

**State of the Meeting  
Great Falls Meeting  
May 23, 2021**

State of Society report

**The Great Falls meeting devoted the regular Sunday meeting to worship-sharing on Sunday, May 23, to share thoughts on the state of the meeting during the past year.**

**Overview of the comments:**

*The meeting members expressed gratitude that Great Falls kept the candle burning when in-person meetings became impossible. Great Falls hosted a weekly online Zoom meeting, and sent weekly reminders. Quakers from Helena and Flathead Valley have joined the Zoom meeting regularly.*

*Lucretia usually led/clerked the meeting. When she was absent, Starshine often hosted.*

*Those present May 23 expressed hope that the meeting could somehow navigate a return to live meetings, while still accommodating those who, for various reasons, prefer online worship.*

*Worshippers had general agreement on what they loved, and even consensus on ways to improve.*

*Praise:*

- 1. Gratitude from many that the meeting continued, Zooming weekly.*
- 2. Gratitude to the leaders that kept the Great Falls meeting alive, love to Starshine, Lucretia, Jim...and others who kept the candle burning in COVID times.*
- 3. Gratitude to advocacy efforts by Jasmine and others, such as contacting senator staffs and writing a minute on Nuclear Arms, with attention to Malmstrom Air Force base which manages part of the US nuclear arsenal.*
- 4. Gratitude for the acceptance of everyone without judgment*
- 5. Overall, meeting seen as warm, accepting and much appreciated in trying times*

*Suggestions:*

- 1. Try to resolve the challenge of returning to live meetings, while still accommodating those who prefer zoom. What's the best way to handle "hybrid" meetings which have Zoom "on the wall" and others in person?*
- 2. Search for a transition of leadership as Lucretia and Jim travel more, and host less often*
- 3. Keep reaching out with advocacy to spread love*

**Attending (14)**

*Lucretia Humphrey, clerk; Starshine, Maria Arrington, Jim Humphrey, Pam & Mike Carroll, Bill & Rose, Lizzy, Kat Northup, Derik Reed. Plus, honored guests from Seattle, University Meeting, Warren & Jana Ostrom. Brent Northup, dedicated notetaker.*

*In the following appendix, we offer a stream of consciousness record of the meeting, approved by the guests for sharing as our state of the meeting report.*

## *Voices of the Great Falls meeting*

**What follows is a stream-of-consciousness transcription of comments by those attending about the state of the meeting, conducted as blended business meeting and worship sharing service.**

*Stream of consciousness notes from the meeting, speakers noted only by an initial or two.*

Thanks to the Great Falls meeting, and our North Star, Starshine, who provided the warm welcome to keep Quaker meeting alive – via Zoom - in COVID times. The meeting is welcoming, friendly. Lucretia has been the unselfish organizer who keeps us together. *BN*

Grateful for the Advocacy team, Jasmine et al, who met with Tester and Daines office staffs...speaking up about nuclear missiles...I felt good about the minute we wrote about that nuclear issue...Jasmine reached out across the state asking religious leaders to advocate for love and compassion across many faiths...we knew we couldn't change legislative policy, but we didn't let the light go out...appreciation for Jasmine in reaching out...many faiths participated including Rabbis in Missoula, Bozeman...continuing to speak out during legislative session...learning to express ourselves thanks to the leadership of Jasmine...I'm appreciative of those who gather every week...on the other hand I'm trying to figure out how to transfer power to another who can take hold...Jim and I may not be here if we travel in the years ahead...vaccinated and unvaccinated makes in-person harder...having Zoom available at a live meeting is hard...equality is missing in hybrid meetings...big issues we have to face in our little group here. *LH*.

Glacier Valley worship group small...only two of us sometimes....very quiet...in my time with this group, felt the power of this group in special ways, very nourishing...a lot of gratitude...that this group found a way to work through hard times together...I'm very very grateful...*MA*

Appreciate our group. Every week together on a personal level. Quaker gatherings offer an opportunity for intimacy harder to achieve in formal structured church gatherings...quaker format allows us to know each other at a level that is unusual...the counter-cultural nature of quakers is needed today...Quakers though small may plant a seed that may grow...appreciate our quaker process ...I'm grateful in these times to have this gathering...*JH*

So incredibly grateful...COVID has continued to meet...really is a steady pillar...compassionate worship group...blessed with this space...so we can continue to meet...been sunshine in a storm...to the Quaker family, thank you... *KN*

Jasmine created a beautiful brochure...to hand out to anyone, and to Malmstrom...missiles underground...100 feet...one person has ability to send off a missile...finger on a keyboard...pressure and the tension on those "missile-liers" way beyond...human concern that here we have nuclear weapons that could destroy like Hiroshima did, with flip of a finger...brochure a way to counsel with the Quaker house...helped Jasmine produce the brochure...to help the people who need the emotional support people...ministers all have it...especially at the base...Quaker House which knows what it's like to have an Air Force base next to the city...love thy neighbor, no exceptions...our neighbors can live anywhere in the world...may not speak our language or dance our dances, but everyone in our world is a neighbor...only real way humanity can enjoy life is to feel safe...to feel it's possible for all nations to be able to negotiate differences...our neighbors are not only Malmstrom, but everyone in the world. No exceptions from that command to love thy neighbor, no exceptions. Jesus helped us realize that love is the most important vehicle for life to exist here on earth...we don't own house/cars...or own a meeting...the only power is our

ability to love, care for, accept and support all other people no matter what they believe...or what they are doing...our choice is to be loving of everyone....S

This has been a perfect storm...pandemic, hate groups, attack on people of color, political scene, taking away humanity, we are in a fight for the soul of our world, not just our nation...not only global challenges, but we've had personal challenges...loss of jobs, struggling with COVID, family members with different ethnicities/color; this group a place of safety, heal my soul, and be safe, that anchor that I can come to weekly...appreciate everyone's words of wisdom...acceptance without judgment at the meeting...just acceptance...what I appreciate is that we don't have someone telling us what to think, but hear from each other's hearts and grow from that...PC

I appreciate that for the first time I have a support group that is really supportive...supported by an entire group, as close friends...never felt that before...first time starting to feel that...thank you for letting me be part of this group...thank you Lucretia for letting me be a part of this group...spirit moves within me...thank you...Thanks to Starshine for inviting me, or I wouldn't have known about this. L.

My heater just kicked on and it warmed me up...I can sit here and no one says a word and it warms my heart, too...might not agree with everything, but I appreciate that we are looking down the road trying to see the best in the world and not the worst...appreciate the group gives me warmth inside letting me know I still belong...just a warm place. BW

Being part of this community is important to me, it's an intimate community...as a young person I believed I should handle problems on my own...keep your problems private...only in mid 30s reached out for help...reached out to various programs and to the Quaker meeting...all along I have endeavored to come closer to my own authenticity, to live an authentic life...I'm trying to accept who I am and for me to accept others right where they are...I feel that acceptance here...here I can be authentic...RS

Thanks for welcoming us....hearing these words warms my soul, I needed to hear this...very appreciative to be with you...JO

*This report was submitted to the members who approved its distribution as our state of the meeting report.*

*End*

*Notes by Brent Northup, scribe*  
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