

Friends Meeting of San Antonio
State of the Meeting Report

March 2018

We are in a better place.

No, not that kind of better place; we are quite alive. We are, in fact, more alive and hopeful than we have been for the past couple years. We still struggle to staff our committees, attract families with children, and avoid overburdening ourselves. But our Meeting feels more like a community than it did a year ago. To prepare this Report, a forum gathered members' and attenders' impressions: these expressed a much different tone than in the recent past.

We wrote on posters labeled "Strengths" and "Challenges," and also one labeled "Wishes." We then read the posters and talked about our impressions. Among our strengths were the terms "friendlier," "giving," "thoughtful," and the comment that we have "a growing sense of togetherness and spiritual unity." One member wrote: "I feel the strong heart of the Meeting even when I am not here," and another spoke of "the strong bond of love and good will between us." Friends were thankful for the wisdom of elders and for the depth of knowledge of Quaker traditions. Friends were also thankful for the openness they feel to where people are on their spiritual journeys. The group agreed that we had turned a corner in our lives together. For challenges, Friends spoke of the continued need to minimize ego and attend to core Quaker teachings. We are slowly growing and need to change as we welcome young people to our midst. Our lack of a children's program worries us. We continue to seek deep ministry and spiritual insights. Some also wish that we could engage in more collective social action, while continuing to support those among us who engage in action on their own.

Under "wishes," Friends wrote: "To grow a warm, caring community," "To see other Friends and be seen by them in the deepest sense of the word," "That Friends Meeting of San Antonio becomes a cornerstone for all things Quaker and a touchstone for the Light in all of us." Friends wished "to make a difference in this community." More distantly, one Friend wished that our land would become "a park, safe and open." More immediately, another wished that we would "have new signs up before the [spring] Fair." One more wish received universal affirmation: "To have the whole Meeting come alive with laughter, joy, and community."

Our now-yearly spring Fair is a focus for that community-building and also for outreach to our neighbors. We are moving slowly toward outreach and how best to make ourselves visible and attractive to passersby. As another example of outreach, we hosted a well-attended Peace Concert in September, with musicians from several local spiritual groups.

We have also arranged talks by local activists on the Israeli occupation of Palestine and on San Antonio's forthcoming Climate Action Plan. The former led to a formal minute to Friends Fiduciary Corporation, where we keep our savings, asking them not to invest in companies that profit from the occupation of the West Bank. AFSC maintains a detailed list of such companies, as well as a list of other companies that operate in Israel but not in the occupied territories.

For community-building within Meeting, we continue our monthly potlucks after Meeting for Worship, and a monthly Midweek Meeting in the home of long-established Friends. Very recently, a pair of attenders has added monthly Thursday evening soup and worship at the Meetinghouse.

We have expanded our adult religious education in the form of study groups, Quaker Questions sessions, and after-Meeting forums on various Quaker-relevant topics. These have been well-attended and have produced lively discussions. We expect to continue these as the way opens.

We also hope to resolve the problem of lack of childcare.

We greatly appreciated the help we received from South Central Yearly Meeting's Ministry and Care committee. They helped us find a way through the difficulties that we had been experiencing. Connecting with others at the sessions of Cielo Grande Quarterly Meeting, especially our guest Patricia Boyce Sims presenting "Climate Change and the Spiritual Way Forward," was most welcome and enriching. We thank all Friends who made these interactions possible.

In Peace,

Signed by the Clerks of Meeting