

## **WMM State of Society -Thoughts**

- **How has the worship experience in your meeting been impacted by changes you have made in response to COVID?**

*Worship is open to friends virtually with Zoom or in the meetinghouse while observing precautions. We have added worshippers to our Zoom worship due to easy access but have some friends who are not comfortable with either format that will attend when things are more normal.*

*The worship experience has been enhanced with new technology that links those worshipping in the meeting house to those online.*

*I believe that most of our members and attenders who come to worship on Sunday on Zoom feel somewhat disconnected from the personal experience of being present with others. It is certainly better than not having the virtual availability.*

*Our attendance on Sundays is relatively the same as in the past but in different places. To me, the worship does not feel as centered and deep. We always knew that we liked being present with one another, but it is revealing how much our physically being present contributes to the spiritual depth of our being.*

- **Have Friends been enabled or excluded by these changes, whether by circumstance or preference?**

*Yes, to both. We have had some folks who came to worship to be in the meetinghouse and they don't Zoom while we have attracted others who are infirmed or from out of the area that utilize Zoom and our community for accessibility.*

- **What is the quality of ministry among you and how has it been affected?**

*The way ministry is "delivered" has changed to fit the times, but it is still there. And extra efforts have been made to have contact with friends who have needs of one form or another. Friends at the end of worship constantly reach out and offer prayers for those raised which includes follow up (Face Timing is good) as well.*

*Ministry and Counsel always addresses pastoral needs and tends to those needs with outreach. Our committees are strong, enabled by their consistent meetings and attention to their work which gets smaller groups of folks in relationship with one another and enhances communication. Our Seekers group continues to meet regularly and is a deep well of spiritual nourishment for those who attend virtually. That well provides spiritual water for our meeting community in various ways. Our monthly meetings for business on Zoom are better attended and richer for the extra time for discernment in decision making. They are slightly less formal with social interaction among members/attenders but that also feels like a "good" thing. WMM Friends are a disciplined group and that serves us well in terms of foundation to build upon.*

*Our buildings and grounds are a blessing providing friends and the community with fellowship, communication, outreach and mental wellness. Small gatherings, physically distanced, happen on the meeting grounds (lawns, gardens and ample parking space) and in our separate community house. Discussion groups, hosted by our revitalized and active Peace and Social Justice Committee, met in the community house and have now, moved to Zoom.*

**• How is religious education faring, for adults and for younger Friends?**

*Our religious education committee has been laid down but prior to the pandemic we had a small group of friends with a concern to childcare who organized themselves to care for children during meeting. Since COVID-19, the group has kept in virtual contact with the children and families, delivering packages with activities. Attention to children's needs during a virtual Christmas eve service were an addition this year with lots of adaptation!*

**• Are there things important to the life of the Spirit the meeting has been led to take up in the past year, or that felt right to lay down?**

*Physical gatherings that embody the spiritual community – Bookfair, traditional gatherings/potlucks including our seasonal meetings for worship have been unable to happen.*

**• Has the meeting been able to respond to the pastoral care needs among you, whether ongoing or directly pandemic-related?**

*Yes, but not as deeply, I believe, through no fault of the outreach efforts. The absence of physical presence is invaluable when a friend needs attention, listening and touch. I do think that due to the restrictions, there is a heightened awareness of the need for outreach, so in some ways, it has increased.*

*Overall, I believe the state of our meeting is good, attentive, sustaining and reactive to COVID-19 related obstacles with “a can-do attitude”. But our buildings are empty, as are the hearts of friends wanting to be in that deep physical fellowship with one another. I feel that there is an intensified effort of “obvious” caring which is felt, acknowledged and shared by most. We are surviving, thriving in small ways and hopeful for the future. This holds us together.*