

Bridge City Friends Meeting State of Society Report March 2021

And then came Covid and Zoom, Zoom, Zoom

In March of 2020, as the lock downs happened because of Covid 19 it was not safe to meet in person, we looked for new ways to connect and support each other. We didn't know what it would be like to not meet in person; we tried Zoom (virtual, internet platform) and it worked! It is different from worshipping in person, better in some ways and less fulfilling in others. But certainly, better than not meeting at all. Our community has risen to the need and become stronger. Attendance at Sunday Worship has increased (20-25 Friends) most weeks. We take time each week to check in with each other and share our joys and concerns. We tried small group Garden Worship during the summer and added a midweek worship as well. We recently added a breakout room to our Zoom meeting for pre-worship singing. This has been well received. We miss seeing each other in person, and not worshipping with Friends who find this technology difficult and distracting, but for now it works, far better than we anticipated.

Our community is strong. The Meeting feeds our souls both at worship and on a daily basis. Our connections to the community are stronger than ever. We are grateful for the opportunities to be a part of this Meeting which welcomes all - from Christ centered to non-theists - as we support each other in our spiritual journeys. We have gained strength and depth from our new younger regular attenders. Bridge City Friends Meeting holds us together in a wonderfully spiritual way.

Our committees find meeting by Zoom useful as we continue to do the work of community building and outreach. Our Peace and Justice Committee has added depth to our activism with twice monthly forums on topics of climate change, racial justice, and finding ways to connect with the wider world. That committee has started a book group that is well attended. Several of us are participating in a 9-month course with Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon working on racial justice and looking at the root causes of institutional white privilege. Others are taking direct action through Friends Committee on National Legislation's Advocacy Teams or personal letter writing campaigns. Our Adult Education Committee is helping us focus inwardly through discussions, using the Faith and Practice of North Pacific Yearly Meeting as a starting point. Our Ministry & Pastoral Care Committee is planning a workshop for later in the spring, (while continuing to use Zoom for Worship). We gathered for carol singing at Christmas time and hosted our annual Christmas Eve Meeting where others joined us to celebrate the season. For the first time in several years, we had a New Comers gathering.

We are lucky and thankful that the Covid has not hit our meeting directly. We hold each other, family and Friends in the Light knowing that there is much suffering around us. We are thankful for the new leadership in our country and pray that the world will begin to heal itself.

As Spring returns, we are beginning to see "the light at the end of the tunnel". Many of us are getting vaccinated in hopes of abandoning isolation and returning to a full and rich life. As we look forward, we realize that all has not been bad this past year. We have discovered even broader ways to experience community. We anticipate returning to in person worship and hope to continue to find ways to connect with each other and the wider world.

Zoom, Zoom, Zoom.

