and to better social distance from meetings on the front porch. Getting this right has been very humbling. As a Friend pointed out: being in a relationship, in part, is always facing the possibility of being wrong.

Our Meeting has often been silent, waiting on Spirit, during our Meetings for Worship. We have found stronger vocal ministry sharing Joys and Concerns, which has provided many of us with a sense of connection and fed our hunger for community. Our Meetings for Worship With Attention to Business have been well attended and have felt productive.

We have gained some new active regular attendees. A returning member transferred back from a nearby meeting. We gained another member who was raised in our meeting and now in his 20’s accepted our invitation to join our meeting. We unexpectedly lost a beloved member, Pat Campbell, former Clerk of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, and our clerk of Finance. Pat’s tribute was brought to SAYMA remembrances. In September we held a memorial for the mother of a meeting member on the front porch and this felt like a Spirit-led event. One of our elderly attenders died in September, but we only recently held a memorial for her.

We have continued to have several unfilled committee positions, committees that do not meet, and committees without clerks. Some members have stepped back

to take care of themselves. In some of our committees that continued to meet, it has felt less imperative to get things done. There seems to be less focus on accomplishments. Ironically, committees have accomplished a great deal. There seems to be more focus on relationships and successful interactions. Thus, it has been a good year for our Meeting, in some ways.

We have continued to work on racial justice in our Meeting and our community. Our Meeting has been fortunate to have gained a Person of Color who is a local racial justice activist. She has become a regular attendee of our Meeting for Worship and joined our racial justice book group. She has brought to us many ideas to mobilize and support the Black community in Asheville. The Tuesday racial justice discussion group finished reading *My Grandmother's Hands* by Resmaa Menakem, and listened to, and discussed the "Seeing White" podcast. We are learning more about seeking awareness of our bodies being settled and when we are triggered. We can use this in our antiracism work. As one Friend remarked, we are wrestling with racism and not each other. We are realizing that there is a wide range of how people feel safe, which it turns out is a pretty wide space. We are learning to trust each other's decisions and what they know about their capacity. We are finding that stepping away from judgment, is leading us to understanding one another. The Atlanta racial justice work was brought to us during the virtual SAYMA Annual Sessions and Retreat, which was very helpful and inspiring for many of us.

In an effort to address our relationship with Cherokee people and with consultation from Cherokee historian Watson Harlan we reflected, discerned and wrote our Land Acknowledgement (LA). In it, we acknowledge with respect the Cherokee and all Indigenous Peoples who have cared for the land. We recognize this statement as a first step to listen & learn from them and we affirm our work together to ensure a strong relationship. We accept responsibility to commit our efforts and resources to the health and priorities of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) and all the varied Indigenous Peoples who live in and around the land on which we are situated. We're grateful to have read our LA at an EBCI Tribal Council meeting where it was accepted after a couple of comments.

In following up on our commitment, we collected donations to cosponsor UNCA Cherokee speakers. Annette Saunooke Clapsaddle, author of the novel, *Even As We Breathe*, is the first enrolled member of the EBCI to have a novel published. Her novel also won the prestigious Thoma Wolfe Literary Award. Clint Carroll is an ethnobotanist from Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma who works on issues of land conservation and the perpetuation of land-based knowledge and ways of life. Our donations exceeded the needed funding so the excess provided gifts to 2 Cherokee UNCA graduates. We planned and promoted two second-hour virtual programs that attracted several Quaker meetings and other faith groups. Dr. Ben Steere, Anthropology professor at Western Carolina University presented “The Cherokee Ancestral Land” and Cherokee historian, Watson Harlan presented “Cherokee Spiritual, Religious and Cultural Practices.” We look forward to continued collaboration with our Indigenous neighbors.

We began our year with our outreach budget at a lower level than we desired. Our Peace and Earth Committee struggled to decide how to disburse the greatly reduced outreach funds. They came up with a solution that did not eliminate any of the local organizations or Quaker organizations that had struggled through the pandemic. By the end of the year, we brought in enough contributions to restore our outreach to our original levels. Our Communications Committee has kept us informed and connected through our weekly online Digest. We formed a new Ad Hoc committee to create our Meeting Handbook and to organize our Meetinghouse files. Our House and Grounds committee organized installation of new windows for the entire meeting house, stripping and painting an upstairs First Day room, and addressed termite treatment.

We have been able to continue our intergenerational activities such as Secret Pals and Simple Christmas craft making via Zoom. These meeting traditions brought us together at a much needed time. In another virtual meeting we held a very funny Nativity play and sang Christmas carols which was a joy for us. In February our youth organized and held a nonperishable food collection and raised money for food pantries in our area. We continued to write cards and visit Friends, but again in this second year of the pandemic, we have painfully missed opportunities.

In December we held a farewell party for a much loved member of our community who was moving to the West Coast to be closer to her family. We were masked and socially distanced on the meeting house lawn. One friend remarked how surprised and joyful it was to realize after several minutes of conversation, just who she was talking to, the mask and the new hairstyle having made that a challenge. The year has been very hard, but Spirit seems to have given us gifts of being surprised by joy along the way.

