

Celo Friends State of the Meeting Report for 2017
Submitted March 2018

Celo Friends Meeting continues to be blessed by the active participation of a diverse group attending worship each First Day. Silent worship is the heart of our Meeting from which other strengths are drawn.

The Adult Religious Education Committee has been active throughout the last twelve months. Following a recommendation from the Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, the committee led the Meeting over the summer and early fall in a discernment process on how to support the sanctuary movement. The results were twofold: the creation of a minute on the specifics of support and a plan to create a committee to implement specific strategies. In the winter of 2017 we presented a four topic program on "Welcoming the Stranger" which included (1) People of Faith and Immigration; (2) Fundamentals of Islam, (3) The Value of Listening, and (4) Our LGBT Neighbors. In the fall we hosted two programs on ministry, scripture, and our environment.

The committee presently is sponsoring a four part series on *Deeping Our Spiritual Life through Understanding Our Quaker Roots*, which focuses on sharing our spiritual journeys, understanding vocal ministry, the sharing of Quaker views on scripture, and the insights of living a life of integrity in a challenging world.

First Day School had a steady elementary group. We continue to learn about the virtues as a tool to understand and cope with the world around us and within us. We enjoyed meditation in the woods or by the river. Nature walks and arts and crafts are popular activities among the children. We had endeavored something new for our Christmas program, a creative, interactive project called "Passport Fair." It gave the children and the meeting a better understanding of the severity of immigrants issue in this country and the need for appropriate action. The fund from the Christmas Program went to support local Sanctuary movement. We had a baking project and reached out to the elders in the community to show our love. A few new teens participated in SAYF retreat in the fall and intend to attend more in the future. Our nursery group enjoys playing together so that young parents can participate in worship. Some parents choose to stay with their little ones.

Celo Friends Meeting supports the efforts of individual Friends as they follow their leadings toward peace work and social concerns. We continue to support Feed-a-Child, a local interdenominational effort to reduce food insecurity among children in the public schools. Friends volunteer locally with Habitat for Humanity, and in the local schools. Many in our Meeting continue to be active in a local chapter of the NAACP and have supported their efforts locally and statewide. The Samburu or "Nurturing Knowledge" committee continues to be active and collaborates regularly with Kenyan Friends providing scholarship support for young women to pursue secondary education. We hosted a representative from FCNL who sparked interest

in supporting that committee. Celo Friends Meeting approved a traveling minister whose leading in the area of eco-justice challenges us to recognize the relationship between damage to the environment and poverty, and the inverse understanding that championing the environment helps bring people out of poverty. The meeting shared these concepts at the local Earth Day celebration in Burnsville this year.

The Committee for Ministry and Care prepares a query for each month. Our queries sometimes seek to help deepen the spiritual experience for individuals in the belief that individual growth leads to spiritual awakening for the meeting as a whole. We post the query on a board in the meetinghouse foyer and read it at the start of meeting on the second Sunday.

We welcomed two new members into our meeting this year. We again offered financial aid to members and attenders who wished to attend SAYMA in the spring.

We again enjoyed two work days this year to maintain our buildings and grounds. The committee keeps a careful eye on the needs of the meeting, and many hands make light (and fun) work while completing the necessary tasks.

At Celo we are grateful to be part of a thriving, active Meeting where we are all growing and learning together in the Light.