The State of our Meeting is as rich as tapestry. Friends responded to a set of Queries offered by NPYM. They did this from a variety of perspectives which clearly illustrate the diversity of gifts, generosity of heart and openness of Spirit which characterize our Meeting. Each Friend described an underlying experience of Meeting which contributes to and undergirds the many accomplishments of the Meeting as a whole during 2018.

We are faithful when we come with open hearts to Meeting each First Day, or sit attentively and patiently in Meeting for Worship for Business. We are faithful when we participate with Friends in social action for peace or social justice, or other service in the community. We are faithful in our responsibilities as committee members or in caring for one another. Our commitment to the Meeting and to one another grows our faith in the workings of the Spirit and helps us develop “a rhythm in our Meeting”. Our Meetinghouse and our rich schedule of activities “ground us in a predictable and active Life together”.

We engage one another in seeking at ever new depths through listening deeply to another’s Ministry in Worship, or in worship sharing as we respond to the Queries on the first Sunday of each month. We know “God speaks to us in so many different ways”. We engage and challenge as we patiently seek unity in our Meetings for Business or in our committee meetings. We engage one another in Spiritual Nurture Groups, and Book Groups, during meals at potlucks or Friendly Eights, in Cleareness or Care Committees. We open ourselves in telling our Spiritual Journeys and help others explore new depths. Some of us deepen our seeking in programs like Way of the Spirit. It’s in that awareness of the sacred that we keep engaging with one another, keep searching for our own truth and helping others find theirs.

Sacred space is everywhere we are. We don’t create it so much as become aware that it is all around us. “Sacred space is ourselves,” “we live in Holy Silence”. So in our Meeting for Worship, in our Worship sharing, in committees or spiritual nurture groups, or in a time when we listen deeply to one another, or even in the stillness of our own hearts, that same sacred space is there. And it’s available to whomever seeks it out. It requires only intention and attention because it is of the Spirit.

Truth “speaks from the heart” in the movement of Love which connects each one of us to the Spirit and through the Spirit to each other and to all of life. It is nurtured in the sacred space which is always available. “We have a duty to speak the truth no matter where we are.” Truth reaches out through us to all who suffer, and even to those who cause suffering, to bring about good. Through the Meeting Truth speaks in right action in the community and in the world through our participation in Friends Committee on National Legislation and its Washington State counterpart, in lobby days, in letter writing campaigns and in direct action.

How was Spirit made evident? There is “no right way or wrong way to find Spirit.” But in our time together in Worship, in the depth of the silence, “that is when God speaks” in our vocal
ministry and in our own hearts. In our listening deeply there is an ever-deepening connection to Spirit among us. “We are interwoven,” having “a family sense”. Nominating Committee has based its work this year on “gifts of the spirit” inviting each member to a service which arises out of their own particular spiritual giftedness. This heightened awareness of our gifts and the increased sense of connection through the Spirit has led to well attended activities, and active peace and social concern effort and a greater weight of presence in the wider community.

Remembering Woolman’s advice to “turn all we possess into the channel of God’s love” we have shared our Meetinghouse with the wider community: musicians, storytellers, our elementary school, a children’s therapy program and various educational workshops have all used space in the Meetinghouse or in its grounds. Eleven percent of our income is allocated to finance the work of Peace and Social Concerns.

With the cooperation of neighboring tribe members we sponsored a Social Justice Camp for elementary school age children to learn about Native American history and culture. Once again this year we participated in the welcome for pullers and their families in the Canoe Journey. The meeting continued its work on a Carbon Tithing program as a form of witness regarding Global Climate Change, applying the funds raised to carbon sequestration. This winter we joined again with other members of our faith community in providing food and care for homeless persons. In resistance to military expansion in the area we held a Meeting for Worship outside the gates of our nearest military installation.

Many Friends spoke not only of the openness and connectedness they feel in Meeting but of a sense of psychological and spiritual safety. “a safe inclusive space”, “safety, support, and energy to expand”, “a place which feels safe”. This year Ministry and Counsel addressed the felt need for physical safety in our Meetinghouse. We explored in depth the development of a Safety Plan which might provide some reassurance of a coordinated non-violent response to any physically dangerous or threatening situation which might arise out of the fraught nature of today’s world.

Images of our Meeting were many and varied: a guest who lays her head on the shoulder of her host; a woven shawl; drawing water from a well; a forest of interdependent trees, plants and creatures, including a little mouse that is paying good attention and listening. Each one speaks eloquently to the State of our Meeting in 2018.