

State of the Meeting Report
Approved on Third Month 8, 2009

Asheville Friends Meeting continues to provide a worship space for about forty people every First Day where we've been blessed with a good balance of silence and well-discerned vocal ministry. We hold regular meetings for worship for the conduct of business and have been able to adjust to a decreased income with various changes in our financial base. We've maintained our giving levels to both Quaker and local service organizations with the guidance of the Peace and Earth Committee, while we reduced our spending in other parts of the budget for 2008. It will continue to be a challenge for us to support the work we see needing both financial and direct contributions and to be stewards of our community and property. The House and Grounds Committee enthusiastically cared for the property needs, including the removal of a rickety set of outside stairs at the back of the meetinghouse.

Our Pastoral Care Committee and the Needs Fund, under the care of Ministry and Counsel Committee, have reached out to meet the needs of members of our community. One of our stalwart elder members, Alice Brown, died after a brief illness in 2008, leaving a feeling of loss, but also a constant reminder to us of the value of each of our members and of the responsibilities we have to our world and to each other.

To keep our community spiritually well and in touch with each other our Communications Committee has updated the directory of active Friends and maintained, as well as redesigned the meeting website; the Spiritual Enrichment Committee planned a fall series of adult First Day lessons; and the Nominating Committee struggled to find the right people to serve the meeting, in spite of the dual problems of lacking a clerk of nominations and having a smaller community from which to fill vacancies. A core group of Friends meets each Fourth Day in a Friend's home with the goal of praying for peace followed by a shared meal of stone soup. The meeting held a residential retreat in the fall around the theme of "Telling Our Stories."

Two beloved members, Eda and Gerald Smith, had extended health problems which resulted in their transferring membership to Celo Friends Meeting, much closer to their home. We have missed them, but are glad of their improved health that has allowed them to join with other SAYMA Friends. The wider Friends' network is a comfort and a strength to us.

The children of the meeting are the treasure and the promise of a future for our meeting. We are thankful for the families that enrich our meeting with their presence, and when new families come our way we rejoice! One of our Young Friends has ably provided child care so that parents can participate and continue to be nurtured and pass the nurturing on to their children. The Religious Education Committee regularly provides lessons twice monthly for elementary aged children and guides the meeting's intergenerational activities the other two First Days. We enjoy an annual Secret Friends exchange that gives us a way to playfully cross the generational divide. We also celebrate our younger Friends and those who work with them with a cookout each summer.

Asheville Friends are well and give thanks for the Light and Divine guidance we have received.