NCFF Annual Gathering

9 September 2023

9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Friends gathered in centering worship at Quaker Lake. About 65 Friends were present.

Welcome

Clerk Richard Wilcox welcomed all to this meeting, in which the focus would be on fellowship rather than business. The theme was “Building Community.”

Worship

Richard opened worship by asking us to be mindful of our Creator on a beautiful day, and then Friends settled into silence.

In a few minutes, 11 Friends each read a different verse of scripture with the theme of protecting widows, orphans and migrants. Richard then gave several historical and current examples of people who – like widows, orphans and migrants – may be left out of a system of belonging and privilege, and asked Friends to consider who might need an advocate now. Being mindful of this, he had printed out copies of today’s documents for those without computer access, and noted that all our materials are in English, which is a language many in the Miami Meeting do not understand.

Worship Sharing Groups

Next came Worship Sharing Groups. Friends present had been assigned a small group, in which several queries about their Meetings and the role of NCFF in community building were discussed.

“Getting to Know You” Activity

Kathy Adams led an activity she uses in the *Alternatives to Violence* training program. Friends were paired up and asked to share information about themselves while a partner listened. In a few minutes the roles were reversed, so each had a chance both to share and to listen, and finally to introduce their partner to another group of two.

Building Community Opportunities

Following lunch Josh Brown treated Friends first to beautiful hammer dulcimer music, then spoke about how marvelous but also elusive Community can be. He noted that not knowing each other can negatively affect community, but there are opportunities everywhere to come together in fellowship and love. Love for others is critical to knowing God, and to allowing “evil to weaken and good to be raised up,” in the words of John Woolman.

Young Adult Report

David Smith reported that the young adults present today were very happy to finally be meeting in person. They had good discussions and want to continue to build relationships and community and be connected to all ages. They want to share Quakerism, as they feel there is a thirst for it.

Bingo Game

Friends enjoyed a game of Bingo, hosted by Cassandra Israel, in which there were numerous prizes awarded to winners.

Closing Worship

Richard shared a couple of stories from his life, in which he had witnessed good things happening and community being built in a church sleepover and a trip to Jamaica. He encouraged us to find times and places outside of worship and Meeting activities to be together and let the Spirit move people into good work and good relationships.

Announcements

The Antiracism Working Group will meet via Zoom on September 21, October 19 and November 16.

North Carolina Friends Historical Society will meet on November 4 at Providence Friends Meeting. Hal Pugh, potter and author of a book on Omie Wise, will be the speaker.

The meeting was adjourned and Friends helped put away tables and chairs.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Hood Seel