

## **Tempe Monthly Meeting, State of the Meeting Report, 2018-2019**

Tempe Monthly Meeting experienced a loss of leadership about halfway through the year, following the resignation of our Meeting Clerk and one of the two Minute Clerks. Others in the Meeting volunteered to clerk the Monthly Meeting for Business from December through April. We are fortunate that a few were willing to step forward. Our Nominating Committee has worked tirelessly to fill positions for the coming year, but they may have to ask members to share responsibility for some of the leadership positions. As is the case for other small Meetings, we sometimes have more jobs than we have Quakers to fill them. This promises to be an ongoing challenge that we must find ways to meet.

Another ongoing challenge is to seek and welcome diversity in our Meeting. At the very least, we need to be sure that we are especially welcoming to diverse visitors. Following through with continuing outreach to those who have visited us is important in retaining newcomers.

We are distressed that agents of our country have treated so abusively the immigrants seeking the protection of our laws and better lives for themselves and their children. Deep in our Judeo-Christian tradition is the reminder to care for the immigrant and to be that Good Samaritan.

We are still in the process of healing our Quaker community. For some, past conflicts remain unresolved, and some members have absented themselves from the community. We hope our recent retreat will help us heal. Our retreat was held during 2<sup>nd</sup> month and had as its focus: "Building Hope and Resilience in Turbulent Times." Anne Pomeroy was a very effective leader, and participants felt that they had spent their time well. Anne reminded us of the need to love one another. Her words were reminiscent of Isaac Pennington's letter to Friends in Amersham in 1667: "Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another.... and helping one another up with a tender hand if there has been any slip or fall..."

We celebrated the lives of dear Friends Gracia Hiatt and Debrah Lechner in Memorial Meetings during 11<sup>th</sup> month, 2018. Both women will be sorely missed, especially because they gave so much of their time to cooking for Tempe's homeless. We feel deep sorrow for their loss but recognize how poor we would be if they had not been with us.

Attendance at Meeting for Worship has been good, especially when winter visitors return. New visitors continue to seek us out and we are happy when they choose to return. For some, Quakerism is not a good fit, but we hope that they leave feeling that they have been welcomed. For the year, we welcomed two new members (both were transfers) and also three sojourners. Pot-lucks and Friendly-Eight meals have been popular and well-attended.

Children's Religious Education needs to respond to the demographics of our Meeting. Since last fall, we have had a program for elementary school children only. Two high school students dropped out because of low numbers attending, and a third has been serving with our youngest children in order to fulfill a volunteer service requirement for school. We

have continued with a program of Faith and Play, Godly Play, and the Testimonies. We rely on supportive children's literature to illustrate the latter. Each week, two Quakers provide the lesson and the activities. By next year, we will need to provide for two groups, as our elementary group moves up and our nursery school children become ready for lessons. Our children still maintain interest in raising funds for Kurandza: education for girls in Mozambique.

Adult Religious Education has waxed and waned over several years, but has received more interest recently as participants have explored Faith and Practice. Following a visit from Marcelle Martin, a new book group is considering studying her recent book: "Our Life is Love: The Quaker Spiritual Journey."

Building and Grounds Committee has dealt with a number of issues as our facilities and grounds age. We have had to replace our sewer connection and improve concrete surfaces surrounding our building. We have also added new handrails on a ramp walkway. Our greatest problem was responding to a failed irrigation system and a need to rethink our current landscaping in order to conform to future pressure from climate change. We plan to seek professional help to guide us.

Participation in the wider community has been good. We continue to provide nourishing, tasty meals and also bedding for Tempe's homeless on the first 6<sup>th</sup> day of each month. We often have as many as twenty members and attenders helping with the preparation, cooking, serving, and cleaning up. Frequently, newcomers to our community offer their services in order to find out what we do. Meeting children also participate and sometimes bring friends with them. As we share company with people who are on hard times, we often receive more than we give: a reminder of the importance to us of attention to their care.

Several Friends have been working diligently to promote legislation that will slow climate change. One Friend has faithfully attended meetings of the local Inter-Faith Network and reports regularly on matters that need our attention. Recently members have been helping to house immigrants in transit who have been released by ICE. Other members make a monthly visit to inmates in the Phoenix Federal Prison, in Anthem. We will continue to seek ways to help our local and national communities during these "turbulent times".