State of the Meeting Reports – 2018

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Draft State of the Meeting Report for 2017

Sanctuary means a sacred or holy place and also a place of comfort and safety. In becoming a Sanctuary Congregation in 2017, Albuquerque Monthly Meeting sought to provide comfort and safety to a friend who faces enormous risk and sacrifice. This has given us opportunity to recognize the responsibility that privilege presents in uncertain times. It was an uncomfortable year in many ways, amid threats to peace and justice and questions of how to address them. Within our community we also felt stresses and strains as we attended to conflicting needs and perspectives on our processes, but even in the tumult of our uncomfortable moments, we often found the sacred in times of quiet worship, in our labors together and in moments of celebration.

At the beginning of 2017 and at various moments throughout the year, we asked ourselves if we had finished our indefinite Period of Rejuvenation. While we seem to be back to business as usual, we reminded ourselves to attend to the concerns related to “strength and Light” that initiated that process, and several Friends voiced desire to abide in a spirit of renewal and rejuvenation.

In January and February Meetings for Worship for Business, we minuted our continued intention to attend to racial justice and undoing white supremacy, support for immigrants, and we asked our Clerk to join with others in witness consistent with our recorded Minutes related to peace and justice. In March, this renewed urgency to social witness and action manifested in a long and gathered Meeting for Worship for Business where we committed to joining the new Sanctuary Movement and welcomed our sister, Emma Membreño, to make our Meetinghouse her “home” protected from imminent risk of deportation. With this we embarked on a challenging journey of accompaniment that has brought new connections with faith communities and others who support sanctuary, and friendship with a courageous woman who copes with confinement to our building with grace and spirit. Her husband, Robert, has also become part of our family, as he accommodates, with his wife, the loss of privacy and life choices to protect her safety.

Our newly established Sanctuary Task Force attended to details of maintaining our Sanctuary, to Emma’s daily comfort and safety, and also provided support for another Sanctuary family at First Congregational United Church of Christ in Albuquerque. The Sanctuary ministry has strengthened our connection with the New Mexico Faith Coalition for Immigrant Justice, which has trained hundreds of accommodators, including many AMM Friends, to create the corps of volunteers who provide essential 24/7 presence for the two Albuquerque Sanctuaries. The Meeting’s commitment to Sanctuary has attracted new attenders and prompted others who had grown distant from AMM to return to regular participation in the life of the Meeting. While the outlook for immigrant rights often seems gloomy, we sustain Light and liveliness with celebrations, loving friendship, and vibrancy characterized by Emma’s artwork hanging in our entryway.

Other work of the the Meeting continues to be carried out by small but active committees and individuals. Nominating, among the smallest with one active member most of this year, expressed gratitude for the on-going service of those who continue to volunteer.

Children’s Programming Committee, led by dedicated parents and a few Friends without young children, provided First Day School activities from the "Quaker Kids Bring the Peace" and “Growing in the Light” curricula of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for about 17 young people of various ages. The committee brought young families and other Friends together for two
well-attended camping trips and our annual Easter egg hunt and potluck--times of fellowship and celebration that offered opportunities to know each other better. Sharing the downstairs space with Emma, our children have enjoyed sharing gifts and conversing in Spanish with her, not yet as formal curriculum but as perhaps more salient lessons in the meaning of community.

Adult Education, in collaboration with Worship and Ministry and others, continued to provide programming before Meeting for Worship each First Day, completing our nearly two-year examination of our Faith and Practice through discussion and worship-sharing. Adult Ed also initiated a year-long book study on Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship, examining the historical relations of Quakers and African-Americans. The Contemplative Reading group continued to draw active participation in deep sharing on Brother Lawrence’s The Practice of the Presence of God and then Rabindranath Tagore’s Gitanjali (A Prayer Offering of Song).

Peace and Social Concerns sought to define its role and process in enriching the collective and individual activism in the Meeting. The committee was particularly drawn to work concerned with conserving and protecting water, and supporting indigenous rights to this precious resource. Among reflections on committee practice, PSC resolved to bring greater involvement in Right Sharing discernment, sought thoughtful and measured communication, and shared the helpful insight that Spirit does not move smoothly through electronic devices.

Building and Grounds attended to increased maintenance needs of our building now in constant use, managed Meetinghouse scheduling on our newly designed website, and nurtured several healthy garden beds. Hospitality also stepped up to the influx of newcomers and coordinated potluck set-up and clean-up while reducing our paper and plastic waste. Sunday morning Greeters welcomed and oriented visitors while adjusting to new procedures for keeping our Sanctuary secure. The introduction of some Spanish language pamphlets enhanced the Greeter’s potential for introducing newcomers to Quaker practice.

Attending to the pastoral care of our community, Oversight and Counsel responded to care and Friend in Need financial requests, as well as membership requests, drawing Friends together for as many as eight concurrently active Care or Clearness Committees. Our membership totalled 98 at year’s end, having welcomed two new members by transfer and two as new Quakers. The Meeting received other membership requests still in process.

Our community lost some members and attenders as well; some moved away; two attenders who had been active at different times died in 2017; some Friends we saw much less as age or illness made it difficult to attend or life and interests took some different turns.

In the midst of this busy, eventful year, Worship and Ministry continued its role supporting the spiritual health of the Meeting. This involved care-taking of the Meeting for Worship, leading bi-monthly worship-sharing, holding two Memorial Meetings, and supporting the formation of a Compassionate Listening practice group. Perhaps most intensive, though, was the extended process to help the Meeting to decide how to close Meeting for Worship and the timing for Meeting for Worship for Business. While these could be seen as trivial matters, they exposed differences in expectations and identification of individual and collective needs. W&M sought to provide space for deep listening and creative problem-solving. It was challenging to know that no options would fully satisfy everyone. However, it was heartening to work through the process and to recognize our capacity to make changes towards being more inclusive, rather than holding to what we were used to. In that spirit we also took up the practice of using microphones during Meeting for Worship for Business. While this has taken some adjustment, we recognize the importance of hearing each other.

Towards the end of the year, an Ad Hoc Committee was created to examine what elements of the rejuvenation process identified in the Temporary Committee report of 2015 still needed our attention. Also at the end of the year, an informal Whiteness Study Group formed to
work on actions consistent with the Meeting’s Minutes on confronting structural racism. Our library and our website have been enriched with resources for learning about the impacts of Whiteness, white supremacy and racism; the Study Group seeks to provide opportunities to engage with each other on these issues. These are examples of our efforts to hold ourselves accountable and follow through on our commitments, even when the work is difficult and uncomfortable.

We finished 2017 with the usual holiday flurry and more. AMM’s Thanksgiving potluck was greatly expanded to include Sanctuary volunteers. December began with a record-breaking 20 recorded Minutes at Meeting for Worship for Business. Our children kept busy at year’s end with our traditions of simple gifts and holiday cards. And we are creating new traditions: On Christmas Eve Sunday adults and children all worshipped together in song more than silence and on New Year’s Eve evening a number of Friends renewed a New Year’s Vigil tradition, gathering for worship and fellowship.

Albuquerque Friends Meeting continues our journey seeking love, truth and community, learning that these are among the most difficult paths to follow faithfully, accepting that we will stumble, but opening to Light which illuminates our way.

Boulder Monthly Meeting activities for 2017-2018 combined to foster spiritual growth while developing internal and external community relations to move forward on Friends’ principles. As the second largest Monthly Meeting in Intermountain Yearly Meeting (IMYM), Boulder Friends share a wide variety of gifts and passions which help to move the Meeting forward.

We used and developed these gifts through a large number of committees who work on everything from maintaining our building and grounds and supporting the spiritual growth of our children to working nationally on environmental issues and standing to recognize and resolve injustices inflicted on indigenous peoples and people of color. Our committees work together to support individual leadings, as well as issues that are Meeting wide concerns.

