

2026 State of Society Reports Monthly Meetings of Illinois Yearly Meeting

Bloomington-Normal Monthly Meeting

Friends in Bloomington-Normal Monthly Meeting feel the inspiration of the Spirit in our worship. A wider variety of voices have offered up messages. During the last year, having more visitors has brought our meeting new life and vibrancy.

We have been giving loving support and funds to help two families with emergency needs. Our close-knit community of Friends has plenty of support, love and Light to share with more new Seekers. We have recognized that we could be doing more to bear witness as a group in the Bloomington-Normal area and to be easier to find.

One area of fruitful outreach has been the local Advocacy Team working with Friends Committee on National Legislation. The group is growing connections to other local faith communities and sharing our values with legislators.

The Women's Meeting for Eating is a joyful fellowship that meets monthly, sharing both food and the sustenance of friendship.

Our First Day School energizes the meeting. All generations in the meeting explored Quaker history with the stories in the book *Quakers on the Move*. Children are showing commitment to the gathering and the current lessons focused on stewardship and sustainability from Quaker Earthcare Witness Earthcare for Children. Discussions around seeds and growth parallel our meeting's growth in the Spirit. The enthusiasm of the youth is inspiring to the adults of the meeting. We are contemplating how to go forth with First Day School when some young Friends reach high-school age.

Some Bloomington-Normal and Clear Creek attenders had deeper discussions about faith and Quaker practices in a Q101 class led by yearly meeting co-Field Secretary Marcia Nelson. We look forward to further learning about history and further spiritual nurture in the upcoming Q102 class with Marcia.

Burlington Worship Group

The Burlington Worship Group has been meeting for over ten years. During the pandemic, we continued to gather via Zoom. In the past year, two attenders became members of Clear Creek, our monthly meeting. Once a month, Friends from surrounding areas join us for worship, often followed by a potluck meal. We are considering adding a time of singing prior to worship. We have also seen an increase in attendance.

We are grateful for the steady sense of community that has developed among us and for the ways in which new attenders have enriched our worship. At the same time, we continue to seek ways to deepen our spiritual life together.

Clear Creek Monthly Meeting

Clear Creek is a small, tight-knit community. Since most of us live at a distance from the meetinghouse, we tend to arrive early for worship in order to have time to visit, then continue that

activity over sack lunches after worship. In this way, we keep up with what is going on in each other's lives—the joys and the concerns—and support each other in any way we can, whether that is through hugs, listening, food or Light-holding. We know we can count on each other for spiritual support.

We welcomed Friends from several other meetings and worship groups including a number of children who enjoyed an indoor egg hunt in the meetinghouse due to rainy weather outside. Our potluck, as always, provided an abundance of delicious food. This annual event typically marks our return to worship in the meetinghouse rather than Clear Creek House, a welcome sign of spring and a renewal of activity on the campus and a lift to our spirits.

We continue to see benefits from our March 2025 retreat, “An Introduction to Quaker Meditation,” which was led by Marcia Nelson. One of the participants has become a frequent attendee at worship. Several area residents who saw the newspaper advertisement about the retreat but who were unable to attend have also visited us, and we have had other visitors as well including two who now attend worship regularly. Among these other visitors were a couple walking across the country via the American Discovery Trail and a couple traveling around the US and Canada in a travel trailer. Visitors always add to our depth of worship, and we are grateful for those who keep coming back becoming part of our community. Two of our attendees participated in the Quaker 101 sessions led by Marcia and hosted by Bloomington-Normal Friends. We appreciate BN letting our Friends “crash” these sessions.

We have had an increase in membership as well. With the laying down of Spoon River Quaker Meeting, three of their members transferred to Clear Creek. In addition, two long-time attendees of the Burlington Worship Group (under the care of Clear Creek) applied for membership and were welcomed to our meeting.

