State of the Meeting Report
Redwood Forest Friends Meeting
2021-2022

How is Spirit moving among us?  What is our spiritual condition?  What are our strengths and weaknesses as a Meeting, and how are we fostering growth in the spiritual life?

Meeting for Worship continues to be the central experience that draws Redwood Forest Friends Meeting together. We hold a weekly Meeting for Worship on Zoom and also host worship in person 2-3 times a month on the odd numbered Sundays. Zoom worship is easier for some, it works well for those at a distance or with health concerns, and a few say it is the only worship available to them. Others have expressed the loss of closeness when worship is not in person, and they find Zoom to be a poor substitute.

Attendance at Meeting for Worship is stable at around 25 participants each week, whether virtual or in person. We have a few new regular attenders, some who attend only on Zoom, others who attend only in person. We have not held a children’s program during the pandemic, but rejoice that there are now several families with children under the age of 5. They have met informally and we hope to greet them in person when it is safer to do so.

We have experimented with several ways of fostering spiritual growth in the Meeting through small group activities involving worship and conversation. For several months we held a movie night, there is an ongoing men’s group, an Experiment with Light group, a Faithfulness group, and one Friend led a series of discussions exploring justice and reparations. Our second-hour programs have involved worship-sharing on QuakerSpeak videos, and we have recently resumed the monthly “Meal with a Theme” discussing Pendle Hill pamphlets. A small group is now meeting weekly for “Come as You Are” Bible Study on the theme of Welcoming the Stranger.

We endeavor to carry our faith into action by participating actively with the North Bay Organizing Project and hosting a Safe Parking Program for the Homeless. We actively support students in Guatemala through our scholarship program. Our Quaker Working Group on Racism has facilitated study and dialog on how to recognize some of the characteristics of white supremacy culture that are embedded within our Meeting’s culture. Redwood Forest Friends Meeting is fortunate to have stable finances, through which we are able to provide annual Stewardship support to almost 30 Friends’ and other organizations which work towards peace, equity and justice. In response to the situation in Ukraine, an interest group has held vigils in the town square and intends to hold more. Another interest group is forming to explore how best to steward our land and to develop relationships with people who are indigenous to this land.

The number of active participants in Meeting affairs is smaller than in years past, and we continue to work towards a committee structure that will serve us and not be burdensome. We have identified the committees that we feel are essential and have set aside others. Even so, it has been expressed that it sometimes feels that there is a lot of unnecessary energy going towards making the Meeting function well. We continue to seek a balance that is within our strength and light.
We treasure our community, but the limited opportunities that we have to be together in person have made our connections with one another feel tenuous. Some of us find that having virtual breakout rooms for socializing after Meeting for Worship helps us stay more connected. Others find that staying in touch with a few Friends by phone or visiting outdoors is helpful to them. We have been able to respond to individuals in need, even during the pandemic.

We are so very aware of the cycle of life in our community as we mourn a recent death, celebrate a birth, and take a marriage under our care. We look forward to the day when we can more freely join together in person as we accompany one another through life’s joys and hardships.

**Worship Groups Under Our Care**

Lake County Worship Group *is working on their report*

Ukiah Worship Group *is working on their report.*

Friends House Worship Group *is working on their report.*