

Eugene Monthly Meeting 2021-2022 State of Society Report



In the past year, Eugene Friends Meeting has reached cautious optimism in our loving community. The Meeting's response to the uncertainties of Covid both brought us together and underscored areas of disagreement. We maintained and even expanded our worship and activities, deepened the bonds of affection and care among Friends, and discovered things about ourselves and the world. We actively sought the guidance and comfort of the Spirit. It's been a fruitful year, characterized by resilience and spiritual growth.

Due to Covid in March of 2020, the Meetinghouse was closed to all indoor activities, but it did not bring us to a halt. An ad hoc committee was formed which came to be called the Community Continuation Committee. Its purpose was to research and recommend protocols for use of our Meetinghouse, and how we could safely gather. The process tested our unity. Many Friends were extremely cautious due to health concerns from the Pandemic. Others felt that the protocols were too restrictive. Finding a balance was challenging. The Meetinghouse remained closed until a year later, in 2021, when we tentatively opened the doors to in-person worship. It lasted a month before the Delta variant struck, and we closed the doors again. They remained closed until March 2022. We are hopeful that we can now gather with the same joyful enthusiasm we knew before.

Like communities all over the world, we met by video conference and came to appreciate the possibilities of remote gatherings that could welcome Friends safely, without driving, and include those living elsewhere. We learned that we can be connected by the Spirit even when we are separated by distance and circumstances. However, for some Friends there is no substitute for the power of worshipping together in person, and a small group of hardy souls met regularly for "worship walking" at the Masonic Cemetery. Committees found increased participation and flexibility and remained active throughout the Pandemic with video conferencing. Here are some of the wonderful activities these committees brought to our community:

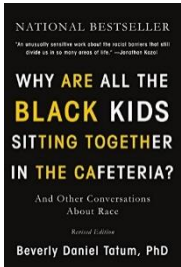
Ministry and Counsel Committee provided three meetings for worship per week by video, plus in-person outdoor worship on the Meetinghouse grounds (weather permitting). Memorial Meetings for Worship have been incredibly rich and uplifting with attenders from across the country and around the world sharing memories, grief, and love. Outreach to new attenders and Friends we haven't seen for a while was a priority. M&C held monthly worship-sharing sessions on Advices and Queries as well as a Winter Retreat on "Affirming Our Faith Through Worship, Witness and Action."

Our newly formed **Care Committee** stayed in touch with Friends who were ill, isolated, lonely, grieving or just needing Friends. They drove Friends to appointments and shopping, arranged meals in times of crisis and loss, and shared fellowship through calls, emails, cards, books, flowers, soup, bread and love.

The **Grounds Committee** met monthly to weed, mulch and prune throughout the seasons and grew flowers and food including vegetables, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries and apples.



Peace and Justice Committee supported Friends with leadings. One was a “Giving Gateway” on our website to facilitate donations to make reparations to Native Americans. Another was an Earth Care Support Group, fulfilling a longing that many Friends have expressed for a hope-filled approach to our Stewardship Testimony through activities including a beach clean-up, a book group and a newsletter on our website. Peace and Justice Committee wrote Minutes affirming our Peace Testimony. These included a statement against Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia; support of re-establishing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran Nuclear Deal; repealing the standing Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF); and ending US complicity in the war in Yemen. Peace & Justice and Adult Religious Education Committees collaborated to lead a series of discussions on the book Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? Using video conferencing, members of Peace and Justice Committee were able to contribute to its work from locations around the country and the world.



Adult Religious Education/Quaker Studies Committee presented “Quaker Basics” for new attenders and a two-part session on “The Religious Philosophy of Quakerism.” They shared Friends’ spiritual journeys through “Let Your Life Speak.” They held a session on “Self-Reg,” a process of nonjudgmental self-evaluation and compassion, and explored the life of Bayard Rustin, a Black Gay Quaker and Civil Rights activist who was the architect of the 1963 March on Washington.

A special ad hoc **Welcome Remodel Committee** shepherded a \$60,000+ project to change our “Men’s Room” and “Women’s Room” to four single-user ungendered water closets. We also built an ADA accessible ramp to the front door of our Meetinghouse with an automatic door opener, installed a washer and dryer and replaced the water heater, wrapping up 5 years of planning, grant-writing, fundraising, getting permits, working with contractors, and putting in literally thousands of hours of volunteer labor.



Finance Committee supported these remodel efforts through budgeting and managing donations and expenditures. The Committee upgraded our online accounting, coordinating with our tax and payroll service. Reduced donations to our General Fund still managed to keep up with reduced expenses this year, and we were able to keep the budget balanced. A miracle!



Children’s Religious Education Committee valiantly attempted a monthly program for youth of all ages, with low turnout. This little bunny in our garden was a regular attendee. A few young Friends gathered remotely to celebrate Halloween and Christmas.

All of these inspiring activities happened with the support and guidance of our wonderful **Co-Clerks**. Through many challenges, they supported us with love, respect, and courage. They calmly, compassionately led us to seek clearness through sometimes turbulent business meetings in our turbulent times. Despite different perspectives on the Pandemic, Friends supported each other spiritually, emotionally and physically. It has been a year of faith in the Spirit, waiting for the Light to break through and reveal the unity in our community again.

Statistics: Two new members, no new babies, several new attenders. We said final goodbyes to three beloved Friends, Herb Kinney, Nancy Black Sagafi-Nejad, and Emily Bear. One Friend was released from membership at their request.