

Celo Friends Meeting State of the Meeting Report for 2018
Submitted March, 2019

During these challenging times both here and abroad, Celo Friends Meeting remains a supportive faith community and a great blessing. Worshiping together, we find hope, faith, understanding, and the energy to meet the world's challenges, along with our own, with love and Light. New attenders are bringing fresh insights and energy to our Meeting and our elders continue to provide the wisdom of experience.

The Adult Religious Education Committee has again contributed a great deal to the spiritual growth of members and attenders. Early in the year 2018, the committee completed the educational series titled *Deepening Our Spiritual Life by Understanding Our Quaker Roots*. Programs included sharing our own spiritual journeys, certain aspects of vocal ministry, and our relationship with scripture. Joyce Johnson led the final program by providing a history of Celo Friends Meeting, enlivened by her own commentary and that of others. Beginning in the fall, the committee organized programs on Simplicity and Peace as part of the winter-long series on the Quaker Testimonies, which continues into 2019. As a basis for learning about the testimonies, the committee distributed copies of *Living the Quaker Way* by Philip Gulley, which Friends universally enjoyed and found useful.

We are blessed with generous Friends who contribute their time and talents to the Meeting. In August, Jenifer Morgan read from her memoir *A Full Life*, which provides a great deal of historical insight into the early years of the Celo Friends Meeting and the Celo Community. After a long hiatus, the CFM Newsletter is being regularly composed and distributed. It includes much besides a calendar of events, including very popular "spotlights" on individual attenders and members, which are helping us know one another. Friends "let their lives speak" through participation in numerous efforts in the wider community. Several of our members continue to take a big part in the Feed-A-Child program, providing weekly assistance to more than 370 food-insecure children in Yancey County. Friends also have been active in organizations helping immigrants. Following a Friend's leading, the Meeting offered support for the highly successful World Peace Games, enabling a local fifth grade class to simulate problem solving on a global scale. A number of other community programs and organizations receive ongoing financial contributions from the Meeting.

In April, Geeta McGahey reported on her recent experiences as an FWCC traveling minister. Geeta's leading is to join with Quaker congregations, programmed and un-programmed, liberal and conservative, in the belief that "with the grounding of early Friends, hearts will be transformed to care more about creation, to care more about the poor threatened by climate disruption, to care more about each other, and to care more about the stranger."

Thanks to the dedication of our Margithaus Committee, we were able to replace the old floor in the fellowship building. At the instigation of the Buildings and Grounds committee, many Friends enjoyed participating in two workdays to keep the meetinghouse grounds and buildings fit and beautiful. We completed the project to beautify the area around the concrete foundation for the old meetinghouse. Rocks and native plantings surrounding the foundation and a stone bench facing the old fireplace, hearth, and chimney make an inviting place to gather and to

reflect on Friends who formed the foundation of our Meeting and to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of the grounds and the surrounding mountains.

In other committee news, First Day School continues to provide our children and those visiting with meaningful programming during the Meeting for Worship. First Day School often meets outside and consists of nature walks, virtues studies, arts and crafts, and Godly Play stories. For their always-highly-anticipated Christmas program, FDS presented *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Ten children took roles, and the preschoolers made a perfect appearance as the people from Whoville. Though we don't currently have a strong teenage presence in the Meeting, we are happy to support SAYF and will host a retreat at the Arthur Morgan School in the early spring.

The Nominating Committee began codifying the work of all committees by soliciting "job descriptions" for each one, which helped all in the meeting to be re-introduced to the tasks and roles that make it possible to enjoy our Meeting. Using the spirit-led process described by the Strawberry Creek Meeting, we have identified a new co-clerk for the coming year and anticipate engaging more members and attenders in the work of the Meeting.

The newly-named "End-of-Life" committee has been exploring ways to engage Friends in making their final wishes known. Based on the groundwork laid by Ernest and Jenifer Morgan over the years, the committee will provide forms for Friends to use to record their family contact information and final wishes, along with information on services that are available locally. The committee will also help facilitate burial in the Celo Community cemetery or elsewhere.

We lost two members of our meeting community during 2018. Dot Barrus passed away in May, and Eda Smith passed away in September. We celebrated their long lives with memorial meetings filled with stories and songs and memories.

Our members and attenders cherish the Meeting for Worship, cherish the silence, and cherish the movement of the spirit. We are, as always, grateful to be part of a vibrant and active Meeting where we are all growing and learning together in the Light.