Some Committees form the foundation upon which much of our Meeting is able to move forward, while developing a community based on shared experiences of meeting the needs of others. Our Nominating Committee, our Finance Committee and our Building and Grounds Committee perform work that we need and depend upon:

Our Nominating Committee discerned whom to invite to serve in the various nominated positions that the Meeting needs each year (21 for 2018-19). It also provided descriptions of non-nominated (volunteer) positions and encourages the community to serve where they feel called. They endeavored to make members and attenders aware of the many committees and individual kinds of work needed for our community to thrive.

Our Finance Committee prepared the annual budget, reviewed the Treasurer’s reports (providing assistance and advice as needed), sent an annual donation appeal to members and attenders, updated the Treasurer’s Manual, improved the budget process to make it more accessible and understandable, and conducted two Program Hours (Finances 101 and 102) to help the Meeting better understand what we do with money and how we make and document those actions.

The Building and Grounds Committee did major landscaping and building repairs, along with regular upkeep and routine maintenance. They met with Chemically Sensitive members to develop an Approved Chemicals policy for use of cleaning supplies for the Meetinghouse and began stocking same. They upgraded garbage service, outdoor lighting, and their operating and capital budgeting processes, renewed the snow removal contract. They replaced items as needed and managed relationships with our neighbors and New Horizons School (which rents part of our building to host a bi-lingual preschool.) They conducted 6 workdays which encouraged members and attenders to contribute physical assistance in keeping our Meeting location clean, repaired, and welcoming.
Our Service Committee focused on meeting the practical needs of our Meeting community (transportation, food, support during illnesses, etc.) and supporting Boulder’s homeless population through regular cooking at the Boulder Homeless Shelter, distributing over-the-counter medications and hygiene products, and year round collection of socks for the homeless, along with sponsoring a potluck that raised almost $900 for supplies for Echo House, an emergency shelter for families with children. Our Meeting also collects non-perishable food for the Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAAA) in Boulder.

Efforts to foster spiritual growth and develop spiritual community

We support spiritual growth and knowledge through various program hours and sharing spiritual journeys, which we videotape for our library and to share the audio on the members-only portion of our website.

The Meeting has continued to endeavor (through program hours, threshing sessions, meetings with individuals, etc.) to ensure that all members are able to fully participate. We continue to work on listening to each other and to slow down in our decision making in hopes of ensuring that everyone feels welcome to speak their minds and share their concerns as we make decisions. We continue to work with members who feel excluded due to chemical sensitivities and others who have felt we make decisions with insufficient seasoning.

Our Ministry and Worship (M&W) Committee conducted a Quakerism 101 course, published short articles on spiritual matters (Q-Tips) in our monthly newsletter The Miscellany, changed how we share joys and sorrows in worship, and held program hours on subjects such as Elder Wisdom. We welcomed John Calvi, Quaker healer, for a weekend in February. We’ve recently begun experimenting with a Fourth Wednesday evening worship period followed by soup and a chat with the clerk.

We continued to develop our spiritual community with a Fall Picnic for Meeting fellowship, a Christmas Eve gathering for worship and singing, followed by a series of Spring potlucks to consider queries on the theme “How does Worship help us survive in difficult times?”

Our Oversight and Membership (O&M) Committee oversees care of the membership, coordinating with the Service Committee and the M&W Committee as needed. This year, they convened 6 Clearness Committees for Membership and recommended membership for Margaret Wallace, Molly Greacen, Leslie Myers, Kevin Moore, Sandra Bierman, and Grant Marylander. They also facilitated transfer of membership for Conner Middlemann and Peter Woodrow. Last fall, they held a welcoming party for the new members and transfers; about 50 people attended the fall potluck supper to learn more about our new members and to enjoy fellowship.
They reviewed the requirements for a Quaker Chaplaincy and recommended that the Meeting endorse Grant Marylander as a hospital chaplain, which it did.

They organized and led a Program Hour on Membership, which featured a panel of Boulder Friends who told of their experiences in making the decision to join (or not yet to join) the Meeting. They began a review of the procedures for becoming a member of the Meeting.

Our Library Committee continues to provide books, periodicals, pamphlets, DVDs and CDs to members and attenders. The Spiritual Book Group continues to meet and remains open to new attenders.

Several Spiritual Formation and SNUG groups continue to meet.

The Religious Education Committee coordinates services to our children, whose attendance is small and inconsistent. Meeting implemented a set of guidelines meant to keep our children safe from those who might harm them. Childcare is provided for program hours, business meetings, and other special events, though the number of children using this feature is small.

We have gained a few new families and the K-5 class has seen as many as 9 attendees.

We have had several “Intergenerational Game Nights” with food and games, which were well attended and fun. Second Sunday is reserved for teens to hear and interact with an adult from our meeting and there is a “walk to a coffee shop” once a month. Both programs are usually well attended.

Our Higher Education Scholarship Committee stays in touch with our college students who have received small grants from the Meeting. This year, we were delighted to award 6 scholarships for $650 per semester to our Senior Young Friends.

Our Fellowship Committee has expanded its reach into the community. In addition to the normal tasks of supplying coffee, teas, and snacks after the 10:00 Meeting for Worship, they now provide coffee and hot water for tea after our smaller 8:30 Meeting for Worship to encourage attenders to mingle and meet with other members of our community. The Committee continued with summer barbecues this summer, sharing discussions about Meeting-wide issues following hamburgers, hot dogs, and grilled Portobello mushrooms. They host a light lunch (e.g., soup) before Meeting for Business every month and hosted the Christmas and Easter potlucks. They provided refreshments for several memorial services as we said goodbye to: Ralph Lugbill, Nelder (Med) Medrud, Ken Spies, and Paul Wehr.
This year, we also hosted the IMYM Arrangements Committee in January.

Our new Welcoming and Outreach Committee works to offer support to new attenders and to let the greater Boulder community know we are here. A number of projects are planned for the coming year.

Our Web Advisory Committee continued to make usability improvements and added more content to our website [https://www.boulderfriendsmeeting.org/](https://www.boulderfriendsmeeting.org/) this year, including a blog page, a Spiritual Journeys page with links to audio files, a Clerk’s Corner, and an Announcements page. We also have a Facebook page [https://www.facebook.com/boulderfriendsmeeting/](https://www.facebook.com/boulderfriendsmeeting/) which is going to be updated by our Welcoming and Outreach Committee in the coming year.

Our Quaker Activities Committee awards financial aid for Quaker events to enable Friends to attend. Traditionally, this has meant providing assistance to people attending the Quaker Women’s Retreat, InterMountain Yearly Meeting, the Mountain Friends Camp, and occasional national events such as FGC. This year, we provided $7,500 to assist Friends. We are not sure how this will be impacted by IMYM’s change to “Pay as Led.” With the belief that our children are our future, support for Mountain Friends Camp increased this year.

- Stands taken on Friends’ principles
- Relations with community and other religious groups

Program hours relating to these subjects included:

Healing the Heart of Democracy (based on Parker Palmer’s book);

Immigration & Sanctuary presented by Diana Maiden from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder;

Spirituality in Action;

Steve Wheelock presenting “Storytelling perspective from a Delaware/Lenape Indian living in Boulder”;

Quaker Voluntary Service (with Damon Motz-Storey discussing a possible Quaker House in Denver).

We became a congregational member of the Metro Denver Sanctuary Coalition and many Meeting members and attenders have contributed time and money to support Ingrid Encalada Latorre, who is in sanctuary at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder. We also become a congregational member of Green Faith Circles, a relatively new interfaith group dedicated to environmental concerns. Our Meeting also sells grocery and gift cards and donates 5% of their face value to the Denver chapter of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC).
Our Indigenous Peoples Concerns (IPC) committee coordinated with our Peace and Social Justice Committee, the Boulder “Showing up for Racial Justice,” the Boulder Unitarian Universalist Church Racial Justice Ministry, and the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center to organize the presentation “Are We Living Racial Justice” by Debbie Irving (author of the book, *Waking up White*) and Reverend Dr. Dawn Riley Duval.

