

Lopez Island Friends Meeting

State of the Meeting Report 2017



We spent 2017 settling into our new status as a Monthly Meeting. We started the year making plans to celebrate that fact, inviting local Lopez Island faith communities and Quakers from around the Pacific Northwest. On a bright and warm May 20, around 75 people arrived, some from as far away as Idaho and Oregon. We shared open worship in the sun, worship-sharing about this move forward in the development of our Meeting, the singing of a song written especially for the occasion by

a member, the installation of a peace pole with a ceremony led by children, followed by a picnic lunch of soups and salads. The event represented a public re-assertion of our commitment to each other; to our values of peace, respect and inclusion; and to our continued spiritual development as a Meeting. In addition to the celebration, our new status led to working through the process of accepting transfers of membership as well as beginning the work of addressing a request from the nearby San Juan Island worship group to take them under our care.



As in previous years, we carried on traditions that nurture our Meeting community. We continue to have worship-sharing on the first Sunday of each month and Singing Sunday on the last Sunday of the month. Annual events that promote our cohesiveness include an all-day cider pressing, a wood-splitting work party, a yearly landscaping and gardening work party at the house of one of our elders, and a silent retreat in December. The Meeting has also supported individual members serving the wider Quaker world by sitting on the Nominating Committee for Yearly Meeting, serving with Quaker Voluntary Service, and working with the Friends Committee on National Legislation. In addition, there are members working on projects that carry our Quaker values of compassion and deep listening into the Lopez community. These include several men attending an ecumenical men's breakfast held every other week at the Episcopal church, one member continuing her long correspondence with a woman prison inmate (also supported by the Meeting with a small financial contribution), and a member who published, with support of the Meeting, an autobiographical book which gives readers a look at her life as a Quaker.

One of our challenges has been staffing the children's program during Sunday Meeting. We held a well-attended threshing session on the subject with a series of well-crafted queries provided by our Children's Program Committee. The sharing was thoughtful, respectful,



honest, and valuable and gratitude was expressed for some of the surprising insights. Several members of the group expressed they felt led to volunteer more often. Though the issue isn't resolved, the threshing session was an important opportunity to practice our values and moved us all to a clearer understanding of the issue and, hopefully, closer to a long-term solution.

The new year, of course, brought changes. The person who lived in the farmhouse where we meet moved into a studio on the property, and his daughter's family, including two children, moved into the farmhouse. Worshippers have commented on the homey atmosphere that is created by having children in residence. Another change was a death of long-time attender Suzy Cunningham that led us to hold our first Memorial Meeting as a monthly meeting. People from the Lopez community joined with us to remember Suzy's gifts and struggles and to mourn her loss.

We're grateful for the strength of Lopez Island Friends Meeting and look forward to continued deepening as a spiritual community.

Thanks to Steve Horn for the photos.