

State of the Meeting Report 2017 Whidbey Island Friends Meeting

This year the Whidbey Island Friends Meeting (WIFM) has celebrated its fifth year as a full monthly meeting that now includes fourteen members (one new member approved in June). Attendance at meeting for worship is stable (with 20 or more in the circle) and our various committees meet regularly with very committed members. We continue to be pleased that newer attenders are active in the life and work of the Meeting.

Four specific areas of internal support have continued to hold and nurture our meeting during the year:

- We have enjoyed a well-attended monthly Meeting for Learning that begins with a community potluck followed by worship, a brief formal presentation related to Quaker faith and practice, and then small group sharing time on the topic.
- Following in the footsteps of our monthly “Let Your Life Speak” presentations (which allowed meeting members and attenders to share something of their life and faith journey), we started up monthly “Leadings” presentations which give each of us an opportunity to talk about the ways we have been and are currently being led. The opportunity to get to know Friends in this way has been a joy to us.
- Our clerk has written and distributed a weekly one-page “Friendly Flyer” to members of the community that includes a brief reflection/message, a meeting calendar, Quaker query, inspirational quote, community events, and a link to an interesting website.
- Most weeks after worship during the first part of the year, the clerk or a member of Ministry & Counsel shared a short 3-5 minute “Quaker Tidbit” that includes helpful information for newcomers—and reminders for regular attenders—about Quaker faith and practice, testimonies, organizations, etc. After a number of months when very few tidbits were offered, Ministry and Counsel is discerning how to reenergize the process.

Our men's group for spiritual nurture has met continuously biweekly for the past eleven years. A women's spiritual nurture group met occasionally during the year and are now meeting regularly every month. The Friendly Bible Study group, active for 3-4 years, met regularly until the summer, when it was laid down. Two or three small spiritual nurture or prayer groups continue to meet regularly.

In May, our Peace and Social Concerns Committee was active in creating a very successful and well attended Alternatives to Violence workshop co-sponsored by our Meeting and the local Unitarians. Several members of the Meeting also attended public hearings about the Navy's use of public parks for war games/training.

During the year, we have been encouraged by and grateful for some of our members working to promote Civility First (a group dedicated to building a community where people who have differing views are treated civilly and with respect) and in October we approved signing the Civility First Pledge.

Our meeting continued to provide support through an Anchor Committee for a member's leadership and ministry with *Way of the Spirit: retreats and learning for compassionate action*, an extended program in Quaker spirituality for Quakers and ecumenical participants in the Pacific Northwest.

A good number of our members are engaged in wider Quaker interests and ministry. In September, one of our members facilitated a weekend retreat on Deepening Spiritual Practice for the Central Coast Monthly Meeting (California). Another member facilitated a series of workshops on Aging with Grace, Courage & Wisdom. One member leads a regular meditation and sharing group. Another member provides leadership in our Washington State Quaker lobby work and our national Friend's Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) work. One member represented our monthly meeting at a fall Quaker Consultation at Ben Lomond Quaker Center. Several members and attenders continue to be active in climate change work, and another member was invited to speak about Quakers to our local Unitarian Universalist congregation. Several members attended one or more regional Yearly Meetings.

In order to recognize and support leadings, our meeting approved money in our budget that can be requested by members of our meeting. Those requests go to Ministry and Counsel, who report to Meeting for Business for consideration.

Our monthly meeting, along with Port Townsend Monthly Meeting, planned a successful fall Quarterly Meeting and several members provided leadership and helped with key parts of the weekend.

Our meeting continued its collaboration with several other churches on Whidbey who are members of the Greening Congregations Collaborative. One of our members meets regularly with the group as our Meeting's representative and provides reports about activities. As a meeting, we have approved co-sponsorship of some GCC events.

Although we are still a small meeting, we enjoy a growing life-giving balance of worship, education, and social action that support us individually and as a community.

A challenge in the coming year is to explore ways to become better known in the community and to invite others to share our Quaker faith and practice.

Submitted by
Jim Hall, clerk
Whidbey Island Friends Meeting
(Approved at the April 22, 2018 Meeting for Business)