

State of Society Report for 2017

Cincinnati Friends Meeting

Cincinnati Friends Meeting is a Christ-centered gathering of seekers of Truth who have come from a variety of spiritual experiences. We are an open and affirming congregation, and a Solidarity congregation in cooperation with the Sanctuary movement. Some of our members are Quakers well-steeped in the practices and traditions of our faith, while others have more recently joined and find Quakerism is a rich source of spiritual truth and practice. By means of our before-Worship "Centering Down" discussions, a number of evening Spiritual Nurture groups, and formal Clearness Committees, we share our searches with one another, and support one another in evolving into newer and richer understandings of God's will for us as individuals and as a community. During 2017 we had visitors nearly every week, and have welcomed 8 new members into our community.

During our semi-programmed worship, we pray, meditate, or consider our lives, our world, and our choices, listen to a message from our minister, and then return to the Silence in hope of further guidance. Spoken ministry varies greatly but is often rich and thoughtful, and usually well-rooted in life experience.

CFM has ongoing programs for youth, both the very young (elementary school and under) and the "Young Friends" group (teens and tweens). Both programs aim to develop an understanding of the core Quaker testimonies of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, and Stewardship of the Earth, framed in a way that each child can understand and integrate into his/her own value system. We encourage the children to discuss these testimonies in light of Biblical insight and their own experiences, with adult guidance to provide more contemporary language and perspective. The Young Friends have been particularly eager to frame these testimonies in their own words, and have provided the Message/sermon on the first 4 testimonies. They are currently working on the 5th.

Cincinnati Friends try to share truth through our use of social media. Our newsletter The Traveling Friend and our Facebook page enable us to let the wider community know about events and issues that reflect our Quaker values. These include posts about our social action and our commitment to national and local Quaker organizations. Our website contains directions to our Meetinghouse and the schedule of events, quotations from Quaker thought, and news about our activities.

Our social action includes efforts to raise funds for homeless and abused women and children (Bethany House), our support for welcoming immigrants and the Sanctuary Movement, marches for peace and justice, and support of the homeless (Tender Mercies) and the hungry (Free Store Food Bank). Both financially and through participation we support the Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati and the AMOS organization for justice and racial equality. We continue our support for local ministries carried out for members of our congregation. We enjoy fellowship and community through shared potluck meals on three First Days a month.

We remain good stewards of our finances and our resources. Trustees at CFM have been concerned with reducing our meetinghouse's use of gas and electric, to reduce our environmental impact and to "walk lightly on the earth." We were hoping to install a geothermal system, and possibly solar panels. Our efforts were thwarted, however, by a basement flood which caused a fire in our furnaces, which had to be replaced immediately since we were already in the heating season. We installed new energy efficient units with "smart" thermostats which will reduce our energy consumption. We have also formed a Landscape Committee to develop a long-range plan for our lovely grounds.

State of Society Report for 2017**Cincinnati Friends Meeting**

Part of truth telling is pushing the hard conversations in love by seeking to engage members earlier in addressing end-of-life planning and Quaker resources.

Cincinnati Friends have been concerned by the disunity within the Wilmington Yearly Meeting. We have reached out to others to try to understand alternative points of view, and have reviewed our own decisions, examining them in the communal understanding of God's love and will for us. We continue to hope and pray for resolution within the Yearly Meeting.