

## Adelphi Friends Meeting (AFM) Timeline

### Introduction

*Adelphi Friends' first members included families with young children and its family-friendly atmosphere continues to this day. Maintaining an active First Day School program has remained a priority at AFM, with children being beloved participants in the community. AFM is also known in the wider community for its annual Strawberry Festivals, which have raised money for multiple purposes including charitable contributions and building expenses. We found in our interviews with AFM members that there has also been a history of helping refugee families during different crises over the years including families from Vietnam, Burundi, and Afghanistan. Finally, AFM members come from a variety of faith traditions including Buddhism, Catholicism, Fundamental Christianity, Judaism, Nontheism, and Protestant Christianity.*



*Group photo of the AFM community in 2019 standing in front of the Meeting House with the White House, the original AFM worship site, on the left.  
(Adelphifriends.org)*

**1900** - Irving Street Meeting House, Washington, D.C. was built. This was a pastoral Meeting.

**Early 1900's**- Herbert Hoover became a member of Washington Monthly Meeting (Irving Street).

**1922** - The camping program now under the care of Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) was born. Many AFM youth have attended a BYM camp and/or have worked on its staff. Camp records from 2015-2022 indicate that 49 campers connected to AFM have attended at least one camp. Additionally, many adult volunteers from the AFM community have worked to maintain the camps or serve as cooks, nurses, or maintenance workers during camp sessions.

**1927** - Herbert Hoover was elected as president of the United States.

**1930** - The Florida Avenue Meeting House was built for the Quaker president and those surrounding him. Most attendees of Irving Street Meeting switched to this new meeting location.

**1947** - Irving Street Meeting ran out of funds for their building and pastor, and sold the property. The money was held at the Baltimore Yearly Meeting to be used for a future Meeting House. The Irving Street Meeting was still considered an organized meeting after selling their building.

**1947- 1955** - Four small groups of Quakers in Washington D.C. and its northeastern suburbs met regularly on their own and eventually would merge to create the Adelphi Friends community: the Irving Street Meeting community which included Joseph and Sallie Wetherald and their six children; some members of the Florida Avenue Meeting who did not want to travel so far; a small Quaker worship group promoted by Bob and Ruth Wetherald that met in Greenbelt; and a small group of Quaker students who met at the University of Maryland and was led by Elizabeth Haviland, a cousin of the Wetheralds. In 1955 these merged groups became known as the Northeast Suburban Friends Group. The groups' merging was assisted by the Executive Secretary of the Florida Avenue Meeting, Herb Hadley.

**1955** - The parish hall of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in College Park, MD was found as an acceptable meeting place for the Maryland worship groups. The first meeting for worship was held on September 11th. This community then became known as College Park Meeting of Friends. Executive Director of Homewood Yearly Meeting in Baltimore, Jeanne Newman, and Jessie Tichener, clerk of Washington Monthly Meeting, began to actively serve in the establishment of this community.

*The front of the White House, 2303 Metzert Rd., Adelphi, MD (Anomalous\_A Flickr post)*



**1956** - The College Park Meeting of Friends realized that the St. Andrew's facility was not adequately meeting its needs. Edith Birgfeld (a member of the community), Herbert Hadley, and Jessie Tichener surveyed the area and declared Riggs and Adelphi Roads to be the center of Quaker folk in that community. Edith Birgfeld saw an advertisement in the newspaper for a house she thought was the perfect place for a new Meeting House. She and her husband went to look at the property at 2303 Metzert Road, Adelphi, MD, and it appealed to both of them. Edith put down a deposit of \$500 on the spot. BYM used the deposited funds from the selling of Irving Street Meeting

House to pay for \$28,000 of the required \$30,000 for the building. The building is what AFM now calls the “White House.” The College Park Meeting and the Washington Meeting (Irving Street) merged, occupying the new building and forming Adelphi Friends. The new name of the Meeting was selected because of the property location. The unincorporated community of Adelphi takes its name from the Adelphi Mill, which was established in 1796.

**1956-1966** - The new building was quickly realized to be too small. Some expansions were made to it, and fundraising was begun to build a new building. Strawberry festivals were one form of fundraising during this period.

*Side view of the Meeting House (friendscommunityschool.org)*



**1966** - The new Meeting House was completed. Adelphi Friends continue to worship here to this day. The old wooden benches for the Meeting House were a gift through Alice Koenig and her mother from Moorestown Meeting, NJ. The benches date from about 1897.

