

Westport Monthly Meeting
State of Society 2022
Light and Spirit Rising Like Yeast

As we finish our second year with the Covid 19 pandemic many challenges have remained. Our struggle with these challenges has allowed for a time of deep reflection and a revisiting of our practices and commitments.

We have struggled with attendance at Meeting For Worship. While many Friends have found Zoom/hybrid worship fulfilling, there are still some Friends who are not ready to come back in person and yet find that Zoom worship does not provide the experience they need. We especially miss the exuberant participation of young Friends. However, in a joyful twist, the challenge of maintaining an active faith community's connection during the pandemic's isolation has helped us become more acutely aware of each other as individuals. Each person has experienced the pandemic differently. Each person has unique needs and challenges. Each person has a unique story to tell. This year we have been called to reach out to each other, to hold each other in the light, to create new ways of connecting. There has been a heartfelt intentionality in creating opportunities for alternate worship experiences that can bring together multigenerational gatherings. We have found deep worship experiences gathering around an Advent fire pit, singing songs and offering prayers and poems. We have found worship in joining together to share safely and conscientiously prepared and served soup and bread. We have felt God's presence in gathering for Bread Day where deep messages arose during the time of waiting while the bread itself rises. While these communal activities are not new, the deep spirit-filled joy they provided took on new importance as we struggle to maintain connection.

These connections have extended beyond the meeting with our outreach. Our Peace and Social Justice Committee, working with constant reporting back to and input from the Westport Monthly Meeting community, has been a unifying and spirit-filled presence. Our work on systemic racism and our testimony in support of Black Lives Matter led to a hateful response from several individuals from the outside community. This in turn led us to hold a vigil to stand for love in Westport and against hate. We were joined in this by and garnered loving support and solidarity from many area faith communities and social justice groups. Plans are set to continue this community wide discussion and maintain this connection.

Our Ministry and Counsel Committee helped to cosponsor a vigil of healing with Donna Amaral to give people a chance to gather and grieve communally for all the losses experienced through the pandemic. Through reflections, poems and candle light we lifted each other up and created a strong bond of shared grief and shared hope.

With hope and joy we look forward to resuming our Book Fair, an event much loved by the community and an opportunity for us to present our faith vision to any who may be interested. Likewise, we look forward to increasing our physical gatherings and strengthening our bonds with each other.

Approved 05/22/22