Whidbey Island Friends Meeting 2018 Annual Report to Quarterly

Mailing Address: PO Box 691, Langley, WA 98260
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Meeting Website: www.whidbeyquakers.org includes a public and member calendar of events
Meets at: Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Whidbey Island, 20103 State Route 525, about two miles north of Freeland

Regularly Scheduled Events:
- Meeting for Worship: held each Sunday at 4:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church, Freeland, WA
- Meeting for Worship for the Purpose of Business: held on the third Sunday of the month following Meeting for Worship
- Singing before Meeting for Worship: first Sunday of the month at 3:00 p.m.
- Leadings Sharing (see below) and Potluck after Meeting for Worship: second Sunday of the month following Meeting for Worship
- Meeting for Learning: fourth Wednesday of the month in members’ homes. Potluck at 6:00 p.m. followed by meeting from 6:45 to 9:00
- Men’s Spiritual Nurture Group: every other Thursday from 7:00 to 9:00 in men’s homes.
- Women’s Spiritual Nurture Group: first Thursday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 in women’s homes

Life of the Meeting
Whidbey Island Friends Meeting continues to welcome new attenders, while experiencing sadness as some longtime members move away to be closer to family. We also find our meeting changing with the reduced energy of many members and attenders as we age. We find that smaller, more intentional and participatory formats such as the men’s group, the women’s group and Meeting for Learning have been more engaging and better attended than Meeting for Worship.

The Friendly Flyer, an email newsletter produced several times a month by our meeting clerk, is a welcome means of communication and spiritual nurture for the meeting.

The Men’s Spiritual Nurture Group continues to meet every other week in each other’s homes. Their annual retreat, to which almost every man comes, was held in February. This group is a core element of the strong relationships within the WIFM community.

In February the women of WIFM began meeting in a spiritual nurture group once a month. These meetings have strengthened relationships among the women as well as expanding knowledge of Quaker faith and customs, and provided a setting for sincere and open sharing.

On the second Sunday of the month, following Meeting for Worship, one of our community shares how and when they have experienced leadings that guide them in
their lives. These talks deepen our understanding of the many ways in which Spirit works, and deepen our understanding and love for one another.

**Committees**
Members and attenders’ committee work lessened in 2018; the meeting is alert to see where this takes us. Some committees met rarely or dropped off altogether. Factors seem to include deep engagement with activities and organizations outside of WIFM; the discouragement felt by many in our nation in these rough political times; and the increasing age and health concerns and lessening energy of many in our group. No committees have been laid down.

Several small groups are under the care of the meeting including a meditation group, small worship groups, and anchor committees in support of persons engaged in public ministry. We hold clearness committees as needed.

Our meeting felt led to create two committees out of the Hospitality and Outreach Committee, given the amount of work for the committee in providing hospitality at Meeting for Worship and at events. Now this work is the purview of Hospitality, while a new Outreach Committee is charged with reaching out to the community through events, publicity and our web page.

**Engagement With the Wider Community**
In January the Peace and Social Concerns Committee hosted an Alternatives to Violence workshop which was attended by WIFM members and people from the Whidbey Island community. The two-and-a-half day event was held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Freeland. The Hospitality and Outreach Committee provided meals.

Two members of WIFM started Civility First, an organization dedicated to bridging the gap between political factions on Whidbey Island by promoting civil discourse through events such as workshops on how to engage people across the political spectrum. They sponsored a booth at the Island County Fair, which WIFM members and attenders helped to staff.

A half-day workshop on adolescent spirituality, led by a WIFM member, focused on the developmental needs of that formative period of life, and ways that adults can foster spiritual growth in young people.

In April WIFM reaffirmed our commitment to care of the earth and recorded our desire to support leadings of members and attenders in actions taken, including participation in the Greening Congregations Collaborative, Citizens Climate Lobby, and protests against the Navy’s increased use of Whidbey Island for flight training of Growlers. WIFM participated in and co-sponsored several activities and lectures about climate change awareness as a member of the Greening Collaborative, composed of Greening Congregations and other faith groups.
WIFM approved donations to local, national and international nonprofits in our annual budget, including contributions to Abundant Financing to NPYM Annual Session, Quaker Voice (Friends Committee WA Public Policy), Friends Committee on National Legislation, American Friends Service Committee, Way of the Spirit/ Good News, Ryan’s House for Youth, Whidbey Island Homeless Coalition, and Friendly Water for the World. A member conducted a fundraising dinner in February to support PeaceWorks activities in Nicaragua.

**Looking Forward**

The Gifts and Talents Committee worked to find people for committee membership and clerking but found reduced interest in these activities among our meeting. No one felt led to serve as clerk of the meeting, so it was decided to have the Ministry and Counsel Committee function as clerk of the meeting for 2019. A member volunteered to prepare and email a Friendly Flyer twice a month, to continue communication within the meeting.

As the year ended, WIFM thanked outgoing clerk of the meeting, Jim Hall, for his three years of warm and intentional care for our meeting, as well as his fabulous peanut butter cookies which sustained us on many occasions. We look forward to the new ways in which the Spirit will lead us to deeper internal lives, to engagement with the life of the meeting, and with the life of the wider community.

Prepared by Diana Butler, Clerk of Ministry and Counsel.
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