

Ames Friends Meeting Annual *State of the Meeting* report

121 S. Maple Avenue, Ames, IA 50010

June 29, 2021

Clerk: Lee S. Tesdell

Ames Friends Meeting (AFM) has worshiped in a hybrid form for most of the past year, with some of us masking and distancing at our meetinghouse, while others join via Zoom. The technology for virtual meeting has allowed online visitation and we have felt fortunate to have met Friends from other locations in the US and from other countries. Although we have transitioned primarily to in-person meetings as of early summer, 2021, we are grateful for the gifts of those who have participated virtually. We plan to continue to offer a Zoom option as we emerge from the pandemic. An additional blessing is the transfer membership of two Friends from the Live Oak Friends Meeting in Houston, Texas.

Our vocal ministry during meeting is sparse. We, nevertheless, are grateful for the ministry of silence as well as speech. Some members have also participated in a number of complementary practices of spirit, including a monthly Meeting for Healing, a monthly Experiment with Light meeting (with a reduced number of meetings during the pandemic), and regular participation in virtual meetings for worship at Pendle Hill. Some have participated in Yearly Meeting Spirit Sharing groups, bringing these fruits of the spirit to our worship. We are again resurrecting our monthly discussion of queries and other topics on the first Sunday of each month, although we have not seen our way clear to address Yearly Meeting Queries in a systematic way.

The AFM has been involved collectively in a number of projects and concerns, both local and global. The AFM has provided support for DACA immigrant fund and sponsors a student to attend the annual FCNL Spring Lobby weekend. The AFM is a congregation member of A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy (AMOS), the Story County Coronavirus-19 Emergency Immigrant Fund, the Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance (AIRA), the Ames Sanctuary Interfaith Partners (ASIP), and Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). The AFM's FCNL involvement includes an Advocacy Team, which regularly interacts with our elected representatives in Iowa. Our Meeting for Business agenda includes regular reports on Scattergood School, AFSC, and the Ames Climate Action Team. Many in our meeting are led by their faith to be actively engaged in other activities in the community and beyond.

Despite these considerable involvements of "faith in practice," we recognize weaknesses. The AFM does not have a Peace, Social and Environmental Concerns Committee. We recognize that the AFM has room for greater collective activity and common focus as a meeting.

We are especially grateful for the faithful corps of regulars who have been able to pitch in with the mundane work of maintaining a meetinghouse by shoveling snow, paying bills, housecleaning, yard work, maintenance, and negotiating equipment purchases. We are also pleased to have the meetinghouse used by a variety of groups, including a Zen meditation group, writer's group, ASIP, and Mennonites. We hope in the coming year to continue to share our meetinghouse with these and other such groups.