

Friends Meeting of San Antonio
State of the Meeting Report

February 2019

What a difference a few years makes! San Antonio Meeting has become a growing, vibrant community, blessed by new members and attenders who are finding ways to contribute to our corporate life. There is a new, palpable energy. We understand that we are changing and that this will require us leave behind some of our accustomed ways. We are, however, hopeful that we can follow the Spirit, nurturing each of our strengths while caring for each of us in our travails.

We can highlight three aspects of our corporate life that have contributed to our current state.

1. We have focused on maintaining a deep, meaningful weekly worship, typically followed by either fellowship or by meaningful forums. More Friends are led to vocal ministry than in recent years. More have stepped forward to lead forums. We now have two midweek worships each month, each of which attracts about ten participants. More Friends now attend our monthly meeting for worship with attention to business. We are, in short, nurturing our Quaker core. We shall continue to do so.
2. We are hosting more public events. We have had two movie nights, a couple of concerts, a Spring Fair, a book and media exchange, a community yard sale, and a Christmas Eve worship and tamale party. We have held several work days maintaining our property, followed by communal food; we advertise these as “Meetings for Weeding” followed by “Meetings for Eating”. Last year’s wish “To have the whole Meeting come alive with laughter, joy, and community” seems to be on our permanent agenda. We have also participated corporately in several marches for human equality. We continue to work with other groups on justice for immigrants and asylum seekers. Several members are also involved in addressing climate change through Climate Action San Antonio, an umbrella group that is focused on climate change.
3. We have changed the way that we conduct our corporate business. Rather than bemoan our inability to fill existing committees, our Nominating Committee has approached its task from the other end. “What would you most like to do for the Meeting? What will bring you joy?” Many people have stepped forward to work on their areas of interest. For example, we have an active Community Engagement group, an enhanced Facebook presence, a new website, and an evolving newsletter/announcement system. A revived Religious Education Committee has taken up some of the tasks that fell to Ministry and Oversight these last few years. We still lack a Treasurer (though we are in the process of reconfiguring that post), and our Property Committee is still overburdened with a building that needs more maintenance than before. But more hands are stepping forward to find ways to share their Light.

We once again have a small children’s program, as several families with children now worship with us. We have committed ourselves to giving parents time off to attend Meeting for Worship. We are still working out how not to overburden those who feel a calling to help guide the children while they do so.

Contributing to our renewal, we welcomed five new members to our Meeting. Joni Mize, Peggy Dial, Stephen Shearer, Kellie Price, and Greg Casillas have felt called to choose us as their spiritual home. We appreciate the energy and skills they bring.

We have, however, also had losses. Ken and Janet Southwood moved to Minneapolis to live near their daughter. We miss them but correspond when we can. (There are photos from their going-away party on our website: <http://bit.ly/2IA3SY3>.) Long-time Friends Doug Balfour and Ruth Lofgren died last fall, and Lori Segura, a steady attender, died suddenly this winter. We attach their Memorial Minutes. We also miss several Friends who have taken time off from attending meeting. In several cases, we recognize that we overburdened them with work. We dedicate ourselves to welcoming them back as the Spirit leads them and to not overburdening others.

This is an important matter. Our annual forum on the state of our Meeting raised several concerns about how much we have depended on a relatively few people. Though attendance at Meeting for Worship is higher than in years past, not everyone is led to be involved in the full life of the meeting. This is as it should be. Yet we need to find ways to let Friends' enthusiasms feed our community while not depending so much on them that enthusiasm turns to drudgery. One Friend used a farming metaphor in a forum last summer on envisioning our future: We have to build the barns that will keep the farm working, but doing so results in more barns to maintain. We are seeking the right balance as we move forward.

In short, we are a growing community, centered in hope, attempting to live in the Spirit, and caring for one another as best we can.

In Peace,

signed by the Clerks of Meeting