Illness and injury have plagued our numbers this year. Rose Dennis Johnson was injured at work in August and continues recovering at home. Both Marydale Stewart and Rachel Mershon fell in the winter and are currently in rehabilitation facilities in Spring Valley and Peru, respectively. We hope they will eventually be able to return to their homes and join us for worship. While there is not much we have been able to do for these Friends, we have visited when we can and continue holding all of them and their families in the Light.

June brought us Illinois Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions, marking the 150th anniversary of ILYM. It was glorious to see so many Friends come to campus, many of whom we had not seen in several years. In July, we hosted the wedding of Claire Gunnell Goode and Jay Farris. Claire had grown up in Clear Creek Meeting, and we were pleased to provide clearness for the couple and have the wedding in the meetinghouse. The wedding was followed by a dinner under the maple trees and dancing on the lawn.

We are excited to have hosted the ILYM Clerks and Continuing Committee Representatives Retreat, “Nurturing Our Meetings,” which was held on March 28. It was a valuable opportunity for meetings to connect and share ideas. This was the first use of the campus this year and will usher in a new season of events, bringing much appreciated activity and guests to us.

This winter's weather has been hard on attendance. We have had to cancel worship no less than four times due to cold and snow which makes travel for many of us unwise. We are looking forward to the return of spring, and to the return of activities to the yearly meeting campus.

Columbia Friends Meeting

Our meeting's worship sees a constant core of attendees both in person and on Zoom for our hybrid meeting. We also have a steady influx of visitors, many of whom are first time attendees. At times, we experience gathered meetings which nourish our spirit. We also have a culture where people feel comfortable and supported sharing their struggles and concerns during worship and at the rise of meeting. Our children join us for the last few minutes of worship and are invited to share what they have

learned in first day school. This brings us all joy as their messages can be spirit led and inspiring. We have an active Meeting for Learning program that has led study sessions on Quaker worship and books of various religious traditions. Our midweek meeting on Zoom has kept us connected to Friends who have moved away, as well as to our ILYM field secretaries. An Earth Care Witness member also regularly hosts an outdoor meditation, which is joined by people from Show Me Dharma and the Unitarian Universalists.

Our current location gives us visibility and a space for children to play and gardens to grow. Twelve of our households are close enough to walk to meeting, all of which helps to support our sustainability testimony and helps to build our community.

We have members who feel led to take action for justice through providing meals for unhoused people; we encourage people to voice their concerns to their political representatives; we continue to hold a small monthly peace vigil; and individuals participate in larger organizations and demonstrations for social justice.

We lost one of our elder and beloved members of meeting at age 94. This year also saw us welcoming one new member, and we look forward to their marriage under the care of meeting. Many of our younger families and attenders share deep friendships and support one another through difficult times. They have built a strong community and help to maintain the large vegetable garden, and enjoy many activities together, including pizza and movie nights at the meetinghouse. Meeting has also formed strong ties to the family who lives in and cares for our meetinghouse, as they sojourn with us from Myanmar. We look forward to the spirit working to guide us with hope and strength to meet the challenges of the year ahead.

Downers Grove Friends Meeting

The expectant waiting in silence and openness for messages from the Divine in meeting for worship continues to nourish the life of the meeting. It is often the same few Friends who share spoken messages, and some yearn for more Friends to feel led to speak. But silent worship can lead to a sense of a shared spiritual experience uniting with each other to make possible the work of the Spirit.

We live our faith interpersonally and in community with others who engage in activities rooted in our testimonies of peace and equality, i.e., protests of immigration treatment, contributing to the work of a county-wide organization that teaches English to immigrants, works to improve the safety of our streets, and advocacy with politicians.

We have opportunities to grow spiritually through fellowship activities in the meeting and through inter-meeting and yearly meeting activities such as programs, discussions, Quaker 8s, and time to worship together. Our woodland labyrinth provides a place for walking worship alone or in community. We are now in a long-term trial of all hybrid meetings for worship so that the experience is accessible, inclusive, and enabling connection and community for all who are present.

The meeting is vital in terms of numbers attending weekly. We are coming together into a growing community. During fellowship after meeting for worship, newcomers are made to feel welcome. However, we have difficulty retaining visitors, especially younger attenders. We currently have only one child in the meeting.