Boulder Meeting, as a whole and in committees, continued to support the leading of Paula Palmer in conducting Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples ministry, including workshops and screenings of the documentary film “Two Rivers,” which has led to formation of the group “Right Relations Boulder.” Paula traveled with two local Native women to the Southern Arapaho reservation in Oklahoma and the Northern Arapaho reservation in Wyoming to learn how they would like to build relationships with the people of Boulder, since we live on their traditional lands. Boulder Meeting included advocating for rights of Indigenous peoples as one of its priorities for legislative lobbying by FCNL.

The IPC Committee also continued study of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and directed the distribution of Meeting funds to assist several Native American organizations.

Peace and Social Justice Committee members focused on funding and Meeting involvement in the following areas: Race and Immigration Issues, Peace and Disarmament Issues, Environmental Concerns, Healthcare, Mental Health, and Homelessness issues. They worked on campaigns for universal healthcare, local environmental issues, accessibility issues in public buildings (including the need for access for those who are chemically sensitive), disarmament, anti-racism, etc.

Submitted by Stan Grotegut, Clerk

Compiled by Barbara Stephens, Associate Clerk
Cascabel Worship Group
State of the WG  2017

We continue to gather at community homes for worship weekly. First Sunday is almost always at Pat Corbett's home and a potluck follows. Normally this is our most attended Meeting. The potluck always draws additional neighbors for food and visiting. Second Sunday is hosted by Elna Otter and Jim McPherson; third Sunday is usually at the Thomas' home. Bob Evans hosts fourth Sunday and Anna Lands fifth, if it occurs.

Members of Religious Society of Friends are Pat Corbett and Charlie Thomas (Pima), Mike Gray (Ft. Collins, CO) and Woody Hume (Hawaii). Meetings range from 2 or 3 to 20 attenders in total.

There are occasional visitors. Pima Meeting members occasionally join us. And this past year Laura Melvin of Fairhope (AL) Friends Meeting visited our Meeting for the second time.

Ministry is usually short and contributed by both Friends and attenders. After Meeting for Worship, there is sharing on a variety of local issues – the community garden; ecological happenings; Mike Gray's service with the Seri Indians; global warming and, this year, political topics. We have also begun reading from Advices and Queries on many 3rd Meeting occasions.

The spiritual life of the meeting continues to open to a variety of concerns, immigration and border issues among the most prominent concerns.

The life of the Meeting continues to be an important spiritual component of our community.

Charlie Thomas for Cascabel Worship Group
STATE OF THE COCHISE FRIENDS WORSHIP GROUP

March 11, 2018

To Friends Everywhere,

Cochise Friends Worship Group is set within Friends Southwest Center near McNeal, AZ. We are grateful that our worship group has remained steady over the past year and continues to meet on a weekly basis year round. We continue to enjoy fellowship and offer monthly worship sharing times. We experience a sense of unity in our worship times together.

Vocal ministry is offered occasionally during worship along with our expectant waiting in the Spirit. This vocal ministry is heartfelt and welcomed by whomever is sitting with us. We welcome new attenders as well as Friends away from home.

Our attendance varies, but there are most often 10-12 who attend worship. In the past year we prayerfully reflected on the possibility of pursuing Monthly meeting status. After two worship discussion sessions and much other discernment, we found unity in the decision to remain as we are, a strong worship group with committed members and faithful attenders. We acknowledge that our status as a worship group does not preclude any among us from participating in the wider world of Friends.

We were happy to host several visitor from the Pima Monthly meeting and are grateful for deepening personal connections. We also met together with friends in the Patagonia area for worship, fellowship and education.

We thank Peggy Lynn Crook for her four years of service as convener of our worship group. Our current convener is Sue Thiem. Ruthe Schoder-Ehri is contact person and recorder and Eve Rosenberg will support and assist Sue as needed.

Ruthe can be reached at RutheAlaska@gmail.com and (520)732-6657.

In loving community,

Sue Thiem
**State of the Meeting Report**  
*Colorado Springs Friends Meeting, May 2018*

**Joys**
This past year, Colorado Springs Friends Meeting has nurtured one another and sought Truth together in the spirit of Friends. In meeting for worship, we often experience individually and corporately the power of silent worship and the rich blessings of community.

Last June, we had the joy of celebrating the marriage of a long-time member under the care of Meeting. During the Christmas season, for the first time in many years, we held a delightful sing-along accompanied by several talented musicians, including our oldest attender, a 93-year old gifted pianist.

**Leadings**
The Meeting approved joining a Sanctuary Coalition comprised of two other local churches. Several Friends have been closely involved with the activities of this coalition, which included harboring a refugee adult and child for a three month period in one of the coalition church buildings. It is anticipated that this important work will continue.

Our Peace and Social Concerns committee has been especially active this past year, and has taken the lead on the Meeting examining the important issue regarding white privilege. They have also sponsored several letter writing sessions to encourage us to address our concerns to our governmental representatives.

Many individuals within the Meeting continue to live their faith through action in a variety of ways. Below are but a few examples:

- One Friend founded *Poetry Heals*, a nonprofit that provides therapeutic writing classes to teen trauma survivors and others who are incarcerated, homeless, institutionalized or in recovery.
- Another Friend continues her ministry by bringing music and song to women in prison
- Many Friends participated in demonstrations and actions that uphold Friends' values of women's equality, justice, the environment and opposition to gun violence. Others served as delegates to local political assemblies.

**Learning and Nurturing Activities**
This year, a "Quakerism 101" class focused on reading and discussing Leonard Kenworthy's book *Quakerism: A Study Guide*. We also have a long-standing "occasional" book group that meets on each fifth Sunday of the month and focuses on Friendly fiction and nonfiction titles. This year, we sponsored a "Centering Prayer" workshop, which was facilitated by members of the local Benedictine community, and were pleased that it was attended by the wider Colorado Springs community. The Meeting continues to have an annual "Soup & Sharing" event, where Friends gather for food, fellowship and worship-sharing around a topic of interest.

**Challenges**
Our membership has remained small but stable at 15, although we continue to attract new attenders who enrich our community. Most First Days, we have 15-20 people in attendance. We regret that often no children are in attendance, but none-the-less have teachers and lessons in the ready. This last year, we adopted a policy to help insure the safety of children based on a yearly meetings adoption of a similar policy.

**Looking Forward**
As a Meeting, we have much to be grateful for this past year, and are optimistic about the future. We are exploring the idea of building an addition to our modest meeting house, but are just beginning to season this idea and discern whether the way will open for us to proceed.

Please tenderly hold us in the Light.
How has the Spirit been moving among us over the past year at Durango Friends Meeting? Once again, we recognize that this query represents a call to reflection and discernment. Perhaps, one way to think about how we’ve encountered the Spirit is to ask: how have we been lured out beyond our comfortable habits, patterns and routines? In what ways have we been led to enact love, justice or generosity?

Or, maybe we should reflect on the fruits of the Spirit? We know that we’ve been informed by the Spirit of God when love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control are made manifest. When, and under what conditions have we experienced this Divine energy? Finally, we suspect that a brush with the Spirit opens our hearts and minds in surprising ways, opens us to a kind of Life that we couldn’t have anticipated.

Our meeting is quite small and often very quiet during Meeting for Worship. Though we are quiet during Meeting for Worship, we’ve begun to share more, and to share more deeply when we gather at the rise of meeting. Because we are small, we are able to “go around the circle” and share about what’s really in our hearts. We share about things that have risen during meeting for worship, things that seem significant but did not quite bring us to our feet. We share joys and sorrows with one another, and we hold each other in the Light. The Spirit has invited us to open up this liminal space that is not quite worship, and not yet social hour, a space with depth and vulnerability. In this space, we minister to one another, listen deeply and, sometimes, share about our encounters with the Divine.

This is also the time when our Young Friends share with us about their First Day School discussion, which often challenges us and almost always disarms us with candor and authenticity. We are grateful for our dedicated First Day School teachers Ross and Rob and our insightful young Friends.

We’ve felt led to experiment by opening our meetinghouse for a variety of non-traditional purposes. We opened our meeting house for the purpose of providing guitar lessons to children, providing space for a Buddhist addiction recovery group, opening our kitchen to college students with leadings to prepare meals for people who are food insecure and for the training of therapy dogs.

