

Central Oregon Worship Group State of Society Report

Willamette Quarterly Spring Quarterly Meeting, May 5, 2018

The past year for Central Oregon Worship Group continues to adapt to the challenges of being a smaller-sized worship group with a desire for greater spiritual growth, positive engagement with the wider Central Oregon community, and the reality of the political tensions resulting from the policies of the Trump Administration and polarization views. We continue to be concerned by the plight of the disenfranchised groups being targeted in our political climate today. Centering on the belief that “there is that of God in *everyone*” we strive to hold those in the Light that seem to be working diligently against the greater good, that they may listen and change their policies.

Due to the generous contributions of our members and attenders, COWG found itself with a surplus of funds and the sense of the meeting is to use these funds to support selected local non-profits, the Oregon Friends Committee on Public Policy, national concerns via the FCNL, and global concerns via the AFSC with the following formula:

- 50% of the funds went to our "Home Base" the Deschutes Children's Foundation for the Children's Garden
- 30% to the Bethlehem Inn, and Habitat for Humanity
- 10% to the state for Oregon Friends Committee on Public Policy
- 10% to national concerns: FCNL
- 10% to "Global" concerns: AFSC

It is the Sense of the Meeting that by providing the majority of our financial resources to our immediate community and working outward towards the global community we may do the most good.

We have been meeting at East Bend Campus of Deschutes Children's Foundation, 2125 NE Daggett Lane, Bend, OR 97701 and enjoy a mutually supportive relationship with them. One of our members is very active in keeping the area by the playground grounded in a positive relationship with nature, utilizing small trees, bushes and flowers so the children can reap the benefits of a more natural surrounding during playtime outside.

During the past year, we focused on nourishing the life of the meeting through monthly discussions based on Quakerism 101 readings. Our worship group has deepened in spiritual growth due to these post-worship meetings and we plan to continue in 2018 with “Letters to a Fellow Seeker” by Steve Chase that we hope will stimulate discussion about how we experience and remain true to our Quaker faith.

We have kept faith during past few years with that Light that guides us when attendance was very low and have been blessed with new attenders familiar with Quakerism, who provide their experience to our group. We are enjoying the new energy that it brings to COWG. Several members volunteer monthly at Bend Family Kitchen to help serve lunch for 50 to 80 low-income and homeless residents of Bend.

We continue to cultivate positive relationships with our immediate community of Bend and the larger Central Oregon community. As part of our outreach, one of our members is serving on the Board of the Interfaith Network of central Oregon and at the May INCO meeting this past week, two of our seasoned attenders gave a presentation to the group on Quaker beliefs and practices. We strive to stay connected with attenders who [are unable to attend Sunday worship and include them in our activities wherever possible through visits and other activities outside weekly meetings for worship. The love and caring we share together is strong.

Respectfully submitted by Bob Marvos, May, 6, 2018