A Friend thanked Bob for all his hard work for all the work he did on the first draft, and another feels this first draft really captured the spirit of what we have been going through.

Ministry and Counsel: Margaret Farmer

Atlanta Friends Meeting has requested all monthly meetings in SAYMA to respond to their Minute on Reparative Justice and Reconciliation. The response they are requesting is for us to send our comments and questions to their Ministry and Worship Committee clerk, as well as the clerk and the administrative assistant of SAYMA. This morning we will give a first reading of the Atlanta minute, with no discussion or action following today.

Two upcoming second-hour forums will be very helpful in our meeting formulating a response to this request, as well as giving us an opportunity to prepare for a discussion at our March meeting for worship with attention to business.

February 27 is scheduled for a discussion on what arises for us from sitting with the Atlanta minute.

March 6 is scheduled for Rob Thomas from Asheville's Racial Justice Coalition to present on the topic of reparative justice (mentioned in the Atlanta minute.)

After our committees and individual Friends have had time to begin seasoning the information from both of these second-hour forums, on March 13 we will have another reading of the Atlanta minute at Meeting for Business, with discussion to follow.

Minute on Reparative Justice and Reconciliation

approved by the Atlanta Friends Meeting (Quakers) 8-15-21

(Minute 8-15-21:03)

We believe there is the light of God in each person, and we are connected to God and to each other by this light. We separate ourselves from God and each other by our prejudices which are the root of destructive conflict. We acknowledge our need for forgiveness and grace. We are called to be involved in the work of reconciliation and reparations to the descendants of formerly enslaved Africans

Reparative justice refers to compensation, which may include a national apology; educational, housing and health care programs; and financial redress from the U.S. government to African Americans to eliminate, to the extent possible, the badges, incidents, and relics of slavery and involuntary servitude which only perpetuate and deepen past injustices and effect society. More specifically, reparations are a system of redress for injustices since 1619.

Reconciliation requires acknowledging and atoning for the wrong done — asking those harmed for forgiveness while resolving never to repeat the wrongs and working to ensure their rights as fellow citizens.

This focus on restorative justice and reconciliation for African Americans in the 21st century calls for us to confront racist aspects of Quaker history as well as continue the work against racial injustice by the Religious Society of Friends. Throughout its existence, the Religious Society of Friends has worked to transform its relationship with African American people as it receives guidance from the Inner Light to work to correct historic wrongs committed by Friends of European descent. With gratitude to the work of Donna McDaniel and Vanessa Julye and others, we note the following:

1. Until 1781 Friends in America struggled with the issue of enslavement.
2. During the 1600s and early 1700s some Friends in the Americas were slaveholders. In Britain, Quakers were involved in the slave trade as ship owners, ship's captains, as investors and as iron-masters made chains and shackles for use in the slave trade.
3. But Quakers ultimately became the first organization to end slavery among its members. In 1790, Quakers petitioned the U.S. Congress for the abolition of slavery.

Quakers of African and European descent were pivotal in the Abolitionist Movement and the Underground Railroad network. During that time, Quakers of European descent did not customarily consider African Americans to be their equal, as reflected in segregated seating in meetings and the reluctance to accept African Americans into membership or to socialize with African Americans. Even as late as the 1950s, some Quaker schools and colleges were hesitant to accept African American students.

However, during the 20th century, Quakers worked as allies of African Americans in the civil rights movement through the American Friends Service Committee, Quaker monthly meetings, and the action of many individuals. Bayard Rustin's Quaker/Gandhian principles led him to become both a close adviser of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and one of the two organizers of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963.

At this march, Dr King, in his speech, "I Have a Dream" stated:

“We have come to our nation’s capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. . . . It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked ‘insufficient funds’. But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt.”

A recent article by the Brookings Institution on reparations noted this statement by Dr King and concluded,

“Given the lingering legacy of slavery on the racial wealth gap, the monetary value we know that was placed on enslaved Blacks, the fact that other groups have received reparations and the fact that Blacks were originally awarded reparations only to have them rescinded provide overwhelming evidence that it is time to pay reparations to the descendants of enslaved Blacks.”

The Atlanta Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is called to work for reparative justice to redress the evils of centuries-long oppression and to bring about equity and reconciliation. Atlanta Friends Meeting will engage in reconciliation and healing within our Meeting, communities, and country. Friends of European descent acknowledge and atone for wrongs committed in the past and present against people of African descent. Friends of European descent acknowledge that we are the beneficiaries of slavery and that the enslavement of Africans contributed to the accumulated wealth we have today. Friends of European descent apologize for not acknowledging these truths sooner, and we atone for past and present oppression in the hope of healing justice. The Atlanta Friends Meeting as a whole celebrates our racial diversity and will actively engage with organizations at the local, state, and national level to generate and implement policies for reparative justice.

The meeting closed with silent worship until the way opens for our next business meeting in the third month of 2022

