

SANTA FE MONTHLY MEETING OF FRIENDS
STATE OF THE MEETING - 2017

Twenty sixteen was a regenerative time in Santa Fe Monthly Meeting, supported by contributions from old-timers and newcomers, members and attenders, and parents who brought their children and enlivened our worship, First Day School and activities. 2016 was the first full year with a clerk who came to the meeting from the outside, and she brought new ways of looking at faith and practice within the meeting. This was reflected in consistency within the business meetings, new ways of looking at procedures and practices, and more. After a period of quietude, it seemed like we were regrouping, regathering, and recreating ourselves.

Several smaller-group activities were offered in 2016 (and continue into 2017). The Light Group, inspired by Rex Ambler's work, offered an opportunity for smaller-group sharing and worship within a set structure, while our Spiritual Life Sharing groups continued to meet monthly as well. Those interested gathered every other Sunday for chanting, which delighted many people arriving early for Meeting. We also offered two retreats in 2016: one was a training workshop sponsored in cooperation with the Friends Committee on National Legislation about effective lobbying and activism for younger Friends and interested community members; and the other, our second in what will hopefully be an annual event focusing on different aspects of Quaker worship, organized by an ad-hoc committee of SFMM members and attenders. This one-day, in-town retreat drew members and attenders from Santa Fe's two Meetings and from worship groups under our care up to 100 miles away. Participants said they grew in their relationships with the Light and with each other.

Our First Day School programs—were reinvigorated by an influx of new young Friends. Monthly jaunts to local Canyon Road businesses strengthened our relationship with the immediate community and gave older young Friends an opportunity to spend time relating over tea, treats, artwork, and more. Trick or Treat for UNICEF, a yearly event, saw costumed kids staffing a bedecked table and raised nearly \$300; young Friends also prepared holiday gifts for clients of the local homeless shelter. Children from toddler to teens participated in the First Day School programs, frequently assisted by parents as well as paid helpers.

Committee membership remained a challenge for the Santa Fe Monthly Meeting. Our Peace and Social Justice Committee revised its structure to include opportunities for more Friends to participate; other committees limped along with only two or three members. This was somewhat ameliorated by several ad-hoc committees formed with specific purposes in mind: the retreat committee, one to make the Meetinghouse more welcoming of people with different abilities, etc.

As is perhaps the case in many Meetings, we continued to bond over food: our monthly potluck provided a wonderful chance for many people to gather, talk, and partake of tasty delicacies. Much like the parable of the loaves and fishes, there was always enough to eat no matter how many people chose to bring food! We also enjoyed a Meeting for Muffins between the 9:00 and 11:00 Meetings every fifth Sunday, and the 9:00 Meeting had an active Lucretia Mott Breakfast program that graced local restaurants with “primed Quakers” monthly. Food prior to Business Meeting nourished our bodies and souls, and increased attendance.

We were fortunate to have some very committed members and attenders spearheading extra-Meeting activities: there remained an active participation in serving the Interfaith Homeless Shelter, a strong support and commitment to helping the Mountain Friends Camp, and an ongoing support for Santa Fe's Sanctuary City status. Many members also joined together in non-meeting-sanctioned activities, particularly political ones.

There seemed to be a subtle level of warmth and tenderness in our Meetings for Worship, bringing a new sense of community to the Meeting as a whole. Although we were saddened by the loss of several elders in 2016, others rose to the challenge and became elders themselves. The Meeting was also blessed with an influx of new attenders, bringing with them a new sense of energy and enthusiasm. We saw respect for change in our meeting, with fluctuations of quietism and ministry connected to our civic life.

The Meetings under our care continued to flourish. Quaker House Preparative Meeting completed its capital campaign, and worship groups in Taos, Las Vegas, and Tres Piedras continued to meet regularly, occasionally joined by visiting Friends from Santa Fe.

We found that having a longer period of silent worship before beginning the Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business made a significant difference in the meeting's flow and tenor. Perhaps counterintuitively, the meetings also moved faster!

We're looking forward to 2017: upcoming programs include our teens helping elders with technology; members and attenders gathering for pop-up dinners; and sessions on death and dying. These are all in the first quarter; let's see what the rest of the year will bring!

Santa Fe Monthly Meeting of Friends lost two to death and gained three members in 2016. Therefore our total membership for 2016, as of the last day of that year, was 73 members, of whom 42 live in Santa Fe, city or county, and 18 live outside Santa Fe but in New Mexico. 13 members live out of state.