

SANDPOINT FRIENDS STATE OF THE MEETING, 2017

According to *Faith and Practice*, the most important aspect of completing a State of the Meeting report is to help meetings in a “self-examination of their spiritual strengths and weaknesses, and of efforts to foster growth in the spiritual life.” In order to gather thoughts about the state of Sandpoint Friends, we sat in worship discussion and asked ourselves two questions: What is important to you about gathering for Meeting for Worship, and why? What brings you to Meeting each week? As we sat with these queries and shared our insights, it became easily apparent that responses were from the heart and deeply felt. Below are representative excerpts:

- “I can’t imagine not coming to Meeting each week. It reinforces my ability to walk the talk.”
- “I get scattered during the week. Meeting helps me to gather myself for the week ahead, to get focused. It forces me to examine how I’m living my life.”
- “A big part of my life is to be with these people and worship together.”
- “George Fox and Margaret Fell are my heroes. There are Quakers out there who still carry the torch. I’m part of a group that holds the Light.”
- “I come as a kindred spirit in non-violence. Meditation is very important to me. Worship can be very powerful. Sharing is also powerful.”
- “I like being able to say I’m a Quaker. It’s part of who I am.”
- “It is one time during the week when I try to quiet myself to hear ‘the Other.’ These Friends are my family as well; these are ‘my people.’”
- “If it is Spirit coming through, then it is appropriate for Meeting.”
- “There is a broad spectrum of beliefs here, and all are welcome.”
- “I live my life according to Quaker values.”

(Just prior to this worship discussion, we learned of the sudden passing into death of a long-time faithful attender. This knowledge helped to bring us even deeper into our soul searching.)

Looking over the last year, we find some of the actions that have helped us support one another. Our Meeting activities and events reflect a wide variety of interests:

- We held our 4th annual bake sale at our local Farmers’ Market to benefit the Food Bank and the Senior Center food distribution program.
- Movie nights are held once a month during the winter months on appropriate topics.
- We offered our support in vigils and demonstrations for the issues of climate change and the Women’s March.
- We offered our support, along with a donation from Meeting and individuals, to the Montana Amish community in the wake of devastating forest fires last summer.
- We watched a video of the Sandpoint Meeting’s founder, Lois Wythe, discussing “Quakerism 101” and “Why I’m a Quaker,” followed by a discussion about our own feelings.
- We offered spiritual and financial support to a Sandpoint Junior Friend to attend FCNL’s Quaker Lobby Day for the second time.
- Two work days were spent doing ongoing maintenance for the Meeting House and grounds, with much participation. We also discussed the possibility of planting a Peace Pole on the Meeting grounds.

We are a group of Friends who enjoy each other’s company and support. One Friend said, “There is LOVE here.” As we care for and about each other, the deep sense of community we

feel feeds into our corporate sense of worship each week. We are all Seekers, and we realize that Spirit is alive and well in our Meeting.

In Light and Peace,

Judith Clarke, for Sandpoint Friends Meeting