

Little Rock Friends Meeting
State of the Meeting Report
2020

Little Rock Friends, like many other meetings, has been meeting via Zoom meeting for a year now. Friends from other meetings have joined us and this has made quite a difference in our meetings for worship. It has brought diversity to our meeting and has brought people from other states. It has also enable other Arkansas to join us who would be otherwise to far to travel to meeting. We find commonality but also fresh perspectives with our newcomers. Their Vocal ministry and other messages provides new light and a greater variety of life experiences. We do miss being in the meeting house. There is something lacking by not being physically present, but the addition of new attenders has added a deepening quality to our meeting for worship. Newer attenders have found it helpful to hear interactions between more experienced Friends and those from other climes.

While Zoom capability has brought Light into a very dark time by giving us the ability to connect, we greatly miss personal contact and singing together. Going forward, we query how we may create a hybrid of seeing each other in person but incorporate the electronic meeting aspect.

Some Friends feel the weight of the many tasks required to maintain our meeting and the meeting house. There is a concern for burdening ourselves to the point of burnout, especially for aging Friends. We have had several burglaries in the past year, which has been disheartening mostly for the damage to our meeting house and the need for expensive repairs. We are grateful for the presence of one of our attenders who is residing in the meeting house so that it will not appear abandoned.

We feel the need to stay in touch with Friends who because of age or illness are no longer able to attend meetings either physically or online. Of course the pandemic has made this more difficult and we look forward to the ability to resume physical contact with these Friends.

Membership changes have occurred only due to the passing of Friends. We have mourned the loss of four Friends in the last year.

Adult Religious Education continues during our first hour most Sundays. We are studying the book Sacred Economics by Charles Eisenstein and have also reviewed several chapters of the book, So You want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo.

The meeting's Alternative to Violence Program (AVP) prison ministry has been put on hold because of Covid-19 since February of 2020. We hope to resume as soon as it is safe to do so. The meeting also continues to publish the Carillon, a magazine for Friends in Arkansas and beyond.

Our meeting continues its membership in the Arkansas Coalition for Peace and Justice. We also continue our Kroger Card ministry to assist members of our community with the purchase of food and grocery items. We also continue our outreach to a single mother and her family.

We do feel we need to think about where we are visible in the community and invite others to become aware of what the Quaker tradition has to offer. We are concerned about how few members and attenders we have and few of us are actual members. We may need to think more about membership and its implications.