

Flagstaff Friends Meeting State of the Meeting Report for 2018

The quality of worship is deep and the sense of community is strong. The expansion of ways and events to become involved in the Meeting has led to an increase in trust, participation and understanding among Friends.

Attendance has continued steady with between 15 to 23 people at Meetings for Worship and between 10 to 15 people present at Meetings for Business. The Meeting has benefited from this increase in input and participation. It also leads to greater understanding of how the Meeting is structured and the benefits of using Quaker process. The people who come to Meeting from Sedona and the Verde Valley still attend regularly. Their dedication and desire to be part of our community, despite the long commute, strengthens our Meeting.

Our Meeting, like Flagstaff, has a turn over of population. Many of the valued participants at Flagstaff Meeting have been here for only a few years or even less, some have Quaker backgrounds, others do not. It has long been the goal of the Adult Education Committee to help people understand Quaker practice and perspective. This year has been particularly fruitful in this endeavour. The house meetings that were begun in 2016, have been continued with Quakerism 101, and then into explorations of the Quaker Testimonies. These house meetings provide time to get to know each other at a shared meal, opportunities for the people who feel led to guide the discussions to gain greater understanding so they can guide the exploration and thoughtful sharing about the topics.

We have increased having speakers after our potlucks. The speakers are drawn from the Meeting and the wider Quaker community and explore a variety of subjects. Our annual retreat was led by Nadine Hoover who shared her extensive experience of both practical and spiritual techniques for discovering and implementing peace in our lives and community. She also shared her knowledge at a well-attended public event sponsored by the Meeting. Another Meeting sponsored event, that was open to the public, was a weekend introductory workshop for the Alternatives to Violence Project led by an attender at the Meeting and two other trainers. The Meeting has also had other community involvement. We collected several boxes of items needed by immigrants who are left with nothing by the Immigration Department. They were distributed by Somos America. We continue to help serve a meal once a month at the Family Food center. We were asked if the Meetinghouse could be used for a memorial meeting for a woman we didn't know, but who had a Quaker background. Although the request was just for the use of the house Friends entered completely into the project making it a meaningful event for all involved. The Meeting was alerted to the presence in town of a group of young people from a Quaker school here on a service project. They were invited to attend a potluck supper which was fun for all as they shared their experience.

We gained a member who transferred from his Meeting in Minnesota. An attender of the Meeting has applied for membership. After several clearness committee meetings with another attender, unity was reached that it was not yet time to become a member.

The growing feeling in the Meeting about gun violence in the nation led us to adopt a minute which was forwarded to AHYM and IMYM and was approved by each of them and sent to lawmakers. After several Meetings it was decided that we did not need a sign or policy about guns. The subject of chemical sensitivity continued to be a concern this year, The Meeting could not come to unity about action to take concerning a sign. Two different signs notifying people of the chemical free nature of the building were tried. Neither of them felt quite right. After more discernment a simpler sign saying that the building was chemical free and a longer explanation on the bulletin board was the course which brought us to unity. The Meeting has agreed to put up a Peace pole in the garden in a spot prepared by the Garden committee. On Peace Day this spot was used for a temporary Peace pole during the Peace Day march. Two people from the Meeting participated in a brief ceremony in the garden. This was the first time the Meeting had participated for Peace Day due to Peace Day and Fall AHYM occurring on the same day.

The first Sunday of each month now has two Meetings, The first one uses Rex Ambler's Light Meditation and ends with worship sharing. The regular Meeting for Worship follows at the usual time.

We are becoming more aware of the influence of the Testimonies in our actions as a Meeting.