We’ve continued to spend time together learning about the Quaker tradition and trying to understand how that tradition informs our contemporary Quaker life. Like Jacob, wrestling with the Divine Spirit, we’ve also wrestled with the tradition and have been challenged, nourished and baffled by the images and narratives that we’ve encountered.

We altered our Meeting for Worship schedule one Sunday a month in order to make it a bit easier for the folks in our Mancos worship group to worship with us in Durango. Though this proved to be somewhat challenging, somewhat uncomfortable, it’s been wonderful to see Friends that we wouldn’t have otherwise seen.

As a community of faith, we wondered how we might be more welcoming to folks who are LGBTQ. Though we have been an open and affirming community for many years, we considered how we might be more clear about our stance. We also wanted to better communicate to those who might visit us, that we offer safe space. In order to accomplish this we drafted an “open and affirming” statement that we placed prominently on our homepage.
Finally, we felt led to give financial support to various international, national and local causes including: Project Equal Chance, Mitrata Children’s Home, Mountain Friends Camp and Thrive. Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee felt led to assemble food boxes for the Manna Soup Kitchen and to support an individual in sanctuary at the Mancos United Methodist Church. We also contributed to Durango Christian Church’s effort to provide material support to folks who are homeless.

These are just some of the ways that we think that the Spirit has moved within and among us in the past year. We recognize that we are often distracted and don’t notice or attend to the movement and activity of the Spirit. May we be more attentive and attuned to the Presence of Grace in the coming year.
The El Paso Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends continues to meet at First Christian Church, 901 Arizona, Rm. 112, at 10 a.m. every First Day. We currently have nine (9) paid members, six of whom are active in the Meeting. We also have two regular attenders and several others who attend as time and circumstances permit. Our weekly attendance ranges from 4 to 10 and we are always delighted to see David Eley, traveling Quaker, when he makes his annual visit.

Cyndi Rains continues as our clerk, Rich Van Cleef is secretary, John Russell is treasurer, Vona Van Cleef does a monthly newsletter, and Connie Crawford is an FCNL representative. We were blessed to be able to welcome Ann Birch (formerly Dee Cameron) back into fellowship following a 2-year sojourn with her daughter’s family in a local Presbyterian congregation.

Our monthly study session of Pink Dandelion’s *The Quakers: a short introduction* concluded in May. Our study sessions took a summer sabbatical and we resumed by observing World Quaker Day on Oct. 1 by watching the QuakerSpeak video, “How Many Quakers are There in the World”, looking at the map showing the current distribution of Quakers around the world, and talking about other Quaker meetings we have attended over the years. Our most widely traveled Quaker turned out to be Johnny Johnson, who has worked with Quaker groups in Jamaica and Kenya. We used *Western Friend* discussion guides for our study sessions in November and December.

Our “5th Sunday Meeting for Eating” after Meeting for Worship tradition continues, with a special one on Oct. 29, 2017, to celebrate the 40th anniversaries of the El Paso and Las Cruces worship groups becoming official Monthly Meetings. We traveled to Las Cruces for worship and a potluck with Las Cruces Meeting at the La Cueva picnic area at Dripping Springs, part of the Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument.

Friends’ principles were sorely tried in the first year of the Trump administration and El Paso Quakers joined other El Pasans in the January Women’s March, the March for Science in the Spring, and the September rally against the Texas Legislature’s SB4, which would have required local law enforcement to check drivers’ immigration status during routine traffic stops.

Several of us traveled to Silver City in August to join Gila Meeting for their annual commemoration of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Connie Crawford and John Russell represented us at NMRM Regional Meeting in Durango in April and at FCNL’s lobbying session in the nation’s capital in November. Connie also attended the FCNL meeting in February 2018 to begin planning for gathering ideas for determining priorities for the next session of Congress. We also participate, as we can, in discussions on various topics with Pax Christi, the El Paso/Southern New Mexico InterFaith Alliance, the Border Network for Human Rights, Hope Border Institute, and the El Paso Social Justice Education Forum.

Holding all in the Light of God’s love, care, courage and wisdom.
Flagstaff Friends Meeting  
State of the Meeting Report for 2017

Attendance at Meeting for Worship has continued steady from last year with between 15 to 23 people attending Meeting for Worship on Sundays. In the past, Meeting for Worship for Business has been lightly attended. This year has seen considerable growth in this attendance with a range between 10 to 15 people staying for the Meetings for Business. The Meeting has benefited from this increase in input and insight about the business of the Meeting and also the greater understanding in the community of how the Meeting is structured and the benefits of using Quaker process.

We have people who attend Flagstaff Meeting regularly from as far away as Heber, Sedona and the Verde Valley. Many of these folks were part of the Verde Valley Worship group, which has been laid down. The dedication and desire to remain part of our community despite the long commute is a blessing that strengthens our Meeting. Several people from the Verde Valley gave the archive of the Worship group from 2004-2016 to the records of the Flagstaff Meeting to keep that effort from being forgotten. We have two new members, one who transferred from his former Meeting and one who went through the membership process in Flagstaff. After a long illness a well thought of member, Bob Eastburn, died in December.

To increase awareness as individuals and as a Meeting our education committee has been working through the year presenting a variety of well attended programs and events. The year started with the continuation of a series of meetings in people's homes to share a light supper and watch and discuss the “Jewels of Quakerism” videos. Our annual retreat in April was on the theme “Bridging Inward Light to Outward Action”. In the fall we revisited the Quakerism 101 program after a lapse of several years. These followed the format of the “Jewels of Quakerism” meetings. In November the Meeting sponsored a healing workshop with John Calvi that was open to other Meetings as well as our own. There were also visits and presentations by various speakers at the monthly potlucks throughout the year.

Work on the Meeting House continued with electrical improvements, replacement of an old water line and the addition of an indoor water shut off. The attic circulation was improved to reduce the ice dams on the roof. The new building committee spread out the workload so one person didn't have to take it all on. The building and grounds benefitted from our usual two annual work days. The garden continues to improve from the work of the garden committee.

The quality of worship is good. Meeting was presented with two concerns: the increasing number of people breaking the silence by coming into Meeting late and the dangers to the health of people with chemical sensitivities, primarily from people wearing fragrances. The Meeting couldn't reach unity on either concern so it was decided to season solutions and continue discernment while trying various ideas and paying close attention to the results. Our main goal was to strike a balance between the concerns and still be welcoming. After several tries and listening to input and suggestions we came to unity on solutions to both concerns.

At the end of 2016 the Meeting was inundated with requests for support and action by many organizations, groups and individuals from all over the country. This had started to diminish by the first part of the year. The concerns in the country and the Meeting have continued through the year. Our tradition as a Meeting has been to take little political action, but rather to support the concerns and leadings of individuals. We continue in this practice. We still help serve dinner at the Family Food Center once a month. Many of our members and attenders are active with social concerns that speak to them. For our size of Meeting a fairly large percentage participate in Arizona Half Yearly and Intermountain Yearly Meetings.
The Fort Collins Friends Meeting has 30 assessed Members and 29 Attenders. It should be noted that due to the number of members moving out of town, 10 are non-resident members. There are 19 regular attenders and 10 occasional attenders. There are usually 3 to 5 children of either members or attenders at meeting. The good news is that we are seeing new faces visiting our meeting.

As mentioned above 2017 saw a number of our members move out of town. As a result, populating our committees has sometimes been difficult. However, we have been blessed with newcomers who have more advanced computer skills which make our communications and visibility on the internet more accessible in this digital age.

Our first Day School continues to benefit from the assistance of students from the Occupational Therapy department at Colorado State University, a collaboration made possible through the unflagging efforts of one of our regular attenders who is employed by that department.

We continue to provided support to Faith Family Hospitality and help host several homeless families at the Trinity Lutheran Church. Our Meeting House has also become the meeting place for Veterans for Peace. Our clerk is also on the steering committee of ISAAC {Interfaith Sanctuary And Accompaniment Coalition} which is active in the wider Sanctuary movement in Northern Colorado. This has also given us an opportunity to meet others in the faith based community who are interested in issues of social justice.