The core of the meeting is aging and that makes it difficult to find Friends to do the work of the meeting. The problem is that too few Friends do most of the work. For many, the idea of doing work in their house of worship or using their gifts and skills to serve on a committee is an unfamiliar concept. Many are also very busy personally or live at a considerable distance from the meetinghouse. In contrast, the heart of our community is most fully realized during projects when numerous people are involved, such as on landscape workdays and through the dedicated work of our committees. At times like this, working together deepens the spiritual vitality of the meeting for all.

Duneland Friends Meeting

Duneland Friends Meeting (DFM) continued in 2025 to be vibrant while small, meeting twice a month at the Timberbridge Condominium Clubhouse in Valparaiso, Indiana and every Wednesday by Zoom. Duneland Friends Meeting showed both signs of strength as a faith community and signs of fragility in 2025. We are held together by the joy found in meeting and visiting with one another. Members share servants' hearts and a genuine care for each other. Our community of highly educated individuals remains eager to learn and continues to participate actively in adult education. In the view of one member, we are people of great ambition, yet without ambition to be great. Our fragility was apparent as several members experienced health issues, and in-person attendance on 2nd and 4th Sundays waned for a time. We even discussed whether we should renew the agreement for our meeting space for 2026. The result of the discussion was that we fairly quickly found unity to renew it, especially since a visitor had recently found us at our meeting place. In addition, we welcomed two new members: Philip May and Daniel Freire. Even as numbers may change over time, the depth of experience, wisdom, and compassion within the meeting remains a strength.

Thanks to the Zoom program, we continued our weekly midweek meetings which serve as a time for fellowship, adult education, and our monthly business meetings. For adult education, we took the suggestion of one member that we consider the topic of "The Light" from a variety of angles. At least six of us offered to each lead a session, and this topic engaged us through the end of the year, with other sessions planned for 2026. The willingness of Friends to prepare and lead sessions, to listen to a variety of perspectives, to respond in worship sharing affirm our strength as a community committed to our spiritual growth.

Friends have long resisted reducing their faith to a single defining statement. Our testimonies—peace, equality, integrity, simplicity, stewardship, and community—along with commitments to social justice and walking cheerfully over the earth as led by the Light and truth, are understood and lived out in diverse ways. These varied leadings may move individuals in different directions, yet they are united by a shared intention to do good. Though our resources are limited and our efforts modest, a small group doing a little good faithfully is, indeed, enough.

There are many opportunities to serve locally by meeting smaller, tangible needs, and these offer a natural focus for the meeting. While drawing attention to ourselves is never the goal, responding lovingly to local needs can quietly demonstrate who Friends are and what we value, often leading others to take notice. Through such grounded service, the meeting can continue to express its care for neighbors while remaining clear about its limits and trusting larger challenges to others. We continued to view our meeting funds as a way to put our faith into action. We used our Sufferings Fund twice to help meeting families in need. We made special donations, beyond our planned contributions, in response to our concerns for the consequences of immigration enforcement and for food security in Valparaiso. We are also strengthened by our connections to Illinois Yearly Meeting with five Friends attending Annual Sessions, intervisitation with Elkhart River Worship Group, participation in the Environmental Concerns Committee, Racial Equity and Education Committee, Ministry and Advancement Committee, and the wider Quaker world.

None of us is promised tomorrow, yet this awareness can invite us into deeper faithfulness today. Though numbers may change, the meeting's purpose need not diminish. By remaining present, attentive, and open to the Light among us, Duneland Friends Meeting can continue to live its witness—however small it may seem—with integrity, hope, and love.

Lake Forest Friends Meeting

Our spiritual center is meeting for worship—an opportunity to center, empty the mind, and listen for the promptings of the Spirit. Lake Forest Friends Meeting has a tradition of waiting worship that is deeply valued. Friends also value vocal ministry, but perhaps would like more. We are always looking for more in terms of deeper spiritual connection.

