

STATE OF THE MEETING

AMES FRIENDS MEETING

Ames Friends Meeting continues to manifest the joy of gathering for weekly worship in expectant waiting for the move of the Spirit in the post COVID-19 landscape. Members and attenders have eagerly begun to re-engage with important social and justice issues facing our nation and world. While our worship style remains hybrid, we are seeing much more weekly in-person attendance and participation in our monthly potlucks.

The Meeting continues to attract attenders at the same time that sadly one of our members passed away. We were blessed to host a Meeting for Worship with Attention to John Spence's Memorial that drew over 20 family and F/friends as witness to the life and contributions of this unique individual. While always holding dear the memory of departed Friends, a new energy by individuals revitalizes our worship in the form of their active engagement in FCNL advocacy issues and legislative priorities at the State and Federal levels. This has led to more outreach and collaboration with members of various monthly meetings within the IYM-C. Additional outreach efforts include support of 1) immigrant families seeking asylum, 2) refugees, 3) several young people attending FCNL Spring Lobby weekend, and 4) co-sponsorship of a program that emphasizes family reunification of Mexican grandparents that have not seen their families here in the U.S. for more than a decade. Additional advocacy also addressed the national issue of past injustices of the federal government's Indian Boarding School Policies including intergenerational trauma experienced by Native Americans and their communities as a result of these policies. Efforts from members of our Meeting to encourage Congress to address this issue have resulted in the unanimous vote of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to re-introduce a bill promoting the formation of the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States.

When not at work in the wider world, Friends continue to find comfort and strength in both our monthly Meeting for worship as well as our monthly worship with special Attention to Healing. In addition, several Friends continue to participate in the Spiritual Sharing small group opportunities provided by IYM-C that weave a web of interconnectedness rarely found in such a diverse membership spanning many states and geographical areas. In a seemingly more chaotic world, Ames Friends are hard at work promoting peacebuilding in a time of increasing

hostilities and threats of war. At the same time our State of the Meeting reports seem to change little. One issue raised was whether our Meeting was complacent about our engagement as a Meeting rather than what individuals are called to do on their own. Opportunities continue for Friends to raise awareness in the community through radio broadcasts and other venues that inform local citizens of the important civic contributions that Friends are making both locally and nationally. The Mennonite community previously sharing use of our meetinghouse disbanded, but we continue to welcome other groups to enjoy the building and beautiful grounds for their events.