

Midlothian Friends Meeting

2018 Spiritual State of the Meeting Report

During these times of political discord, Midlothian Friends Meeting (MFM) provides a quiet place for spiritual nurture and respite from the challenges and distractions of the world at large.

Midlothian Friends strive to respond to discordant political views and hate speech in a spirit of love and light. The meeting has embraced the FCNL campaign, "Love Thy Neighbor (No Exceptions)," as a way of life for the meeting and as individuals. We have used our thrift store, The Thrifty Quaker, to spread this message to the public by distributing two hundred yard signs and the same number of bumper stickers to customers.

Our Peace and Social Action Committee (PSAC) and Sanctuary Study Group approach social justice action from a place of love, compassion, and forgiveness rather than from a place of political confrontation. Their examples have moved MFM Friends to do the same in their individual lives.

In 2018 and the first two months of 2019, Midlothian Friends Meeting provided support for undocumented and documented immigrants with grants totaling \$12,000 to 501(c)3 organizations that advocate for them. Additionally, ten of our members participated in activities supporting immigrants.

Unrelated to immigrants, Midlothian Friends Meeting during 2018 was able to grant \$5,258 to non-Quakers who had emergency financial needs, and another \$28,921 to charities who provide general social justice efforts locally, regionally, and internationally.

Our roots in Quaker tradition and worship are strengthened by remembering there is "that of God" in everyone and by experiencing a direct relationship with the divine. Also, by using the queries offered in BYM's *Faith and Practice*, we experience fellowship with other meetings within our regional community, knowing that we are all led and supported by these same queries.

Our monthly discernment time together is a worshipful experience that allows the unified Spirit to prevail rather than our individual egos. We have introduced changes that reduce the "business feel" of this time together so that more silent worship and spiritual discernment can occur. In the interest of simplicity and informality, we have moved away from using committees where practical and, instead, bring decisions to the entire meeting during our monthly time for discernment. In the past year, we changed the name of this discernment time from "Meeting for Business" to "Meeting for Discernment" to emphasize our improved focus.