**1968** - A young adult associate member was a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War and was imprisoned as a result. The AFM community regularly wrote letters, visited, and supported him through his prison sentence in Petersburg, VA.

**1970s-80s** - Regular community-building coffee houses were held in the basement of the Meeting House where young friends, in particular, would sing, dance, play instruments, tell jokes, and do magic tricks, etc.

**1975-1999** - AFM engaged in emergency housing work. In 1983 an Emergency Housing Committee was created. AFM housed homeless community members for short-term stays in the basement of the Meeting House. The Committee laid its work down in 1999.

**1986** - Members of Adelphi Friends founded Friends Community School (FCS), whose students were first taught in the White House (after substantial improvements) and in the Meeting House. After multiple relocations, a new campus was built at 5901 Westchester Park Drive, College Park, MD, and



**2005-** A Memorial Garden was created at the rear of the property on the southeast corner and procedures were established for its use. It was created through member sweat equity and funds from a bequest. The Memorial Garden Committee keeps a book with a Memorial Minute for each person who has died and has a stone in the Memorial Garden.

**2006-** The 50th Anniversary of Adelphi Friends was marked by a series of events, some of which involved envisioning the future of the Meeting. “ Dream Teams” were subsequently formed and focused on a variety of long-term goals and needs within our community. One of the new goals that were born was a need to renovate the Meeting House. Another part of the Dream Team vision was providing structure and support for **Go Forth Projects**, member-led service projects coming from specific leadings linked to Quaker values.

**2006-** The first same-sex marriage under the care of the Meeting was celebrated.

**2007-** AFM issues a public minute on sustainability, acknowledging a visible crisis in the earth community.

**2008-** A Building Committee was formed to start discussing plans for a renovation.

**2009-** AFM supported a Friend and her family through a gender transition.

**2010-2012-** Adelphi Meeting Young Friends took part in an important service project with Fundación Esperanza de México in Tijuana, close to the Mexican/US Border, collaborating with workers to help build homes and living cooperatively in the Esperanza Posada. Each Young Friend funded themselves - applying for economic support from friends, family, and Peace & Social Concerns.

**2012-** AFM publishes a letter to other Quakers on LGBTQ inclusion with a concern that there are Friends in other Quaker Meetings and organizations who cannot be honest about their intimate relationships and fully included in their worship and work communities.

**2013-** A public minute on transgender inclusion was issued, welcoming transgender persons to worship and be supported by AFM.

**2014-** The Cornstalk Project, a nonprofit, was started with the aid of Go Forth. Its goal was to support widows and children in northwestern Kenya. It has supported over 30 families since.

**2015-** A Burundi Quaker family arrived in Maryland. Over the next several years Adelphi Friends helped them settle into a radically new life -- including things like tutoring English; teaching the teenagers to drive; sending Rahaloy, the youngest, to Opequon Quaker Camp; and negotiating the bureaucracies of the US immigration, education, employment, and medical systems. In return, Adelphi Friends was blessed with the company and culture of Friends in many ways similar to us and in many ways rather different.

**2016-** A public minute on gun violence, hate crimes, and racism was issued with a commitment to partner with organizations and individuals who identify and take concrete actions that “foster love where there is racism, understanding where there is hatred, and peace where there is violence.”

**2018-** a public minute in support of the civil and human rights of transgender people was issued.

**2020-** With the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, Meeting for Worship and Meeting for Business began to occur virtually on the Zoom platform. All use of the Meeting House for group gatherings was suspended.

**2020-** After the killing of George Floyd at the hands of police and increased national attention to the Black Lives Matter social movement, AFM members began creating accountability groups and taking specific actions in an effort to become anti-racist.

**2021-** Phase One of the building renovations begins.

**2022-** Phase One of the building renovation was completed. The Meeting House began to be used for in-person Meetings again. A virtual option remained for those who felt a need to continue worshipping from a distance.

**AFM Friends of Note:**

Three Generations at AFM: Alexander Barnes, Alex Barnes, Brianne Boylan, and Dmitri Barnes

Longest attender at AFM: Carol Ann “Pud” Baker, whose mother, Alice Baker, was active in the early AFM community.

Longest continuous member at AFM: June Confer, who joined in 1974.

Youngest attender at AFM: Tamar Almagor Bourland (4 months old).

**Prepared and submitted by: Toby Oerter and Lara Oerter, May 15, 2022**

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