All meetings try to live out Quaker values in times of political turmoil. LFFM is struggling with this. How are we addressing distress, angst, anger, and a desire for action? One opportunity to address such feelings and leadings is through a weekly protest at the corner of Route 41 and Old Elm Road. Another is by sharing potluck meals where people can discuss anything, including concerns and feelings stirred up by political or other events. Members are also participating in political activism outside of the meeting, including events led by American Friends Service Committee and non-Quaker organizations.

To promote spiritual deepening during the past year, a Bible study based on George Fox was offered at LFFM. The meeting held a newcomers group and an opportunity to participate in an extended meeting for worship.

The meeting has regular events that provide more opportunities for sharing spiritual experiences, including the handwork gatherings, midweek meeting for worship, and adult reading group. Friends also gather regularly for music and to play games.

LFFM does community outreach in several ways. We provide meals for Lake County Haven and support refugee families in the Chicago area through Exodus World Service. We also host an annual fundraiser for F.O.C.U.S., which provides the Justus D. Howell Scholarships for students attending the College of Lake County.

The children's and teens' programs are vibrant and contribute mightily to LFFM. They show leadership in community outreach, having initiated a twist on potluck Sundays: they've made soup for everyone and asked people to donate to a food pantry instead of bringing a potluck dish to share. The children have also prepared meals for Lake County Haven and gathered provisions for refugee families. At the rise of meeting, the children report on what they did in First Day School. The report causes children to reflect on their morning and it creates a bridge between children and adults at meeting.

We are grateful for each other and for our well-loved meetinghouse. Despite the challenges of this particular time in history, we keep the words on the FCNL bumper sticker in our hearts and minds: "Love thy neighbor (No Exceptions)." It sums up what we want to do as Friends.

Northside Friends Meeting

Frequent themes in our listening sessions this year were noise, movement, and growth.

Northside has moved twice since this time last year. In March 2025 we learned that we would need to move out of the space we had shared with Chicago Friends School. An ad hoc committee quickly began exploring options and we decided to move to Edgewater Presbyterian Church (EPC). It is located not far from our previous location, and is close to the "L" Red Line, which is used by many of our attenders. We started off in a small room that barely fit us; through the positive partnership we developed with EPC, we were able to move a few months later to the larger space where we now meet. First Day attendance now averages 55 Friends (including approximately 9 online). Our moves have reinforced our belief that the meeting is the people, not the space.

In the past year we have made a joyful noise, be it with very active vocal ministry, the open and vulnerable sharing during Joys and Sorrows, or the activities of Friends at demonstrations and vigils around the city. We are discerning leadings regarding anti-racism work and social justice, and have been challenged when seeking unity. We grieve the war and strife in today's world. Friends seek to engage our communities for positive change and provide sustenance for activists and resisters.

An influx of families with young children and a small baby boom have motivated a re-formed Children's Committee. A First Day Program is offered once a month, with childcare provided by volunteers on other First Days. One Friend described the childcare space as a room with a "good, peaceful, fun culture." A welcoming for two babies born last year will be held in early May.

Meeting for Worship continues to be enhanced by technology. This year Technology Committee introduced handheld microphones to worship, as well as new in-room speakers. These improve accessibility for both Friends attending online and in person.

The meeting continues to experience an influx of new seekers, and is enriched by all they bring us. Many are younger people with little "church" experience, or those who are moving on from their church of origin. Queer and transgender seekers find comfort and community in meeting. Seasoned Northsiders enjoy introducing new attenders to Quaker practice. We were reminded of the distinction between guests and hosts in Quaker meeting. It is a joy to watch Friends move from being a guest to a host, and a challenge to older Friends to respectfully share hosting. In response to this influx, a new Community Inreach Committee was formed to encourage fellowship and community, and welcome newcomers.

We lost two Friends last year. Wil Rutt, who had contributed so much to Northside over many years, passed away at age 90. Wil believed in us when we were at our smallest, and encouraged us to take steps to stabilize and grow. His stalwart faith and friendship are greatly missed. Our other loss was young Henry "Hank" Sullihan, who died just before his third birthday. Hank was a sparkler who brought joy and a love of Elmo and chocolate croissants to our meeting.

