

Cincinnati Friends Meeting  
State of the Society for 2013

“Take heart! It is I; do not be afraid. . . . Jesus at once reached out and caught hold of him.” Matthew 14:27, 31.

**In our silence and our speaking, are we drawn together by the power of God in our midst?**

A Sunday 10 am Centering Down group uses a Worship Sharing format to think about material offered by the Minister relevant to her talk that morning. Attended by members and attenders alike, even those new to Quakerism and to our Meeting enter into these discussions often with deep understanding. Although different individuals attend each Sunday, a spirit of attentive listening has grown in these discussions which are always deeply thoughtful. Study groups on mysticism, the Tao The King and Brent Bill's book *Spiritual Compass* and regular Sunday afternoon Spiritual Conversations are also meeting Friends' needs.

Our creative and dedicated Hospitality Committee continues to offer a meal most Sundays after Meeting for Worship. Carry-in dishes were always varied and plentiful. We recognize the warmth and generosity of all at CFM in contributing to and, then, helping clean up after. The primary value of these meals lies in the opportunity to share our lives with one another. Our congregation is widely scattered, and the meals provide an opportunity for the kind of community which previously was in short supply.

Ministry and Counsel provided Clearness Committees at the request of two attenders, one regarding future education and the other regarding finding employment consistent with each individual's spiritual values.

Disappointed with sometimes low attendance at meeting for business, we struggled over several ways to encourage greater attendance at Meeting for Worship with attention to Business. Asking committee clerks and coordinators to submit regular reports and making sure we communicate decisions of committees and of Monthly Meeting have helped. We have begun to recognize a need for more listening in our Meetings for Business and less lobbying for one's position.

**How does your meeting encourage its members to step out on Faith in Jesus Christ?**

In 2012 we discovered Quaker Quest as a way to let Cincinnati Friends Meeting become known more widely in our community. As we began exploring this opportunity, we realized that before we present ourselves in public meetings, we needed first to know ourselves and each other more deeply. An eight member Quaker Quest Core Group was named to plan and carry out this inward process of knowing one another better. Between October and December, 2013 we offered 16 small group meetings at a variety of times on seven topics: faith, corporate practice, individual practice, ethics and/or morals, personal history, community, and other. Each of the 16 group discussions was facilitated by two members of the Core Group. These sessions enabled a welcome depth of personal reflection and sharing. Now well into 2014 we are testing the waters (Matthew 14.22-33) again. Are we being led to move into the public phase of Quaker Quest?

The Meeting continues to support two ministries by members of our Meeting. Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee helped a local woman's shelter start a vegetable garden. In 2013 in connection with our 200 year anniversary we pledged time and money to producing a 45 minute video about CFM and Quakers in the Midwest. To further identify ourselves as an Open and Affirming

Congregation, we added to our website the 2004 Baltimore Yearly Meeting response Friends United Meeting's personnel policy regarding gay and lesbian Friends and Cincinnati Friends 2005 Minute in support of BYM's concern. Our Christmas Eve service celebrated the Christian roots of our Meeting and the Religious Society of Friends.

Approved by Cincinnati Friends Meeting  
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