

## State of the Meeting Report

Deep River Friends Meeting  
Tenth Month, Fourteenth Day, Two Thousand Twenty One

Friends,

We write you today to share our challenges and our blessings from the past year. Friends have been discerning our way to continue to stay engaged with our members, attenders, and community given the circumstances the Covid-19 pandemic has brought. We have also been carefully listening for our way after the departure of our Pastoral Minister of nineteen years, Scott Wagoner, in Seventh Month of this year. We have mourned the loss of many Friends this year as well who were all an important part of the fabric that weaves us together as a Meeting. Yet, with all the uncertainty and heavy hearts at times, we are always aware of the blessing in our midst through the presence of the Spirit which is always known to us. We have welcomed new membership, celebrated births of children and grandchildren, and praised the recovering of many ailing Friends.

Currently, our main focus as a Meeting is discerning who we are as a Meeting and who we want as the first among Friends in a Pastoral Ministry role. We have hired Don Durham as our Interim Pastor and entered into an intentional process with him to work out this definition of ourselves as well as who the person we are looking for could be. Don brings deep experience in this process and experience with Friends from his time at many other churches and his time at First Friends in Greensboro. We are grateful and excited to be doing this work with him.

We are pleased to report we have been able to hold in person Meeting for Worship through most all of the pandemic with careful planning and adapting. We mostly held services outdoors through 2020 and we able to come back to our Meeting Room in Third Month 2021 being careful to observe many precautions. We have also been offering worship through online services like Facebook, YouTube, and our website to ensure we offer a way for all to join us in our waiting time for the Spirit. We also continue to reach out to Friends through our newsletter, email, and phone tree to keep them up to date on news, events, and needs around the Meeting.

This year has been one of more quiet in our worship than in the past. This has mainly been due to the logistical nature of being outside in a large open space or having less Friends in attendance to share vocal ministries in open worship as they may not have yet been comfortable due to Covid-19 concerns. We have had more vocal ministry as we have reentered the Meeting Room and these messages continue to be meaningful and guided by Spirit as we have come to expect over the years at Deep River Friends. However, Friends do still seem to be mostly in a season of more quiet reflection during worship.

The prepared messages continue to be encouraging, challenging, and thought provoking. While Friends do miss the messages of our previous Pastoral Minister they are enjoying what our Interim Pastor is bringing each week. Change is never easy and often unwelcome but Friends have embraced it with grace and gratitude.

Since the departure of our Pastoral Minister in Seventh Month pastoral care has been an area of thoughtful concern among the Meeting. We have worked hard and many Friends have started or increased their own personal outreach to others in the Meeting. Our Interim Pastor has been diligently connecting with Friends to get to know them and to find out what needs require attention. He has been working with Ministry and Counsel as well to ensure the needs of the Meeting are met.

We continue to engage in our missions supporting the greater Friends network through Worthington Friends in Jamaica and Belize Friends School. Our Quaker Men and Women's groups continue their work contributing to Friends missions. We also continue to support local community needs through school supply collection, food drives, crop walk donations, and more. Our Meeting is always looking for ways to engage in seeing that of God in everyone and being a good neighbor to all.

Overall we are a Meeting doing well. However, like all right now, we are mindful of our needs personally, financially, spiritually, and more. We are blessed but we struggle. We have great times of joy and times of anxiousness. We are blessed and we can say we will continue to be, but know we must remain ever clear in heart and mind for the leading of Spirit to carry us through the difficult times we are finding along the way.