

West Knoxville Friends Meeting – State of the Monthly Meeting 2022

This year we turned to joy when we felt our spiritual well-being lagging. Business meetings were often a time of strife, and we responded by seeking balance with time for sharing of joys and caring for others. Peace and Social Concerns provided an opportunity to center on music and fellowship, Ministry and Nurture sought to resolve conflicts and provide opportunities to elder in the most positive sense of the word. This fostered hope as we navigated challenging times and set the stage for future growth.

Discomfort over racial justice tension experienced in SAYMA was also experienced within our Meeting. In recognition of the need to address this tension, Friends engaged in learning activities, and several joined the Racial Transformation Training offered by SAYMA. Our InterRacial Well-being and Restorative Justice Committee continued to bring forward information and opportunities focused on our local community.

We continued the practice of a hybrid meeting for worship. When meeting in person, Friends opted to continue wearing masks except when eating and we resumed our custom of shared meals. New attenders were welcomed, and the absence of those who left was felt. Meeting gathered to give support for two memorial meetings, a member and a family member of an attender, and a few Friends were called to move to other locations.

One Friend lead a Quakerism 101 class which was attended virtually across SAYMA. However, we felt the absence of our traditional Religious Education as we no longer gather for study prior to meeting for worship, and our second hours after the rise of meeting were mainly business focused this year. Friends expressed sorrow for this absence and hope that we return to sharing religious education topics.

Individuals used their gifts in many ways by keeping the Meeting House in good working order, caring for children during meeting, making all occasion cards, providing technical skills, representing the Meeting with SAYMA, and volunteering with Family Promise. The continued good work by our Peace and Social Concerns Committee grew to include a Friend from a programmed meeting who participated in writing letters to support FCNL issues and we joined the programmed Friends for worship one afternoon. Friends greatly appreciated opportunities to gather for music, food, and fellowship. Of special note is the hard work of the Hospitality Committee to keep us nourished physically as we focused on the spiritual and practical work of Meeting for Business.

We continued working to revise the Statement of Practice and bring it in line with the actual running of the Meeting, new committees were added, and the activities of long-standing committees were clarified during Second Hours. The year ended with a new concern about a planned housing development adjacent to the Meeting's property.

We look back on 2022 as a year of struggle to grow and a willingness to engage in work that challenged us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We remain strong and committed to living up to Friends' testimonies.

Prepared by the Clerk and Asst Clerk and approved at Meeting for Business 4/2/2023
Melissa Preast
Clerk