

Athens Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, held at Cherokee Corner Church in Arnoldsville, Georgia: State of the Meeting, Spring 2024

Athens Friends have been gathering weekly for worship, First Day School, and fellowship for one to two hours each Sunday. We conduct Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business once every two months.

Our weekly attendance averages around 10 people on a given Sunday. First Day School attendance has unfortunately been sparse this year. On some Sundays no children attend, other times one, and when we're lucky up to five will show up. To encourage intergenerational bonding, we had a well-attended and energetic spring field day. We also tie-dyed one First Day. We continue to enjoy our annual holiday traditions like candlelight worship on Christmas Eve and a spirited Easter Egg hunt.

In terms of our spiritual life, we have focused on having at least one Second Hour per month focused on various elements of the Quaker testimonies. Given that we have several new and consistent attenders, we decided to run a round of Quaker Basics (Quakerism 101), An Introductory Course in Quaker Faith & Practice. Held twice a month, these sessions have led to dynamic discussions and a deepening understanding of our history and traditions as Quakers.

Friends have expressed gratitude to the Nurture and Ministry committee for having rallied our group to provide meals and other needed support to several of our members and attenders in need this year.

Our relationship with the LLC group that owns our property remains functional and mutually beneficial. This year we worked with them to get some large trees removed that were getting in the way of power lines.

We continue to enjoy our relationship with the Comer Worship Group, a preparative meeting under our care. We visited each other back and forth several times in 2023 and look forward to more time together in 2024.

The meeting continues supporting groups that align with our values, such as Family Promise, a local organization which provides shelter for families experiencing homelessness, the Interfaith Clergy Partnership of Greater Athens, and Voices from the Border. First Day School also raised money and collected supplies for the Madison Oglethorpe Animal Shelter.

Love, unity, and mutual nurture abide among us. We give thanks for our Quaker community that continues to thrive in Athens.

#### **A note from Comer Friends:**

The Comer Quaker worship group meets every first day for intergenerational singing at 10am followed by unprogrammed worship at 10:30. Over the past year attendance has ranged from 2 to 20 people, with 2-8 of those attending being children. Children stay for the first five minutes of worship and afterwards parents offer childcare.

About once a month we offer a first day school program. Once a month (2nd first day) we co-sponsor an interfaith worship followed by a potluck with the Baha'i community in Athens. Our home meeting location is on the back pavilion at The Perch community center. We're grateful that Georgia weather and a smokeless fire pit allow us to meet comfortably outside most weeks. We have several attendees who have invited us to meet in their homes when the weather is too cold.

The Comer Quaker worship group has decided to work in collaboration with Jubilee Partners and Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty to host vigils in Comer when the state schedules an execution. We are prepared to host our first vigil on March 20th when the state is scheduled to execute Wille Pye, though we are hopeful that the execution will be stayed.

Sincerely,

Laura Gordon (Co-Clerk, Athens Monthly Meeting) and Angie Martin (Comer Worship Group)