

## Eugene Monthly Meeting (EFM) of the Religious Society of Friends 2022-2023 State of Society Report

During the past year, EFM has acknowledged the value of the technology that was vital to our community during COVID and has gratefully come back together in-person in our Meetinghouse.

Three years ago, the **Community Continuation Committee** was formed to help guide the Meeting community's response to the COVID pandemic. During the last three months, Meeting members have experimented with ways to keep the advantages of the technology that helped the community stay connected while we come back together in-person. Eventually the Meeting reached unity on the need to make technical and time investments in technology to hold more regular hybrid meetings from the Meetinghouse. We have developed skills and systems for worshiping and working remotely and these skills and systems will add efficiency and capacity to our Meeting in the future.

Our annual clerks' gathering focused on exploring our habits around conflict and means to effectively transform it. The sharing of our concerns and search for the means to address issues in manners consistent with the values and teachings of Friends has been an affirming process for EFM.

We were successful in securing a generous grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board through the Long Tom Watershed Council to design and implement a Trout Friendly Landscape Plan for Meeting grounds. The project will require matching labor and financial contributions from EFM over the coming year.

We have seen our efforts to identify, welcome and nurture our relationships with new attenders contribute to growth and life in the Meeting.

The **Welcoming Remodel Project** received grants from FGC and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting that helped pay for remodeling the restrooms into single-use "water closets" and a Front Entry accessible ramp . The work continues as focus shifts to the rear accessibility access.

The **Children's Religious Education Committee** continues to welcome children and families to our Meeting. Even before the pandemic, our youth numbers were dwindling, but we feel hope for the future. We currently offer First Day School once a month, and regularly host a small group of children, offering activities and discussion on earth care, love, stewardship, equality, friendship and play; we have also facilitated activities with intergenerational groups.

The **Adult Religious Education/Quaker Studies Committee** held a monthly Zoom class for 2022-23. We chose Pendle Hill Pamphlet #439, "Marking the Quaker Path," by Robert Griswold. Worship sharing in small groups has offered the chance to delve deeply into topics and to learn from each other. We're pleased that Friends of different generations and those who are isolated for health or other reasons, have found in the Quaker Studies a treasured time of loving connection.

The **Finance Committee** values both giving and receiving support in the committee and in the wider Meeting, which has deepened our spiritual connections. Our work to focus and hold priorities has helped both the committee and the Meeting by bringing clarity to our financial processes.

The **Library Committee** has updated its catalog of all the books in our library, which our Webmaster has linked to the EFM webpage. Our hope is that this will make our collection of informative and inspiring books more widely known and used.

**The Ministry & Counsel Committee** is actively involved in our emergence from the pandemic: thinking, planning, implementing. We're accomplishing more than ever within recent memory. Zoom has been an excellent medium for weekly book groups: one focused on the book *We Cry Justice: Reading the Bible with the Poor People's Campaign* by Liz Theoharis; another discussed the book *Becoming Rooted: One Hundred Days of Reconnecting With the Sacred Earth* by Randy Woodley, starting the 100 days before Earth Day.

### **Peace and Social Justice Activities.**

Our awareness of and sensitivity to the injustices inflicted on native peoples by 19th century settlers of Oregon has increased this year through weekly indigenous peoples land acknowledgements at the rise of Meeting for Worship; through centering messages at the EFM Winter Retreat on indigenous peoples environmental consciousness; and through building relationships with native American people's organizations through the Giving Gateway initiative and increased interaction with the Longhouse at the University of Oregon.

Our consciousness of the harms done by plastics has been heightened and efforts put in place to mitigate our contributions to the problem and help move towards a plastic-free world to stop the damage done by plastic in our oceans and food.

Within our means we have sought to express our awareness of the sufferings of peoples in distant corners of our world including Ukraine, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Iran, in addition to problems with gun violence in our country.

**Peace and Justice Committee** has had a vibrant year. Two members of our committee are members of the FCNL Advocacy Team for Eugene-Springfield. One member of our committee is an NPYM representative to AFSC corporation and has led us to focus on Immigrant justice through the "Know your Rights"/ Project Voice", the AFSC work in OR/WA/ID/MT. We participated in the Eugene Peace Day in the Nobel Peace Laureate Park in Eugene honoring United States awardees of the Nobel Peace Prize in September 2022.

The **Earthcare Support Group** has been very active with monthly support meetings via zoom, open to anyone, and maintains a page on the EFM website that features a regularly published newsletter with earthcare actions and information.

The Reparations to North American Indigenous Peoples **Giving Gateway Project** gained momentum this year, which includes a page on the EFM website.

Typically, Peace and Justice Committee members each have their own leading and we form a mutual support group. Last year we brought many opportunities for spiritual growth to the Meeting. The most visible contributions were connecting the winter retreat organizing committee to our keynote speaker, Randy Woodley and approval of the Minute on Reducing Plastics with the Plastic-Free Challenge.

**EFM membership** remaining relatively constant. During the year, Barbara Copeland passed and Bhavia Wagner was released from membership at her request after her relocation. Paul Barker's membership was transferred to EFM from Multnomah Monthly Meeting. We welcomed newborn Arthur Bear Mack to our community.