

	Wed, Feb 7, 5:32 PM (5 days ago)
--	----------------------------------

Cookeville Friends State of the Meeting 2024

Just existing and being together weekly has been very important to us. Going from Zoom to a hybrid Meeting and having several potluck meals together felt like big accomplishments. We find that we need time with like-minded people in order to face our current issues. We feel supported by our Meeting community in the small steps we have been able to take to ameliorate the climate crisis, along with other steps taken as individuals to help our human world be a kinder place. Support was also felt while dealing with family losses and health crises. There was a grace present in helping one another and then letting go of decisions made that we might not agree with.

We invited Star Smith to lead part of our annual retreat and enjoyed a day of fellowship and challenge. She asked us many important questions and helped us delve deeper into the reasons why we want to become an anti racist community. Two of us were led to join the racial justice working groups after Star's visit and have benefited greatly already.

We continue to be concerned about the state of SAYMA and its seeming inability to change. One of us was so upset by the spring representative meeting that they are taking a break from participation. For those of us who participate in Yearly Meeting activities and decisions it is sometimes hard to maintain hope and connection. After our retreat experience one of us was baffled by SAYMA's upheaval and asked. "Are we not taught as Quakers to seek to understand others even through our personal discomfort?". We feel that Star Smith and the Uplifting Racial Justice committee have been an excellent catalyst for change.

We have felt much joy in having two young attenders among us who helped us in so many ways. They have felt welcomed and comfortable with us and they have enjoyed the variety of perspectives and the commonalities that we share. One of them has been heartened by the online young adult friends group.

We are slowly working on outreach and defining who we are and why we exist as a Monthly Meeting. We hope to have a working website up and running this next year. We embrace the Light by allowing each other the grace to be where we are, even when this has been a struggle.