In September we held a weekend retreat at Clear Creek House in McNabb. About 15 Friends attended the intergenerational weekend that included Story Theology led by Beth Burbank and Spiritual Journey sharing. We held our annual summer picnic in late August. We took advantage of having access to our space full-time (a first in Northside's history!) to hold our holiday party on a Saturday morning. The Community Inreach Committee provided activities for all ages, and carol singing was accompanied by guitar, ukelele, and many hand-held percussion instruments.

"There's a continuity from when I was a child in this meeting until today, and it's not the people, it's the spirit of the meeting." We continue to listen for the Spirit in worship, Meeting for Business, and our daily lives. New attenders join us for community, silence, and for service. Our attenders have a diverse range of beliefs, and one Friend asked, "How do we maintain a center for what is Quaker in our Meeting?"

Oak Park Friends Meeting

Oak Park Friends Meeting continues to be an accepting and supportive community. We learn from each other's wisdom. We feel that we have had more vocal ministry this year, while maintaining a good balance of silent worship as well. For the past few years we have had a sense that we were shrinking, but this past year we have had many visitors, some repeat visitors, and one or two new attenders who attend on most weeks and fully join in the life of the meeting. We have also had a few children who visited the meeting, including the one-year-old great-grandson of one of our members.

We are blessed with the faithful service of long-term co-clerks, treasurer and recording clerk, as well as the participants in the various committees. The String Academy has been a friendly, responsive landlord, and we plan to share a booth with them at the annual "A Day in Our Village" event in Oak Park in early June. We have placed a large sign in the front window saying "Quaker Meeting 10 a.m. Sundays" with a dove logo.

We participate in the wider Quaker world and have relationships with Chicago Friends School, Care Children's Academy (a Quaker school) in Uganda and with Scattergood Friends School. With the stewardship of our Peace, Justice & Environment Committee, we donate to various Quaker organizations. In addition, during this time of national and worldwide turbulence, members and attenders are individually active in various peaceful expressions of speaking truth to power.

We were pleased to host two visitors with meaningful presentations this year. The first was Michael Luick-Thrams, an American historian who has lived in Germany for many years and presented information on Germans and Quakers during World War II. He spoke mainly about a group of 185 Jewish and political opponents of Hitler that were housed at Scattergood Friends School in Iowa during the war. He is the executive director of TRACES which oversaw the creation of an exhibit on the subject and there was also a documentary on it produced by Iowa Public Television.

More recently, we were delighted to have Candy Boyd of St. Louis Friends Meeting visit us to share information on Project Lakota-Ville, one of the Quaker projects that we donate to annually. Project Lakota-Ville works on housing and other needs on the Pine Ridge Lakota Reservation in South Dakota and the historic Ville neighborhood in St. Louis, which was severely damaged by a tornado last year. Candy brought pictures of the tornado destruction and spoke about her activities and insights in working with this project.

We have an ongoing spiritual group called Quaker Share that meets 3 times a month. The Adult Religious Education (ARE) Committee holds monthly events using a Quakerism 101 theme. Currently we are reviewing the SPICES testimonies, which has led to fruitful discussions.

On months with a 5th Friday we gather at a Friend's home to make lunches for Housing Forward, the local housing/homelessness organization.

Our weekly e-newsletter keeps friends and visitors abreast of monthly and yearly meeting activities, as well as of events in the wider world.

We plan to continue welcoming visitors and endeavoring to uphold our members and attenders. We feel that the state of our monthly meeting is progressing in a positive direction, and plan to discern ways to keep on this course.

South Bend Friends Meeting

South Bend Friends has crested and is coming down the other side of a generational transition, with some of our more seasoned Friends stepping back from active participation in committees and newer Friends stepping into leadership and committee roles. This transition has prompted us to be increasingly intentional in having gathered ways of working together. We continue to reap the benefits of monthly potlucks and snacks at the rise of meeting, both of which we restarted last year after COVID, as Friends continue and deepen conversations rising out of worship.

