

WKFM — State of the Meeting 2023

This year the WKFM property has presented challenges. Winds brought down a large tree and the subsequent removal of hazardous trees by friends left stacks of logs that are now joyful playthings for children who come to meeting. Development on adjacent land resulted in damage to our forest. There had to be a costly survey of the property and the developer had to be encouraged to work with care. Continuing into 2024, a fence will be needed to separate the burial grounds from the backyards of new homes.

The issues with the property highlighted that the meeting is smaller and older, and we found ourselves serving on multiple committees and wearing several hats. How could we do things with the people and gifts we had? People helped out when asked and we were able to get through each crisis step by step.

We continued the practice of a hybrid meeting for worship and second hours. New attenders were welcomed and the absence of those who left was felt. As the online Quaker cloud came to an end, one of us stepped forward to create an online presence for WKFM. Members took advantage of programs offered by the greater Quaker community, often via Zoom either at home or at the Meeting House.

Individuals shared their gifts by keeping the Meeting House in good order; caring for children during meeting and providing for their religious education; providing technical skills; representing the meeting at SAYMA; participating in Justice Knox; and volunteering with Family Promise. The Peace and Social Concerns Committee organized several events throughout the year: a potluck and sing along with Maryville Friends Meeting; a community gathering featuring Paulette Meier, a Quaker Singer/song writer, with a carousal and ice cream; a chanting at the Church of the Good Shepherd led by Paulette; and participated in the Christmas program at Maryville Friends. All this was in addition to regular letter writing sessions in support of FCNL.

Our Interracial Wellbeing and Restorative Justice Committee helped the meeting establish a Reparations Fund and it is doing well. The CMU Fund continued to provide financial help to students in Uganda. The meeting joined Justice Knox and grew in awareness of what other spiritual groups are doing and our combined efforts made a positive difference in our community. Meetings for Healing have returned as regular second hours. The updating of the Statement of Practice was completed, and we are grateful.

What held us together was caring for each other. Work was shared through regular committees and by ad hoc committees for special tasks. We appreciated and used Quaker Practices, which are powerful and contributed to our staying together as a meeting. Though our numbers are smaller, the members of the meeting have maintained the level of giving.

We look back on 2023 as a year of challenges and a willingness to engage in work that is physical, emotional, and spiritual. We remain committed to living up to Friends' testimonies.