

In 2016, we were encouraged by Callid Keefe-Perry, Intermountain Yearly Meeting Keynote Speaker, to focus our State of the Meeting Report on the query: How has Truth prospered among us in the past year? The query challenges us to engage in a more deeply seasoned conversation about the movement of Spirit in our meeting.

Gila Friends have been active in leadership and participation in local, regional and yearly meeting in the past year. On a typical First Day, anywhere from 6-15 gather to worship. There was a large turn-out from our meeting for both New Mexico Regional and Intermountain Yearly Meeting gatherings. There are 26 members. Ed Anthes has asked to be released from membership, after many years of absence living in Vermont. Friend Jim McQuaide moved to Maine for health reasons, where he attends meeting as a Sojourning Friend. A third Friend, Dorothy Pine, has also moved to be closer to family, while retaining her membership in Gila Friends. We have been blessed with visitors and new attenders, so our numbers have remained fairly constant.

Over the past year, our community has consciously chosen to reach deeper into our collective sense of the Spirit. We have had active participation by most attenders in monthly adult education. The first three months focused on prayer, sharing our prayer practices and fruits of prayer in our daily lives. After regional meeting, we have watched Quaker Speak video segments, a project of *Friends Journal*, followed by worship sharing. Friends who participated in the School of the Americas Watch Convergence in Tucson and Nogales shared their pictures and experience of the Truth with us. Additionally, Ministry and Oversight provides queries for Third Sunday worship sharing during the last half of Meeting for Worship. This, too, has encouraged sharing by those who rarely speak in meeting.

These activities have deepened the spiritual life and the connection among us in our community. We are more accepting of the diversity of the naming of the Spirit/God/Spiritual Authority/Holy Power/The Inward Teacher/Jesus/Creator among us, discovering that where language limits us, the Spirit expands us. We seem to have been drawn closer by sharing our unique experiences, while experiencing acceptance from one another. When the conversation was avoided for the sake of unity, that unity was surface deep only. Now that unity has a greater substance to it. We hope to continue this deepening in the coming year.

We have written a “Fair Share” letter, to be updated and sent annually after the approval of the annual budget. The letter has served to remind Friends that we value their contribution and participation in the meeting community. The letter also helped us to reach out to members from whom we have not heard in some time, and we received a heartwarming response. We have tried to engage with those who have been inactive, trying to keep our membership rolls up-to-date in order to reflect a deeper integrity about who we are.

Active members and attenders are all engaged in participation and responsibility in the meeting at a level at which they are able. We struggle with how to keep the responsibilities manageable for our small community. We have continued to be active in spirit-led social concerns in our community and beyond. (List attached) New this year, has been the extension of our definition of community to include gathering for meeting with Las Cruces and El Paso Friends. We hope to continue that mutual outreach in the coming year.

We have faith that our community will continue to grow in the Light in 2017.

State of the Meeting Report for 2016, Gila Friends Meeting – Summary of Events

January

- Two Gila Friends assisted with youth advocacy workshop in Santa Fe

March

- Passed a minute in support of United Nations Resolution 70/48
- Approved cosigning of a letter from the Romero Institute requesting that Pope Francis revoke the three 15th century papal bulls that promulgated the Doctrine of Discovery

April

- Memorial service for Elizabeth Simon
- Many members attended regional meeting in Albuquerque

June

- Many Members attended IMYM

July

- Gila Friends participation in Silver city's 4th of July parade. We organized a peace coalition and were joined by many community groups and individuals of all ages.

August

- 30th annual commemoration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings. Attendance included Friends from Las Cruces and El Paso and many community members.
- Gila Friends sponsored an address by Jill Hruby, President and Director of Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque. The talk, titled “Sandia: A Vibrant, Multi-mission Engineering National Laboratory” was cosponsored by the Western New Mexico University, Gila/Mimbres Community Radio, Gila Resources Information Project and the Silver City Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.
- It was intended that Gila Friends Meeting would, once again, have an outreach presence at the Western New Mexico University Welcome Back Bash but the event was rained out.

September

- Approved Fair Share Letter template regarding financial support and membership in the Gila Monthly Meeting. This letter is to be sent annually following the approval of the budget.

October

- World Quaker Day was celebrated with worship and refreshments. The public was invited.
- Two people from Gila Friends Meeting attended the convergence on the US/ Mexican Border in Arizona which was sponsored by School of the Americas Watch.
- Friends approved the process, form letters and response forms for contacting inactive members and, when necessary, releasing them from membership.
- 5 Members of Gila Friend Meeting attended a special 5th Sunday joint meeting with Las Cruces and El Paso Meeting Friends in El Paso.

November

- Approved revision of the duties and responsibilities Gila Friends Meetings Officers, Representatives and Committees
 - 1 Member attended the FCNL annual Lobbying effort in Washington DC and hand delivered letters to our senators and congressman.
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