

Cincinnati Friends Meeting
State of Society Report for 2012

Our State of Society Report answers the two questions posed by Ministry and Counsel of Wilmington Yearly Meeting:

How does our Meeting recognize, develop and nurture the gifts of our members and attenders?

The Meeting recognizes “God’s varied grace” (1 Peter 4:10) in members’ and attenders’ gifts through the discernment of a nominating committee and by listening to leadings given to individuals. Members of committees and coordinators have faithfully shared their gifts in support of each area of responsibility.

Having reduced the number of formal committees in 2011 and named individual coordinators for some responsibilities, we continued to wait for individuals to offer their particular talents as they received leadings of the Spirit. Two are engaged in specific writing projects, one working on a history of Cincinnati Friends Meeting and another producing a video on the meeting. Another attender saw a need for more intentional attention to the Meeting library and inspired a reassessment and reorganization of its materials. Another member offers an experience in art exploration for 4th to 6th graders from a subsidized-housing development in her neighborhood. Another received affirmation through a Clearness Committee that her artistic talent and blogging were a spiritual gift.

Sensing the Meeting’s need for more community, one energetic individual brought this concern to Hospitality. As a result, consistent with the advice given in 1 Peter 4:9 to “be hospitable without complaining,” an active and dedicated group has been providing full meals and fellowship following every Meeting for Worship during the last months of 2012. The gift of these individuals has enabled members and attenders to get to know one another more personally.

Another individual organized a series of Quaker Conversations on a range of subjects from awareness of n religious practices to members and attenders sharing their personal views and experiences of Quaker Faith and Practice.

Vocal ministry of speaking out of the silence continues to be varied, and at times ministers to the Meeting’s spiritual needs. In the occasional absence of the pastor, several different individuals have accepted the responsibility of preparing a short spoken message as part of Meeting for Worship, speaking “the words of God” (1 Peter 4:11) as given them by the Inward Light.

In an effort to understand who we are as a community, to help us travel our spiritual journeys, and to prepare us to help others along their spiritual journeys, in the fall we hosted a one day workshop on Quaker Quest and have decided to continue the Quaker Quest process.

How do we encourage a life consistent with the principles of the Religious Society of Friends?

At the leading of an attender Cincinnati Friends Meeting engaged in a discernment process regarding religious persecution. The result was a Minute presented to Monthly Meeting. With its approval the Minute was forwarded to local and Quarterly Meetings for consideration. Through this process the Minute was eventually approved by Wilmington Yearly Meeting Executive Board.

The Meeting practices benevolence by regularly collecting food for food pantries and cleaning supplies and other personal items for a woman's shelter and Hospice. In expression of the Quaker peace testimony the Meeting chose to associate with the Greater Cincinnati Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center. After making several efforts to reach high school students with Quaker literature on enlistment in the military, we learned that IJPC was already engaged in such work—*using Quaker materials*. It seemed appropriate that Cincinnati Friends should support IJPC, thus strengthening its efforts and giving Meeting members and attenders another avenue to express the peace testimony.

The Meeting continues financially, spiritually and physically to support a young family sharing their ministry of sustainable gardening in downtown Cincinnati. With the financial help of the Meeting they have been able to hire a college work-study intern and two teenagers to work the seven month growing season; they also funded Community Supported Agriculture shares for two needy families. Beyond this financial support volunteers from CFS meeting have provided cooking lessons, assisted in building structures, dug a rain garden, and helped sell produce at Cincinnati's farmer's market.

Approved by Cincinnati Friends Meeting
February 17, 2013