Lopez Island Friends Meeting
State of the Meeting Report for 2019

Our report this year grew out of reflections shared when we considered each Quaker testimony in turn to assess our Meeting’s spiritual strength as well as areas needing attention and development, and efforts we made to foster spiritual growth in these areas. Here’s some of what emerged.

The climate crisis is a huge concern. We’re asking ourselves what we can do in a more concerted and collective way to address the issue and care for our world. What is the role and responsibility of our faith community? We struggle with the tradeoff of travel with stewardship of the earth. Some of us participated in an island-wide “Fossil Free by ’33” campaign, and now we’re considering whether our Meeting might do a carbon-offset effort of our own.

Under peace and social concerns, one member is getting trained virtually via FGC to help us organize a meeting effort around systemic racism. We note that we’re not connected with the growing/sizeable Hispanic population on the island and haven’t done much Meeting work around immigration issues.

We recognize that increased polarization is not limited to our country at large but also in our own island community. One member proposed an interfaith potluck and worked with other faith communities to organize it. This purely social event, neither religious nor political, drew close to 70 people. We’re grateful for the opportunity to get to know folks we would never likely have met and are heartened by the universal messages of support for doing another such event.

We realize that where and how a Meeting allocates its resources can speak volumes about its values. As a meeting, we give to numerous local causes that support our values -- not just money but time and energy, too. And our annual work parties for Meeting House wood splitting and cider pressing, as well as to help an older member maintain her home and yard, have the bonus of letting us gather socially while we live our testimonies. We have hired a person to lead our children’s program, and the presence of children adds to our meeting community.

We’re making progress in various ways when it comes to strengthening our Meeting community, with two-times-a-year inter-island gatherings with two worship groups (San Juan and Orcas) under our care, quarterly potlucks,
intergenerational meetings, a new book group, an educational series about the history and practice of Quakerism, and a monthly newsletter. We have welcomed a new member to the Religious Society of Friends and accepted transfers of membership. In the wider Quaker world, members attend Quarterly and Yearly Meeting sessions as well as other Quaker events around our region and nationally. Two members attended a clerking workshop in Seattle and another participated in the annual meeting of the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). We provided extra support for one member in a public role in our community in managing challenging issues and community conflict.

We continue to be grateful for our meeting space at Sunnyfield Farm, for deep worship and sharing during troubling times, for our community, for laughter and singing, fellowship and food, and a clear sense of holding and being held in the Light.

Addendum, March 2020:
As we write this report, we, like all meetings and worship groups in NPYM, are in the midst of coping with COVID-19. We recognize the importance of social distancing to slow the spread of the virus, but our meeting space is small, and we can't ensure adequate space between people. At the same time, we know that in such stressful times, people often turn to their spiritual communities and practices for support. For now, we've suspended face-to-face worship. We're holding virtual Meetings for Worship via Zoom followed by social time when we can check in to learn how each person is doing, and we're seeking other ways to care for each other.

Lopez Quakers at our summer potluck.