Every January we continue to enjoy a ski trip to the Snowy Range in southern Wyoming that is great fun for all concerned. We also hold a regular Meeting for Worship in the first part of August at a member’s lovely ranch 30 miles north of Fort Collins.

Our monthly Meeting for Learning that meets prior to regular Meeting is well attended. This popular study group reads and discusses a variety of topics dealing with Quaker background and faith. We had the good fortune to have visit our meeting Tony Biggin a Quaker composer from England, who put on a portion of his program “Visioning New Fire working for Quaker Renewal.”

Last Fall our Building and Grounds Committee also renovated our Caretaker’s apartment, replaced much of a damaged fence, replaced our handicapped ramp and front porch, and oversaw the placement of a granite bench and Kentucky Coffee Tree in memory of a member who passed away a few years ago.

Our Meeting continues to support Mike Gray and his ongoing ministry to the Lakota and Seri peoples. We also have provided financial support to Friends to attend at Regional Meeting, IMYM, and also a women’s retreat at Allenspark, Colorado, in the Spring.

Mindful of our philosophy that sees that of God in everyone, we are committed to listen to each other non-judgmentally and to do what is within our power to bring the beloved community to our corner of the world.

Bob Doak, Clerk
Gila Friends State of the Meeting Report for 2017

“Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.” – Isaac Penington

Not for the first time, nor perhaps the last, we turn to these words from Isaac Penington as we try to grasp and express the condition of Gila Friends Meeting at the beginning of 2018. The message is as fitting today as it was in Penington’s 17th-century England.

Gila Friends live in the world of 2018. We are active in that world, trying to live our testimonies in a community - and nation - that is experiencing tremendous stress and challenge. As our attention is drawn outward, we are reminded that it is necessary to give care to ourselves, and to each other, in order to preserve and nurture our spiritual health and dedication.

The words of another English Quaker, this one in the 18th century, show that this, too, is a travail that has long been with us: “No clear impressions, either from above or from without, can be received by a mind turbid with excitement and agitated by a crowd of distractions. The stillness needed for the clear shining of light within is incompatible with hurry.” — Caroline Stephen

Even with outreach efforts, we continue to be a meeting of aging adults who are active in our community as a meeting and as individuals. We did enjoy the attendance of a young family for a few months and enjoyed a visit from another young family who were traveling through our community. Many of our members are active in the larger Quaker community at the regional, annual meeting, national and world level. (See appended list of activities.)

Our corporate fellowship has been enhanced by planning and participating together in the community activities. We have also, on occasion, enjoyed watching a QuakerSpeaks video together after meeting for worship and sharing what it prompts within us. Our acceptance of the responsibility for hosting the NM Regional Meeting (NMRM) 2018 spring gathering has also brought us together to plan the program and arrangements.

Our member number has remained stable at 26, although four of our dear members are distant. We have had the joy of having recent increased attendance from some members who had been mostly absent from our fellowship for some time and we have had some new attenders.

In November, a fire in the building were we have long held our weekly meetings for worship caused a loss of much of the Meeting’s books and other possessions and forced us to find another location for our worship and business. While this has caused some feelings of loss, we are currently enjoying the intimacy of holding our meetings for worship in the home of one of our members. We were joyously joined in moving our property by a 7-year-old grandson of a member. We are also touched by a number of offers from other meetings and individual Friends of literature to help rebuild our library. At this time, we are still uncertain when we will be able to return to our previous location.
And so we are, as always, a work in progress. While individually and as a blessed community we try to adhere to and publish our testimonies amidst the social and political turmoil, we are reminded that old wounds and new challenges to the body and spirit of Gila Friends Meeting remain unhealed. We go forward with renewed commitment to Friend Penington’s admonition to bear one with another, forgive one another and not lay accusations one against another. And we do this in trust that way will open.

Activities of Gila Friends in 2017

January

Many members joined in the Peoples Procession from La Capilla to Gough Park in Silver City on January 21.

March

Gila Friends Monthly Meeting cosponsored with Immigration Justice Network a forum on immigration at the Western New Mexico University’s Miller Library, along with two related workshops on the days before and after the forum. One member attended the 2017 Friends World Committee for Consultation gathering of the Section of the Americas.

April

Several members attended the New Mexico Regional Meeting in Durango, CO, April 21-23.

June

Many members attended Intermountain Yearly Meeting at Ghost Ranch in mid-June.

July

Gila Friends participated in Silver City’s 4th of July parade. We celebrated heroes of peace and justice and took second place in our category.

August

We hosted our 31st annual Silver City observance of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings. Attendees included Friends from Las Cruces and El Paso and many community members. Following the event, our well-worn commemorative posters were retired and new, up-to-date posters were obtained and printed.

Gila Friends Meeting had an outreach presence at the Western New Mexico University Welcome Back Bash, greeting new and returning students.

September

Gila Friends had an information table at the 2017 Silver City Pride Festival in Silver City. We approved guidelines for called meetings.

We endorsed a statement, initiated by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship for placement in a local newspaper, affirming the worth and dignity of all human beings and pledging to treat others as we would wish to be treated. This was in response to the neo-Nazi march in Charlottesville, VA.

October

World Quaker Day was celebrated with worship and a video about the ways in which Friends worship around the world. The public was invited.

Two members of Gila Friends Meeting attended a special Fifth Sunday joint meeting with Las Cruces and El Paso Meeting Friends at Dripping Springs Natural Area, celebrating both of their 30th anniversaries as monthly meetings.
November

Our representative to FWCC attended meetings of the FWCC Nominating and Representatives Engagements Committees. A member attended the Friends Committee on National Legislation annual meeting in Washington, D.C., where he hand-delivered 30 letters to our senators and congressman. Four people from Gila Friends Meeting attended the Border Convergence held on the border in Nogales, AZ, and Nogales, Sonora, Mexico. The Encuentro was sponsored by the School of the Americas Watch and endorsed by IMYM, Gila Friends and many other organizations.

December

Many Gila Friends were pleased to join Presiding Clerk Jane Foraker-Thompson and her family in celebrating Jane’s 80th birthday.
State of the Las Cruces Monthly Meeting, early 2017 to early 2018

Here are the memories and markers Las Cruces members and attenders listed:

Gatherings over meals that feel like “family”—monthly pot lucks and Friendly suppers with Friends in homes.

A Meeting for Worship, held at Dripping Springs in the Organ Mountains, with Las Cruces, El Paso, Gila, and T or C Friends. A pot luck picnic and fellowship followed.

A Listening Clinic, begun last fall, led by Vickie Aldrich on First Fourth Day of every month.

Work Days Outside the Meetinghouse, weeding, planting, watering, that many said “helped build community.”

A gain of two new members, plus one returning member, and a new baby.

The Spears' Friendly Bible Study offered before Meeting for Worship for six weeks last spring.

A Butterfly Garden to help save the Monarch butterfly, a work in progress.

Monthly Spiritual Study held after Meeting for Worship called “inspiring” by some members.

Use of the Meetinghouse by some other groups during the weeks.

A historical timeline of the Las Cruces Monthly Meeting, a work in progress, displayed at the Dripping Springs gathering.

A renewal of the Peace, Social, and Environmental Concerns Committee with a committed convenor and activities like “Writing Letters of Conscience” planned.
Moab Monthly Meeting
State of the Meeting
March 2018

We are still experiencing an increase in the attendance at our meetings with five to seven Friends usually and several of our meetings have had more than ten people. We continue our practice of having Worship Sharing on the second Sunday with the topic announced in our newsletter.

For community outreach we focus on providing money for needed services or purchases for families in crisis in our community. One of our members is starting a nonprofit called Moab Sprouts to help provide quality child care for infants through 3 years of age. We provided funds to help pay the expenses for getting a 501C3 designation. The local church providing a weekly community dinner has discontinued this. We decided to switch our financial support to Moab Solutions which helps find housing for and gives support to our homeless population.