We have a vibrant community of young Friends and parents. In December, Young Friends presented a "friendly beasts Christmas pageant." We are grateful for the technology that allowed us to record and share the pageant virtually within our meeting. Many Friends who could not attend meeting that day expressed joy at being able to experience the pageant in this fashion. More recently, young Friends painted wooden eggs for Easter, and older young Friends hid them outdoors on a beautiful Sunday for the youngest Friends to find.

Meeting continues to partner with local organizations such as We Make Indiana, a local multi-racial, multi-faith movement working with local public officials on policy changes to ensure that all can thrive. We have continued to express concern for accompanying our immigrant neighbors, and a small group of Friends have started to volunteer with Neighbor to Neighbor, an organization that works with immigrant families, to partner with an immigrant family to help them integrate into the South Bend community.

We are entering a period of uncertainty about our physical space, which may take a great deal of our energy and concern for the next couple of years. We are waiting to hear from the church from whom we rent space, whether they will stay in their historic building or sell it. We are trying to prepare for a variety of possible outcomes while discerning the best way forward for our community. Given the turmoil within our country and around the world, we continue to create space to be open with each other, to listen and strengthen relationship bonds with each other and the wider world.

Southern Illinois Quaker Meeting

In preparing this State of Society, SIQM reflected on the queries in Illinois Yearly Meeting's *Book of Faith and Practice* and reread our submission from last year. We find ourselves in much the same place as a year ago. We are still small but maintain a faithful corps of people who attend regularly and have a number of others who attend as they can. There is a deep bond among those who attend, either as members or as long-time attenders. We are often only five or six, but occasionally are around ten. We frequently come to a gathered silence, being in community enriching the sense of the presence of Spirit. Vocal ministry is only occasional but often feels as though a given message touches a questioning or concern of another person present. Even when our hour of worship includes no vocal ministry, we share at the end thoughts and experiences of the silence that did not quite become a fully formed message to be delivered as ministry. This draws us closer and allows the community to offer reflection and acceptance of what is shared.

We also draw closer as a community through the sharing of potluck meals once a month and gatherings for "Life of the Meeting" potlucks at one or another of our homes. The latter allows us to come together with those we have come to call the "Quaker adjacent"—spouses and partners of people in the meeting who do not attend themselves and those whose schedules may not allow them to regularly attend Meeting for Worship. They too are part of our Friends community. Several from our small meeting attend the Quarterly and Annual Sessions, and return to us, sharing richer Spirit. The visits from the Field Secretaries also connect us to the wider body of Friends.

Like many, we are troubled and vigilant about the many injustices and threats to those in our community, in our country, and in the world, whose lives are made more precarious and uncertain by policies and actions of our government. We act according to our individual leadings to support those most harmed and to help change the course we are on as a nation. These disturbances that reach so deeply into the fabric of our society compel us to act as we can. We hold those harmed, and try to hold those inflicting harm, in the Light and struggle to find the ways we can most effectively make a difference. The chaos in world and social order makes our presence in silence and community a respite, reflection and inspiration, from which we hope to go forward to effect change in whatever small or large way we can. It is meaningful and exhausting work, and we are glad to be together in Spirit.

St. Louis Friends Meeting

In many ways, our meeting seems the healthiest it has been in years. We have had many new attenders in the past year, and many of them have become steadfast in their attendance. Alongside long-term members and attenders, there are a lot of full pews each First Day! At our April Meeting for Business, we welcomed our newest member, and the clerk read two more letters requesting the next steps for membership.

A focus on building repair has energized the meeting. Our building received some (small, compared to many buildings in North St. Louis) tornado damage last May 16. Looking into repairs revealed many more issues that had gone unresolved, which compromised the integrity of the building, but would cost large sums to repair, and a lot of time to arrange for repairs and allocation of funds. A threshing session about our building revealed that most Friends value the spiritual benefits of keeping the building, and keeping it in good repair. Thus our property and finance committees have been very active this year, and the meeting at large is so appreciative. Ministry and Caring Committee notes that having a building that looks as if it is being maintained creates a feeling of security for new attenders—that this new spiritual home will not soon crumble.

