

State of Society Westport Friends Meeting 1994

As we reflect on the previous year, we recognize that our meeting community is in a continual process of transformation and growth. Our commitment and bond to one another are strong and centered in faith, leading us to continue to worship together, to nurture our children, and to witness and carry forth our individual and collective ministry as Friends.

Care and nurture of our children remains central to our meeting family. We have the sense that our children feel loved and held by the meeting. We recognize that in addition to important and ongoing First Day School activities, our children also contribute to our fellowship and the depth of Meeting for Worship. Their presence reminds us of the difficulty we all sometimes have in staying centered. "Our little wigglers are quiet worshipers without too much sh-shing." We see our children moving into the world fortified in faith to witness themselves. When we see an eight-year-old's letter to the editor, a college student's ministry through community service, and a young person's strength of presence in a diverse national gathering of young Friends, we know that their faith is alive and vital.

We feel blessed by the dedication of our First Day School teachers. Shared leadership allows flexibility, but concern exists that some First Day School teachers do not have adequate opportunity to attend Meeting for Worship. A desire to spend more time in community led to a series of "Second Sunday Discussions". Themes we choose encourage us to probe and question the bases of our beliefs.

Another present concern is attending to the needs of our older members. We look for and receive guidance from elder Friends and value the generational diversity within our meeting. We appreciate the grace with which our more experienced leaders are nurturing new leadership. The work of transition has been challenging and sometimes uncertain but also an opportunity for growth. Advancing age of Friends within our membership reminds us of the importance of pastoral care. As attendance at Meeting for Worship becomes more difficult for some, we continue to search for ways to meet their needs. Concern remains that we have needs yet unmet in our meeting community.

Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee carries active witness of our faith into the community and beyond. Some question if our commitment to the immediate community should be strengthened. We worship in a town politically divided. We ask: is there a healing role for Friends among our neighbors? What does the surrounding community know of us and the depth of our belief and practices? How can we