

Spiritual State of the Meeting Report
For 2016
Midlothian Friends Meeting

The spiritual state of Midlothian Friends Meeting (MFM) remains lively and vital for our community. We have continued to find success in sustaining a Spirit-led process while simplifying some of our meeting structures. Our adult education sessions called Meetings for Nurture focused on simplicity and “Conversations with Friends” this past year. Finding out about the spiritual journeys that helped others make space for what matters influenced the life of our meeting and is leading us to grow in the Spirit in busy lives outside the meetinghouse.

The depth of our quiet worship may be hard for some to measure, and yet, the clear message that sitting in silence is the opposite of being busy, directs us to become attentive to the Spirit. Worship is simplicity itself. Additionally, while worship brings us joy, the depth before or after worship in both our Circle of Friends discussions and our fellowship with coffee and conversation provides valuable opportunity to learn, model, and seek methods to act and speak the truth of the Quaker testimonies in our everyday lives.

MFM strives to be a place where we give and receive personal support in our search for following the Light and finding that of God in everyone. We want to be a sanctuary of peace and acceptance as we welcome everyone with differing points of view. Recognizing there are many ways to express our testimonies on the way to live, we seek to share without imposing and to support everyone’s spiritual journey in our Light filled community.

A stable model for a religious education program progresses with two adults, raised in our meeting, sharing the duties of instruction and curriculum planning for each Second and Fourth First Day sessions for our children held during worship. Despite inconsistent numbers of children, we are thankful to have Spirit-led teachers who teach a clear foundation in Quaker testimonies and in Quaker process.

The nurturing strength of a “Circle of Friends” gathering, held every First Day before meeting for about a half hour, continues providing an outlet for non-secular discussion and exploration for Friends’ inward paths. Examining sacred texts and writings of religious thinkers, philosophers and poets provides a thoughtful start to Meeting for Worship, as well as, spiritual guidance for the week ahead.

Our meeting house and the grounds around it provide a beautiful and quiet spot for introspection. We feel fortunate to be stewards of land certified as a wildlife habitat located within a Preserve neighborhood. It is important to both use it and share it. Soon after someone begins participating in worship with us, we have started to provide this new Friend access to the meetinghouse at his or her convenience. We want our meeting to be a place for anyone to experience the Light beyond predetermined times of worship.

Our main exposure in the community remains the activities of our store, Thrifty Quaker (TQ), and Friend\$hare, a program providing emergency financial assistance to non-Quaker persons in need. The thrift store consistently raises thousands of dollars for non-profit community- based organizations each month. It provides an opportunity to share our Quaker beliefs, our passion for social justice and our testimonies, with the financial and monetary gift so desperately needed by these struggling institutions.

Reaching out to the wider community to fulfill a long-standing Quaker tradition of speaking truth to power is also part of our mission. A Spirit-led process undertaken during several months of our Meeting for Worship with Concern for Business held on the Second First Day during our worship time in 2016 was the development of a Minute on the use of drones. A worship sharing process allowed for deliberations and the sense of meeting as MFM wrote a strong statement to be shared with the wider community about the need for peaceful means of resolving conflict and against the use of drones. It is available under the heading “our beliefs” on our website: <http://www.midlothianfriends.org/>.

Midlothian Friends offer an intimate environment inspired in part by our vision of community. We welcome all who read this to pay us a visit and honor us with their presence as we worship together.