

State of the Meeting Report 2021

Beloved Friends of South Central Yearly Meeting:

Greetings,

Like all groups, we have had to adjust to this difficult and unusual year. The year has had its ups and downs, as might be expected.

We are reduced in number as long-time members and beloved friends Michael Palmer and Sue McAlister have moved to Oregon, and our former clerk and dear friend Bailey Norwood has found a different spiritual path. Lois Jackson moved to Pennsylvania shortly after joining. A regular attender has moved to Tulsa and also found a way of worship that more suits his needs. Several individuals have written to join the Stillwater Quaker Facebook site and expressed interest in coming to worship with us once things open again. The site manager has had several email exchanges with interested inquirers.

Mike and Sue suffered a huge loss as their family home in Oregon and that of Sue's sister were destroyed in wildfires this year. Friends kept in regular contact with them, and they report having felt supported by our messages and prayers. They are in touch with Quakers in Oregon and have reported on the important work being done by AFSC with undocumented people displaced by the fires. The Stillwater Meeting was honored to contribute financially to this effort.

We still enjoy time with the two children but First Day School is infrequent. We keep in touch via notes and cards, and occasional Zoom meetings. Although we missed our annual holiday party at the Garbutt house (with Cindy's harp playing, Christine's delicious cookies, and the company of two big friendly dogs), the children organized a delightful holiday party for everyone via Zoom in which we enjoyed their songs and stories.

SFM cannot meet in person due to smallness of our usual meeting place. Some Friends join other Meetings (SCYM, Little Rock, Tulsa, and Bloomington) for worship on Zoom and find this nurturing. Other Friends feel disconnected during worship via zoom. It is not technically possible for some Friends to join via Zoom, but we have all tried to stay in touch and support one another by phone and email. We have discussed meeting together outside as the weather warms. We continue to pay rent for our Meeting space, in part to support the good work of the Girl Scouts who operate the facility.

Business is conducted via Zoom by a core group of Friends who are more comfortable with the technology and make up 3/4 of the membership. Some have noted that we need to be more careful to follow Quaker process i.e. waiting to be recognized by the clerk and speaking once to an item under consideration until all who wished to have commented, after which Friends may add to their original comments if necessary. Opposing viewpoints are stated, considered, and met with love by Friends as we find unity.

Adult Religious Education fell off last year due to the pandemic, but has recently been restarted through Zoom. This allows us to reach out to distant F/friends and continue to include them in

our community, and to have guest speakers from distant Meetings, allowing more diversity in topics and outlook. Turn-out has been a bit more robust than it was in person and has included individuals from other meetings. The Religious Education Committee went to considerable efforts this spring to develop some programs that involved speakers from other meetings and Quaker organizations. The Religious Education should probably meet more frequently to be sure our needs to learn more about Quaker history, practices, and beliefs are met. A session or more involving Worship Sharing might also be very nurturing.

Although some in the Stillwater Meeting have been occasionally getting together for phone and Zoom chats, as well as front-porch visiting, we need to be sure to connect as a community. We did hold one virtual social hour, and Ministry and Care might do well to organize another.

Organized outreach to the community and political action has never been central to our meeting and that was case this year as well. As individuals, however, we make an effort to respond to Quaker commitments to justice and peace in our own ways, whether at work, at home, or in community organizations.

In Peace,

Stillwater Monthly Meeting