We have continued to attend the monthly meetings of the Interfaith Leadership Council which has changed its name to the Faith Based Coalition with a mission statement of “People of faith working together to serve, give hope, and offer resources to our community”. This year they donated to the food bank, but most of their work has been focused on our youth and the issues of suicide and addiction. We have been some of the most consistent participates in the group, and we plan to continue our involvement.

A member of our group attended Yearly Meeting last June. Our representative to Representatives Committee was not able to attend the meeting in Tempe this winter. We were excited to welcome a new member this year, so our meeting has 9 members.

We have discontinued our First Day Program since one of our children moved away. The parents of our remaining child would like to find other parents interested in attending, so we could resume the program.

We continue to have potlucks most months. Our newsletter has kept us informed and connected. Our monthly worship sharing helps us explore our values and our spiritual journeys. We are grateful for our Meeting and the opportunity it gives us to share our lives with each other.
Mountain View Friends Meeting (MVFM) is an unprogrammed meeting in Denver, Colorado, affiliated with Intermountain Yearly Meeting. Current membership stands at 166 adult members and 7 junior members.

We have four Meetings for Worship that meet every Sunday. People from each of these meetings take part in the monthly Meeting for Worship for Business and in committee work. Each of these meetings has grown in attendance over the past year.

Westside worship, with approximately 5 in attendance at 9am, and 15 to 30 in attendance at 10am, meets in Edgewater, a suburb west of Denver. They tend to have careful discernment before vocal ministry is offered. They value a sharing time for “afterthoughts” after Meeting, sharing spiritual insights not spoken in worship, which over time fosters spiritual intimacy.

Two meetings for worship share the Columbine Street meetinghouse in Denver. The early Meeting for Worship (9:00) is the smaller group, often 15 to 25 Friends, and tends to be still and gathered. This is a close-knit group. The later Meeting for Worship (10:30) is a large group of 60-80 worshippers. First Day School is offered at this time, so many families with children attend. There are usually visitors and newcomers. Following worship, there is a time for sharing joys and sorrows, a time for introduction of visitors, and a time for announcements. Following the announcements there are programs and activities which offer opportunities to strengthen connections with one another and become involved in social action projects. Monthly there is a potluck, the sharing of a spiritual journey, and a peace and social justice forum.

Participation in and preparation for Meeting for Business continues to improve with 40 or more people attending. Meeting for Business is held in the Light by a member of the Worship and Ministry Committee.

**Significant Events and Changes in the life of MVFM**

2017 was a year in which both external and internal events and conditions challenged our meeting to stay grounded in the Spirit to find our way forward as a community. In the midst of political and social disruption and both spoken and unspoken conflict among us, we sometimes struggled to hear the guidance of that still, small voice as we sought to listen to and support each other and to serve those in the wider community impacted by the growing discord in our nation. Some have felt a sense of helplessness and a weakening of trust contributing to our malaise. But at least we were willing to struggle, and going forward we are working to regain our balance and our strength relying on our faith and our love for each other.

**Meetinghouse Remodeling**
In 2017, Mountain View Friends Meeting moved forward on its earlier decision to remodel the Columbine Street main meetinghouse that we have occupied for approximately half a century, rather than acquire or build another facility. The remodeling is largely concerned with improving building accessibility, and includes ramp access to the main entrance, and an elevator. Fundraising for the $300,000 needed for the meetinghouse renovations continued well into 2017. The goal was reached mid-year and the committee responsible for the “Quiet Campaign” was laid down in August.

Because of Denver's building boom, all aspects of the project have moved somewhat slowly. A new sidewalk and foundation improvements were installed on the north side of the building. A new ramp and stairs were built at the main entrance, and the front yard area was landscaped. Inside the building, bookshelves were built to accommodate the meeting's library collection in what will be the new fellowship room. The existing library was removed, and was in the process of being converted to the new kitchen space. Workroom tools and materials, and the water heater were removed from the furnace room area in preparation for the elevator installation. New heat pump units were installed throughout the building to provide air-conditioning, and replace most of the function of the old furnaces.

The Building & Grounds Committee continues its work to maintain and update existing features of the building.

At year's end, construction permitting was in the final phases. Movement of the kitchen, and installation of the elevator began in early 2018.

We should note that although the response to the remodeling project has been very positive, and some would describe themselves as settled and happy, there are people who find the commotion and change discombobulating. We also acknowledge that not everyone was easy with the decision to stay at the meetinghouse and there is some lingering disappointment. We have yet to find ways to align seemingly conflicting values such as honoring tradition and community history and conservation and best use of financial resources, with a vision for growth and new opportunities for service.

Safety Concern

During 2017 and early in 2018 we dealt with a serious safety concern. A former member who was no longer permitted to attend worship or other meeting activities due to continual threatening and harassing behavior attempted to enter the meetinghouse. He then punched a Friend who tried to block him from entering. Though a number of Mountain View members continue to support and visit with him, the difficult decision was reached and implemented to obtain a permanent restraining order with the goal of preventing future incidents and insuring that worship at the meetinghouse continues to feel safe.

Reports from a Worship Group and a Preparatory Meeting under the care of MVFM

Westside Worship
The Westside worship group continues to grow. Two meetings for worship are held on Sundays, the first at 9:00am with attendance fewer than six people, and the second at 10:00am with attendance for worship often exceeding 20 people. There is an email list kept of people who wish to receive communications about the Westside group, that includes 53 regular members and attenders. We have continued our tradition/practice of sharing after-thoughts in the spirit of the meeting after meeting for worship. It is generally a rich sharing of inner thoughts, insights and reflections.

Of the total who regularly worship, about two-thirds are members of MVFM or other meetings; the rest are regular attenders of Westside only. Some alternate worship between Westside and Columbine. Westside is regularly represented at MVFM business meetings, and many attendees of Westside are actively involved in MVFM committee work, both as members and clerks. There is a small number of regular attenders at Westside who have not attended a meeting at the Columbine location.

There is a strong sense of cohesion among the worshippers, who express their appreciation for the more intimate opportunity for worship in a smaller group. This year about once every 6 weeks, a discussion has been held on various topic related to Quaker worship and process. These have produced fruitful discussions and opportunities to remember/learn who we are as Quakers.

There are occasionally visitors curious about what Quakers are/do, and they do not generally return. They are welcomed and also referred to the Columbine meeting to experience a larger meeting so they can determine which setting meets their needs. During the year, two meetings have been held specifically on the topic of who we are as a meeting and where we are going. Worship and Ministry was in attendance for one of these meetings. Following good Quaker process, there has been lots of reflection and discernment at these meetings, but to date no conclusions or minutes have been created.

The current location at the Edgewater Recreation Center is adequate for our needs, but the building will not be available after August 2018, so the process for finding a new location to worship in is underway.

Business is conducted as it arises and is done as a meeting of the whole. The "minute" below was crafted at one such business meeting and is still largely relevant at this time:

April 29, 2012

About 9 of us, including two young friends, met after meeting for worship and discussed who we are as a worship group and the following statements capture our agreements.

We are a worship group of MVFM and contribute to MVFM both financially and through our service on committees. We model how a small meeting can live a Quaker presence in a larger Quaker community. Our west side location is valued for its proximity to our homes, but we do not feel called to have an active service presence in this neighborhood.

We value our form of worship* and welcome children who are able to spend an hour in silent worship; we do not provide child care or first day school.

We operate as a committee of the whole and in that fashion conduct business, care and concern, and support each others' service endeavors and spiritual well-being.
Though this space is adequate for our purposes, we would move to another space with the same rent if it were on the west side of town, had windows and natural light, had better acoustics, and quieter heating and cooling.**

*Our worship practice is that of unprogrammed Friends where there is very careful discernment before any vocal ministry is offered. We follow meeting for worship with "after-thoughts in the spirit of the meeting"-- spiritual messages that we didn't speak in worship or that were the focus of our own personal worship. This is followed by refreshments and more general discussion and conversation.

