South Seattle Friends Meeting ("SSFM") gathers for worship every Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to noon followed by a social gathering. We meet at the Central Area Senior Center at 500 30th Ave. S, Seattle, WA 98144, supporting a facility for seniors and the facility’s diverse neighborhood, and incidentally enjoying breathtaking views of Lake Washington.

Even as we appreciate the natural beauty surrounding our worship, we work to remember that we live and meet on land with a complex history that merits our mindfulness of the Coast Salish people, whose traditional home we share. In gratitude, SSFM and many individual members of our community support Real Rent for the Duwamish tribe.

Our meeting:
- Is wheelchair accessible and welcoming to all;
- Offers childcare/First Day school for our approximately 15 children; and
- Brings together 43 Members, and approximately 20-30 regular attenders.

Uprooting Racism was SSFM’s theme for the year, explored in depth in our March annual retreat. Presentations by the Social Justice Fund Northwest and The Coalition of Anti-Racists Whites framed the issues, followed by discussion. SSFM chose to follow up on the NPYM’s 2019 minute on Racism which acknowledged and pledged to address the systemic racism that exists within and beyond white Friends.

The Ad-Hoc Uprooting Racism Committee worked throughout the year to build awareness and participation in racial equity work. For example, SSFM:

- Met for a presentation of the Movement Voter Project to support community-based organizations in key states with a focus on youth and communities of color;
- Sent supportive messages to Morning Star Baptist Church in Spokane after a neo-Nazi group targeted it with racist flyers in October 2019;
- Participated the Martin Luther King March in January 2020;
• Published (and continues to publish) regular articles in our monthly newsletter addressing aspects of racism; and

• Initiated a book group on “White Fragility,” by Robin DiAngelo, intended to help white people reflect on their own privilege and educate our members and attenders on how they can talk about it with others in a constructive way. (Our book group has been postponed until the coronavirus outbreak is more controlled.)

SSFM values inclusion in the areas of age, race, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, physical abilities, and neurodiversity. We are strengthened by the variety that our members and attenders bring to our meeting and we warmly welcome everyone. Along with the racism work discussed above, we promote other opportunities to support inclusion such as the Mini-Midwinter Gathering of Friends for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer Concerns, the Retreat for Friends of Color, a dictionary drive for prisoners, and a fundraiser to support young Friends to visit Nicaragua. SSFM has an Older Friends group that meets monthly, as well as a Death and Dying group. We reach out to other Quaker organizations informally and through SSFM Member appointments to serve with, for example: QuEST, NPYM Peace and Social Concerns, FCNL General Committee, PNQ, Quaker Voice, Housing Equity, and Right Sharing of World Resources.

Our children are another focal point of our meeting, and we revel in their energy and the fresh perspectives that they bring. Highlights from the year past include:

• The annual children’s Christmas pageant with original and child-created set backgrounds, liberal ad-libbing, and leading the entire community in song;

• Discussions of faith practices that the children and their families practice outside of meeting;

• Discussions about the practice of spending time in nature to feel closer to the Light that is both within and around us, accompanied by talking about and practicing meditation styles suitable for young bodies like walking meditations, music, and labyrinths;

• Discussions of social justice issues including homelessness, global warming, poverty, and understanding the challenges that people with disabilities can face; and

• A comparative religion program that will continue into 2020, engaging Quaker beliefs and building understanding of Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism.
We are thankful for our multigenerational community and the relationships that our children and elders enjoy.

**Adult Religious Education** did not hold an annual pageant, which seems like a real missed opportunity, but did share narratives of spiritual journeys, overviews of the People of Color Retreat, Friends World Committee for Consultation and Quaker Voice’s legislative agenda, and continues to provide monthly opportunities to broaden our understanding of our shared faith.

**SSFM’s monthly newsletter** (created in 2018) continues to roll off the figurative press! Delivered via email to our members and attenders, the newsletter serves as a colorful and engaging means to keep our community informed and connected in addition to conversations had through our email listserv. Each newsletter issue includes dates of upcoming events within and beyond our meeting, announcements – both sad and joyful, and other news of interest to our meeting. We also enjoy submissions from our community that may include some combination of photos, stories, poetry, and insights.

**The SSFM Quaker Library** grew and flourished in 2019. The Library was created largely from member donations of their Quaker literature and resources in order to facilitate sharing between Friends. The library continues to expand and is enjoyed by many. The books are even catalogued on the SSFM website...

**The Community Spiritual Life Committee** (“CSL”) held spiritual growth sessions to deepen members’ and attenders’ knowledge of Friends and our practices. CSL also proactively greets and includes new members and attenders who show up for meeting and are cornerstones in helping grow and bind our community.

**Our home at Central Area Senior Center** is a strong relationship we are grateful for, and SSFM is also grateful to the Arrangements Committee members who keep us all informed about how we can assist in the center’s successful transfer of ownership from the City of Seattle.

**In closing,** SSFM is a committed and supportive community of members and attenders covering a wide range of ages. We are fortunate to receive stable financial contributions and we benefit from an active email list facilitating engagement and conversation between meetings.

One **recurring challenge** is that we are a small meeting, and sometimes struggle to fill all of the volunteer slots each week, despite a strong volunteer ethic among both members and attenders.
An **emerging challenge** is balancing the needs and wants of members to join in Meeting for Worship and minimizing risk of infection with the coronavirus. A significant proportion of our community members fall into one or more of the populations at higher risk of contracting coronavirus. The need to prevent infection and engage in recommended self-isolation and social distancing has discouraged some people from feeling able to attend Meeting for Worship. If this trend continues (or reoccurs in the fall) we will, as a community, need to find ways to stay connected and support each other. SSFM has begun holding meetings via videoconference, allowing members and attenders to participate remotely, which has had a corollary benefit in allowing the community to share in worship even while out of state.

**What do we expect in the year ahead?** The year 2020 will be eventful. The result of the national election in November will impact every social justice issue, including economic disparity, the environment, and immigration, to name just a few. We are committed to supporting each other and voting our conscience in order to promote equality, justice, tolerance, compassion, and love for all.

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*Your authors this year were Judith Anderson and Scott McJannet. Judith has attended SSFM for six years, coming to the Quaker faith after a long search for a liberal spiritual community that was aligned with her values of social equity and compassion for all. Scott has attended SSFM for nearly a year, coming to the Quaker faith in 2019 after an online quiz suggested that he had been a Quaker all his life without anyone telling him.*
Scott and Judith met at meeting and a few months later started dating. Despite the cliché beginning and our combined four kids and three dogs, it is going realllllly well! Thank you to all our Friends at SSFM for your support, faith, and gentle tolerance of our overly-demonstrative romance!