

Flagstaff Monthly Meeting State of the Meeting Report 2020

Over this past year COVID has challenged everyone at Flagstaff Meeting to draw deeply on our faith and upon our knowledge of Quaker process under the guidance of Spirit. We were led to address unprecedented challenges both outside and within the Meeting.

If we closed the meetinghouse, how do we continue to meet?

How do we maintain and build on connections to our community?

How do we listen deeply to each other with love as we struggle, and stay safe and healthy?

Our meeting has not only survived but thrived. We have utilized conference calls for weekly Meeting for Worship combined with some folks choosing to meet in the yard, as weather allowed, and later in the Meetinghouse with all due precautions. We have used Zoom for our committee meetings, educational offerings, and Light Meditation, as well as meetings with other Flagstaff community members and the wider Quaker fellowship. This year we had two Christmas celebrations by Zoom. Our attendance has been at nearly pre-COVID levels, and the quality of worship is deep. With little or no opportunity for socializing after meeting, our individual check-ins and sharings at the rise of Meeting have become even more precious. While we all miss being able to socialize, we have utilized emails, phone calls, and occasional visits to reach out to one another and provide support where we can. We have particularly reached out to our members who have had difficulties navigating the new technology we now use.

Our Finance Committee, after much consideration, recommended moving the meeting's investments to the Friends Fiduciary Corporation, and it was approved. We are pleased with our new investment partners because they are so conscientious, and our investments are easily accessible.

The new Archive Committee, formed last year to preserve the meeting's documents, records, and history, has been largely dormant due to COVID, and we hope to resume work as conditions permit.

We installed our new peace pole in the Fall, offering messages of peace in English, Spanish, Navajo, and Hopi.

COVID also dampened our ability to provide volunteer assistance at the Flagstaff Family Community Food Center. Knowing how vital their efforts are in our community at this time, we doubled our annual financial contribution to them. Several members of the Meeting have continued to volunteer individually, and we look forward to resuming our practice as soon as it is safe.

The Flagstaff Friends Meetinghouse is in the heart of the Southside of our town. We continue to build on our connections to the Southside Community Association (SCA) and its Murdoch Community Center. We have a member serving on the SCA Board, and several members have attended Zoom presentations on the Lived Black Experience (LBE) facilitated by the SCA and a coalition of local Black organizations.

Two of our Meeting's members led two Zoom House Meetings drawing on material from the LBE series and the Pendle Hill pamphlet, *Race, Systemic Violence, and Retrospective Justice*, by Harold Weaver Jr. We will continue to build on this relationship and create a stronger bond with Flagstaff's Black community.

The Education Committee continues to provide the monthly Light Meditation practice which has been well attended on Zoom. The committee also facilitated two highly popular Spiritual Nurturing groups, each meeting for three sessions via Zoom. The Committee also hosted a Zoom Meeting titled "How Are You Really Doing?" as an open-ended check-in for us all. This event drew a sizable group who shared freely and deeply on all the many personal challenges faced this year. We had to postpone our annual retreat with Paula Palmer and her workshop, "Toward Right Relationships with Indigenous Peoples." In its place we had two Zoom webinars on climate change that were very productive and inspiring. These were led by NAU professor and climate activist, Dr Stefan Sommer. Flagstaff Friends joined a local interfaith group addressing critical climate issues, and together we attended and were part of a presentation to Flagstaff City Council in January 2020 to support an official declaration of a climate emergency.

Our faith community has had a challenging and fruitful year.