** This concern was addressed with the move to the Edgewater Community Center.

Three Valleys Preparatory Meeting

Three Valleys Preparatory Meeting (TVPM) in Montrose is a preparatory meeting under the care of Mountain View. TVPM is entering their sixth year of meeting for worship in the manner of Friends. During that period TVPM has met every first day and has met monthly to attend to business. The number of attenders is normally in the range of 7-10. TVPM has a new meeting location: Zion Lutheran Church, 701 S Junction Ave., Montrose, CO 81401. Meeting for worship is Sunday at 10:30 am. The core group that meets regularly is growing closer and developing much mutual support and developing in the way of Friends.

Financial support has been adequate to support the needs of the community, provide a comfortable balance, and to support several other organizations.

At meeting for worship for business on June 4, 2017 TVPM discussed becoming an independent monthly meeting and decided that they lack depth in the numbers of Friends able to carry out the responsibilities of a monthly meeting. Rather than reverting to being a Worship Group, TVPM wants to continue its status as a preparatory meeting.

Reports on Activities of MVFM

CALM (Children and the Life of the Meeting)

We have a dedicated group of teachers and others, including a paid childcare worker in the nursery, who are ready to work with our children. Our biggest challenge is the lack of consistency in the children coming to the groups. There are some children who come nearly weekly. The lack of consistency makes it difficult to plan programs and to build on what has been presented in previous weeks. On second Sundays, when we have business meeting following meeting for worship, the First Day School begins with an all-age-groups sing and then they usually prepare soup or some other food for people staying for business meeting. On fifth Sundays, children join the adult meeting for worship and have quiet activities they can do to help them focus. Paid childcare is provided for many meeting activities. CALM is concerned and involved with all aspects of children’s experience in meeting, not just First Day School. We work to raise young Quakers together.

School of the Spirit
In 2017, The School of the Spirit Committee collaborated with our Worship and Ministry Committee to bring a program to our meeting called Beloved Conversations created by the Unitarian Church. The program focused on the issues of racism and white privilege. It began with a weekend retreat and then continued with a series of approximately weekly follow up sessions. A small group from the meeting eagerly set out on this project with the hope of honest and informative engagement. Interestingly, there was only one person of color in the group and one man. The group learned some concepts and practiced some skills for interrupting racist behavior. The opening weekend gave the group hope but we did not develop steps to build on what we had learned.

Quaker Studies

The latest iteration of Mountain View Quaker Studies program recently ended after its 2018 class. This concluded a series of classes that began in 2001 and was offered each year but 3 since then. Over this period of time roughly 150 people have taken the class. Aspects of this class were also offered to IMYM participants in 2006 and 2015 and at Friends General Conference in 2013 and 2015. Those who taught included Martha Roberts, Loyce Forrest, Gusten Lutter, and Danielle Broadaway. A more complete report will be presented to the Monthly Meeting at a future time.

Sanctuary

MVFM has continued its active engagement in the work of the Metro Denver Sanctuary Coalition. The Meeting hosted Ingrid Encalada Latorre and her year-old son Anibal in sanctuary from December 2016 until mid-May, 2017. There was a joyous celebration when Ingrid was able to return home to her family with a stay of deportation while her court appeal progressed. Members of the Meeting accompanied Ingrid to her court appeal, which was denied, and then kept vigil with her as she pleaded for a pardon, which was also eventually denied. In October, just days before her scheduled deportation back to Peru, Ingrid asked to re-enter sanctuary. At a called, on very short notice, business meeting, no unity was reached on her request. The conflict and failure to reach unity was very upsetting to everyone. Fortunately, the Sanctuary Coalition found other sites to receive Ingrid into sanctuary. Members continue to be involved in Ingrid’s courageous effort to stay with her family and the Meeting has donated funds for her support. During the summer of 2017, the Meeting offered its sanctuary space to two others who later chose to report to their check-ins with ICE and were detained and deported. Witnessing families being separated is difficult to bear. These latter offers of sanctuary have all been constrained by anticipated construction in our Meeting House. During our construction hiatus, the Meeting is working to establish a formal Sanctuary Committee to guide future sanctuary work.

Dismantling our Racism

Over the past year, with the help of the Work Group on Dismantling Our Racism, MVFM has grown in our awareness of how racism and privilege based on race is present in our societal institutions and attitudes and in our meeting. There was broad participation in activities such as structured conversations after 10:30 meeting for worship, queries offered at meeting for business, and movie nights, presenting topical films dealing with racial matters and attitudes. Through the Spring of 2017, a smaller group took advantage of a series of workshops entitled
Beloved Conversations sponsored jointly by the Work Group on Dismantling Our Racism and the School of the Spirit Committee. These activities have helped us as a white majority community understand how racist policies, practices, and attitudes have shaped the experience of people of color in our meeting and in the wider community. Our continued commitment to the Sanctuary movement and our support for the Friends General Conference institutional assessment on racism testify to our deep desire to act to redress the wrongs born of privilege in the Society of Friends and in white society at large. There is still much work to be done. We are reminded by cherished individuals and parents of children of color in our meeting that despite our best intentions, we continue to contribute to the hurts and injustices perpetrated through racism. We must re-affirm our willingness to examine our own hearts and actions as individuals and as a community. With what we learn, let our future efforts to dismantle our racism be guided by the Spirit and informed by the wisdom of Maya Angelou: “I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better.”

Prison Ministry

After a member of our meeting was denied parole from state prison at the end of 2016, the meeting continued to prepare for the hoped-for release of our member in 2017. This included making sure that people knew his history, exploring housing possibilities, and planning what we thought would help people be comfortable with his physical presence with us. Then in mid-2017, he was sent to community corrections in Denver and was soon able to attend Meetings for Worship and other events at both of our Denver area locations. Substantial support was provided to help him get medical care, Supplemental Social Security and other things he needed.

The ad-hoc committee responsible for helping the meeting and the formerly incarcerated person through this reentry and integration process met monthly for a year to arrive at, among other things, their recommendation for accompaniment of the formerly incarcerated person. The accompaniment was an effort to reassure and provide a sense of safety to people in our meeting who have undergone serious trauma and who anticipated not feeling comfortable or safe in the presence of a formerly incarcerated person with his history. However, immediately after the business meeting where the recommendation was presented, one of our worship groups met and decided not to follow the plan for an identified accompanier. They stated that the formerly incarcerated person was welcome in their group at any time without accompaniment. It became apparent that the unity that the committee thought it had reached had not been fully seasoned. As a result, the plan was not implemented at that time at the other meetings for worship either.

Meanwhile, the formerly incarcerated person was seen to be an exemplary resident at his community corrections facility, but, sadly, in mid-January 2018, he was taken into custody, found guilty of parole violations and was returned to prison. We hope he will be released again in the next year or so.

There were many challenges and conflicts for us during 2017. We believe we will strengthen our community by aiming and working to address these challenges and conflicts honestly and creatively.

Submitted by Mountain View Friends Meeting 4/2018
Pima Monthly Meeting’s
2017 State of the Meeting Report

Introduction

There is a community of fellowship and mutual accountability within the Religious Society of Friends. It is expected that our Meeting will share our challenges and successes with other Meetings so that we can learn from one another and inspire each other to flourish.

Meeting challenges

In last year’s meeting report we expressed concerns regarding our Nominating Committee. We have laid down the Nominating Committee because we could not fill any of the positions on this committee. We are facing the challenges of us serving committees rather than the committees serving us. In addition, it was difficult to find a sufficient number of people to fill the committees. Our committee structure was handed down to us and some fear letting go of additional committees will destroy that structure. The old committee structure is crumbling and we are deciding whether to prop it up or let it fall by the wayside. We are actively seeking a new structure that serves us. Meeting held a threshing session in Third Month 2017 to begin discernment around this problem. Future threshing sessions will articulate who we are as a Meeting and how to support that identity.

Not surprisingly, it is difficult, and sometimes tiring, to live with uncertainty. We might realize that we are not going back to the old but we are not sure where we are going. With the current Meeting structure being in a state of flux, we have feelings of excitement as well as trepidation. We are in a place of peril and opportunity— we need to let Spirit move us through this juncture.

