STATE OF THE MEETING, 2018

SANDPOINT FRIENDS MEETING

Sandpoint Friends Meeting is composed of people who truly care for each other and enjoy being together. This feeling is evident whenever we gather, whether for Sunday worship, at Meeting potlucks, or in community events. We are a group of f/Friends composed of various ages, different backgrounds and lives, and a diverse spectrum of beliefs. All are welcome here, in a sacred space, drawn together by a deeply felt sense of belonging and care for one another.

In a small Meeting, the loss or absence of even one person is felt and makes a difference. Last year, we lost two precious attenders to cancer, and a third, at 99 years of age, who died of natural causes. Along with the December departure of "snowbirds" for warmer climes, this leaves a hole in our circle each week. At times during the winter, our Sunday Meeting may have as few as 7 or 8 people attending worship. We look forward to warmer weather and the return of those we have not seen for a while when our numbers will grow to around 20 people present on Sunday.

We have been blessed to have a fairly regular attendance of a family with two young children. Occasionally, one or two other families come to Meeting but not on a regular basis. We have started to think about ways to introduce the children to basic Quaker values, including the testimonies. We also frequently have visitors, and we find that often people have found us through our website, SandpointQuakers.org, or through our Facebook presence. We welcome all.

While we both individually and as a Meeting have had changes and challenges as well as growth, 2018 was mostly a year of stability for Sandpoint Friends. Historically, our Meeting has been largely silent; recently we have had increased vocal ministry. We have been using queries and inspirational quotes/writings at the beginning of our worship. We have found this has deepened and uplifted our time together.

We still do not have a full-time clerk since there is no one person who is willing or able to undertake that position. Instead, we have continued with our practice of rotating clerks, as one person takes on the tasks of the Clerk of the Meeting for one or two months at a time, and the work of clerking is shared. We have found that a side benefit of this is that more Friends and attenders are becoming involved and participation in Meeting affairs is increasing.

Our standing committees are few. Ad hoc committees become active when needed. We changed the name of our pastoral care committee to Ministry and Care, reflecting a concern about the long-used terminology of Ministry and Oversight.
We have done outreach to our local community with our 5th annual bake sale to raise money for various causes. We also "planted" a Peace Pole at our local library for all to enjoy, with the expectation that another will be planted on our Meeting House property in 2019.

Friends in Sandpoint Meeting share the responsibility of care for the Meeting House and its property. We share a collective feeling of gratitude for this gift, which we have owned for 19 years. We have a number of work days each year for maintenance and for the harvest of our three fruit trees. This has become a time of joyous sharing while doing work that is needed. We also share the harvested fruit with our local food bank and other community organizations.

Care for the environment has been a large concern for many members, along with the question of how we can reduce our carbon footprint on the earth. This has morphed into a discussion about conservation, recycling, and climate change. Two of our long-time members were part of the "Solar Pioneers" documentary by Idaho Public Television about people who first began the use of solar technology to provide energy to their homes.

One of our attenders ran for the office of State Representative for our district. While not successful, she ran an active and fruitful campaign. Shortly after the campaign ended, Sandpoint Friends Meeting helped to support her trip to FCNL in Washington, DC, to participate in Lobby Week. She excitedly shared her experiences with us on her return.

Another of our attenders has started a meditation group for people in Alcoholics Anonymous. They meet once a week in our Meeting House and are grateful to have found a "sacred space" here. We feel pleased to be able to offer a meeting venue that touches peoples' hearts in such a special way.

In 2018, we started preliminary planning for the Fall 2019 Quarterly Meeting in Ellensburg, WA, which we will co-host with Tacoma Friends Meeting. Sandpoint Meeting will provide the Plenary speaker. The theme will be exploring aspects of Being/Becoming Peace.

We are grateful for everyone in our Meeting, each one bringing a piece of what makes us whole. We welcome all to join us.