

*State of the Meeting*

In 2013, Worship and Ministry started spiritual life sharing groups, where 4 of us meet in peoples' homes, as a way to deepen individual connections throughout the meeting. Gratitude was expressed by some for this opportunity to gather, while others felt a loss that not all sharing groups gelled and continued. Adult education programs are held on Third Sundays, where we may have a discussion of topics concerning Quaker life and witness, and also be introduced to a member's ministry in the world.

Our Peace, Earth Care, and Social Witness committee has had a challenge with inconsistent participation and changing issues to address from month to month. As the year unfolded, the committee regained focus under new leadership.

The library is doing well, buying new books, including heritage Quaker classics. Getting them back from borrowers has been more of a challenge.

The retreat in May 2013 and the Twelfth Month Gathering in December 2013 both drew large numbers of participants. Both occasions were successful beyond our expectations, with many people saying that they enjoyed the community atmosphere. Our retreat doubled in attendance from 2012, this year welcoming 55 adults and 19 children. One reason for this is that there are financial resources for people who previously could not afford to attend, through Strawberry Creek's own system of allowing all persons to register, regardless of ability to pay the full fee. Those who participated in the retreat enjoyed finding creative ways to commune and share, as the schedule did not include a large number of programmed events.

Historically, Strawberry Creek Meeting has been focused inward, offering covered silences and deep worship, as well as spiritual programs for our children. However, our Worship and Ministry Committee has also offered clearness and anchoring committees, which support individuals in their work in the wider world on an extended basis. There is an emphasis on helping members develop ministries and on discovering ways to nurture and support them.

Our Meeting, in committees and as a whole, has had many discussions about "what is our corporate witness?" We continue to foster projects such as our Dime-a-Gallon fund, which offers grants to groups working to reduce the impact of fossil fuels on our environment. The Oakland Quaker Worship Group attendees have for the past year supported the weekly Nightwalk associated with the Oakland Ceasefire/Lifeline to Healing program. Many of us have causes that we work for individually; the question remains, is there a new Strawberry Creek witness struggling to be born?

As we continue our searching about whether to obtain a permanent site, we have had many discussions about the resources we have ready for such a purchase and resources (mostly human) and time we have already spent in finding way to proceed. The Site Committee continued to weigh options and offer possible solutions to the Meeting.

The death of long-time member Carolyn Marks brought Strawberry Creek Meeting a bequest. The Meeting devised a thoughtful and thorough process to decide how to use

these funds in the spirit of our departed member. We brought to business meeting two proposals concerning the use of the bequest. The largest one concerns facilitating yearly joint projects between Woolman Semester students and participants in the Youth Spirit Artworks program, which empowers homeless and low-income youth. SCMM will also initiate FGC's Quaker Quest process for our Meeting.

We understand, that we are part of a larger movement and that Quakers as a national religious group are losing membership. Our membership numbers are 99, with 4 new members and 2 requesting transfers or leaving for other religious communities.

In conclusion, Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting continues to bring together and nurture people open to noticing how Spirit moves among us and eager to engage in the world.

Respectfully submitted,

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