Having two meetings for worship at different times sometimes feels too separate or lacking in cohesion. There is a feeling that we need a bridge between the two meetings. Some have expressed a general wish for Meeting members and attenders to know each other better, perhaps with more social gatherings. Out-of-town Friends have also expressed this wish.
Meeting successes

A “listening session” reported that the spiritual health of the Meeting seems good, with centered and strength-giving Meetings for Worship being the norm. The social justice work and service opportunities that the Meeting provides can draw members and attenders towards Spirit, although one person reported that they feel it to be a dichotomy—social justice or spirituality—that they wish could mesh. One person said that the joy of the Meeting is its people. We have an openness and absence of dogma that enables conversations with hard, thought-provoking questions. We handle conflict in a healthy way. We see committee work as a plus. We appreciate our Adult Spiritual Development classes. We are carried by our spiritual community.

The financial standing of the Meeting reflects responsibility and stewardship.

Past and Ongoing Activities/Events/Accomplishments

Pima Monthly Meeting has been involved in a variety of ongoing activities and events:

- Migration Action Committee work included securing Meeting funds to post bond for two detainees in coalition with other community groups, visiting the offices of the Meeting’s congressional representatives, hosting speakers, and participating in the School of the Americas Watch events at the US/Mexico border, sharing food and gifts through the slats in the border wall, listening to speeches, and recognizing our shared humanity.

- Several in the Meeting participated in the Migrant Trail Walk that involved peacefully walking from the border to Tucson. They provided dinner for 60 walkers.

- This year saw Pima Meeting reach out to the Islamic community as we met numerous
times for discussion, sharing an Iftar meal, and celebrating Eid with the gift of a Quran from our meeting to the Islamic Center of Tucson which had recently been vandalized.

- We sponsored an ongoing movie night for women, including those from the Muslim community.

- An Iskashitaa-sponsored dinner to welcome refugees was held at the Meetinghouse.

- A number of Adult Spiritual Development Committee classes were related to White Privilege through “Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) and Black Lives Matter and a showing of the movie, “I am Not Your Negro” with discussion.

- Several in our Meeting are involved in prison visitation and facilitating the Alternatives to Violence program in the local prison.

- “Meeting with the Clerk” sessions were held weekly with attenders grateful for an opportunity to converse informally with the Clerk.

- We had an initial threshing session on Meeting structure that let us know we needed to season this topic further.

- Meeting updated its website and began implementation of Google G-Suite.

- Pima Meeting hosted Arizona Half Yearly Meeting in the Spring.

- Our Meeting was enriched by a workshop entitled “Friends’ Decision-Making and Clerking: Serving the Community with Joy and Confidence” given by Arthur Larrabee.

- Meeting appointed a Pastoral Care Coordinator to ensure that members of our community remain connected to Meeting life during times of illness or chronic health conditions. Pastoral care included several at-home Meetings for Worship and a lovely rising from several members and attenders to provide a month of 24/7 care for one of our community members.
• Efforts for “greening” the Meetinghouse continued to be explored and funds have been rededicated for this purpose.

• Work days focused on the Meetinghouse and yard and fostered camaraderie.

• A monthly sewing circle encourages fellowship, and often leads to deeper conversation as creative juices flow.

• The usual holiday gatherings promoted our sense of community.

Anticipated Activities

We look forward to a day-long “Get to know you” retreat in April 2018. The Meeting’s Adult Spiritual Development Committee will be planning this event.

Also, as mentioned earlier, Pima Meeting continually looks for ways to bring the earlier meeting for worship (“the 8:00 meeting”) and the later meeting for worship (“the 10:30 meeting”) together. Having the Adult Spiritual Development classes between meetings twice a month is one way to address this. Another way is to have an “Inter-meeting Meet and Greet” on 5th First Days to help attenders of each meeting to meet and spend some social time with each other. We welcome suggestions from other Meetings.

The people in our Meeting...

Demographically, we took in three new members and we lost four members - two passed away, one resigned, and one transferred to another Meeting, ending the year with 81 members. As a Meeting, we have faced many serious health challenges, resulting in fewer people able to come to meeting or participate in committee work either due to ill health or to caregiving.

Summary
Pima Monthly Meeting is a thriving spiritual community. Our community is changing, but our love for each other and our commitment to Quaker process will see us through. The desire of Pima Meeting’s members and attenders to be in unity with the Spirit will ensure that we move forward in harmony with the Light.

March 11, 2018
When Friends gathered at the meeting house on Canyon road for Christmas Eve worship and fellowship in 2017, the soft glow of candles inside and the lilt of carols by the luminaria on the street outside helped us open to a feeling of gratitude for the year past and light for the way ahead. We have experienced deepening of the Spirit within the Meeting community and increased capacity for our witness in the world around us.

The deepening of our Spiritual path has been expressed in the monthly meetings of Light groups (inspired by Rex Ambler's work) and Spiritual Life Sharing groups.

We have a refreshed mid-week worship, and have experimented with a series of worship sharing sessions to acquaint those new to Friends with this rich practice. We held the fall queries from InterMountain Yearly Meeting in worship and this has led to a continuing engagement with issues of white privilege, colonialism, and racism through a listening session, subsequent pop-up dinners, and discussion about continuing to move this forward in the life of the Meeting.

Santa Fe First Day School included weekly lessons for a wide range of young Friends (toddler to teen). We have a family based program with a Quaker curriculum focused on the testimonies, including stories, crafts, cooking and service projects. Service projects included preparing small bags of food to give out to homeless people and release packets for immigrants leaving detention centers. We collected several hundred dollars for UNICEF and participated in the Women’s March. Adolescents participate in a monthly discussion at a nearby tea house. Last fall children, adolescents and parents attended an overnight at Tree House Camp and enjoyed hiking, singing and tie dying tee-shirts.

Fellowship at rise of meeting has been lively and our calendar of events on First Days has been full. On 5th First Days Friends worshipping at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. visit between the two sessions, and Friends worshipping at 9 a.m. convene a monthly Lucretia Mott Breakfast Gathering at local restaurants. Some Friends have passed on and others at a distance have transferred or laid down membership, while new members and Friends transferring membership in have kept our numbers level. We generally see 40-50 Friends at worship times on First Day. Our formal membership is 75, while regular attenders number 69 in our meeting and the worship groups under our care. We visit with Friends in the worship groups under our care, and deliberate on how best to support them.

After several years of declining response to the nominating process, Friends framed a way to ask each of us how Meeting can best serve our spiritual journey. The result was an opening among us to reconsider our committee structure and how better to help us all to better share our gifts and abilities with Meeting. Further, Meeting has designated an Elder to hold us and our discernment in the Light, sensitive to the current needs of Meeting, individuals among us, and the wider community. We have also become
increasingly aware of the limitation of too-small a physical space to include Young Friends and the entire meeting together for worship together.

Another reflection of the Spirit moving among us is the renewed commitment to making donation to local charities and to larger Quaker organizations by Meeting as a whole. Support and anchoring committees allow Meeting to assist individual Friends’ with pastoral needs and with their leadings.

We maintain relations with Quaker House (Preparative) and the Taos and Las Vegas worship groups under our care primarily through visits on First Day.

We are indebted to Albuquerque Friends for their sanctuary witness. While many of us are active in support of the local migrant community, we continue to identify ways for Meeting to do so as a community. Santa Fé Monthly Meeting hosted a workshop on “Immigration, Deportation, and Sanctuary” organized under the auspices of New Mexico Regional Meeting in early November, with about 50 New Mexico and Colorado Quakers attending. We also hosted a gathering of 92 New Mexico Friends on the occasion of a visit by Diane Randall, Executive Secretary of the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Our Future Planning and Building & Grounds committees are helping us to balance needs for additional worship and First Day School space with stewardship of the property at 630 Canyon Road. We have also become increasingly aware of the limitation of too-small a physical space for Young Friends, for the entire meeting, and for gathering both in worship together. Several options are under consideration. Work with neighbors and city officials has allowed us a three-year City-code variance and special use permit for construction of a new worship space on the 630- Canyon Road property. Stay tuned!

Submitted by:
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