We have gone from years of mostly completely silent meetings, to Meetings for Worship with a good balance of silence and a few messages delivered each week, from a diversity of speakers and a variety of traditions or viewpoints. Usually one or another will “speak to one’s condition.” At the rise of meeting, people greet each other and discussions continue from messages. Some messages are intentional or unintentional queries. Some Friends say the meetings feel “gathered” in the silence. Hearing the leadings of others enhances our own path.

In these times of political turmoil, injustice, and war, many are seeking spiritual refreshment, solace, and community and finding it among Friends at our meeting. We have an active Peace, Justice, and Community Concerns (PJCC) committee, and many Friends are socially engaged in the St. Louis area and beyond. Some examples: our meeting continues to spiritually and financially support Project Lakota-ville with time, labor, and funds, this year primarily assisting victims of the St. Louis May 16 tornado. (Project Lakota-ville works under Lakota and Black leadership assisting with a variety of community projects.) PJCC participated in a vigil with our local AFSC chapter on ending youth incarceration. Several Meeting members/attenders volunteered at the first Get Outdoors Day in Fairground Park, supporting children in North St. Louis who have limited access to nature.

St. Louis Friends Meeting has ongoing and intermittent ways outside of Meeting for Worship to support its members and attenders on their spiritual path. We have weekly First Day school for children with two or three or regulars and occasionally up to five or six children. Our youngest Friends are exposed to Quaker testimonies and are encouraged with love and patience along their own path as Seekers of the Light. There is an ongoing Friendly Dozen group and smaller Spiritual Direction groups that have been meeting for spiritual sustenance for years. A Reading Group meets regularly and Adult Religious Education is robustly attended. This year, we hosted an Introduction to Quakerism series. New attenders have mentioned feeling welcomed personally and appreciative of the literature for newcomers at the entrance. Our annual attender’s dinner has been announced for May. Committee work also helps people in our meeting feel engaged with each other in the community and wider world. Our work together helps us grow in humility, collaboration, and patience.

There is work to be done in the world, in our meeting, and within ourselves. We bring our wider cultures and flaws with us. Our processes are often opaque to newcomers. Valuing simplicity in a digital age can lead to some communication and outreach challenges. While our Committee for the Unhoused continues to find ways to support this community, some of our meeting mourn the lapse in using our meetinghouse as a winter shelter. Finally, we hope more attenders are moved toward committee engagement and membership.

Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting

Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting is satisfied with our worship and community this past year. As some of our older members surrender duties, newer, younger ones step up. We miss our Friend Sten Johansen, who died 6/30/2025. We have welcomed several new attenders recently, including young adults. Worship is usually deep and enriching, with a variety of Friends moved to speak most First Days. Meetings for business progress with laboring together and harmony. Children nurture the community as they share their joyful energy.

The meeting engages in pleasing community activities among ourselves. We have several formal and informal groups that break bread together; we craft; we walk our parks together; we study the Bible; we sing before worship; we help each other with appointments, rides, moves, and more. After worship, conversations linger, and we often have organized times of spiritual sharing or learning about activist causes. So we grow and support each other.

Meeting continues to be active in the world at large. Recent activism has included help for a new winter homeless shelter, and assistance for urban farming and provisioning the hungry. Meeting strives

to reduce our carbon footprint with renovations, and works to improve the ecological vitality of our property. Members attend or organize a variety of political protests as we work for a better world. We are all deeply concerned about our foreign-born neighbors. As a meeting, we have contributed to helping with some of their medical bills. Some Friends have also provided additional support for immigrants. In other matters, some continue our work with detainees and their families, including occasional singing at the nearby jail.

We look forward and pray for another year of growth, stronger connections, and improving circumstances.