

State of Society Report - 2016
Midcoast Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Pastoral Care. The committee has been busy and has functioned well. In addition to basic responsibilities for Friends who are ill, alone or suffering loss, including quarterly meetings for worship in a shut-in's home, we have offered Listening Sessions to all, put on a birthday party for Friends in their 90's and listened to Friends, including some feeling alienated. We have listened to Friends troubled by the absence of alienated Friends. We have noticed that Friends tend to lack communication skills for clearing up misunderstandings. Emergency Fund Committee is under the care of this committee and a book sale in February contributed modestly to the fund. Remaining books were donated to the Miles Thrift Shop.

Communication. In the absence of a monthly printed newsletter, beginning in October e-news announcements in which events and news of interest to Friends are announced via email on an as-needed basis.

Our meetinghouse and grounds are being actively maintained as needed. We reconditioned and treated the exterior wood decks, and cut back brush along the road to enhance visibility. We installed a composting bin outside for our organic trash. We began seeking bids to replace cushions on 16 benches in the worship room that are aging badly. As a result of a discussion within the Climate Justice group, the Meeting decided to host a solar farm on our property. This farm would provide power to up to nine homes or small businesses. A Minute of Support was approved in June and we made a commitment in August to lease land at the bottom of our open field to a Solar Farm co-op that would provide power to nine homes in Maine. We anticipate lease revenue of over \$600 per year. Due to aesthetic concerns, considerable effort was made to locate the solar array as far from the building and sight lines as practical. Additionally we are discussing plantings as a screen between the backside of the solar array and the Meeting House. Construction should be complete by Re-Vision Energy in June 2017.

The Finance Committee is working with a bookkeeper to maintain accurate and timely records resulting in better presentations to Meeting for Business concerning budgeting. It was necessary to re-key the safe deposit box that we keep since the keys had been lost. The box contains important records concerning the building, the organization of the Corporation of the Midcoast Friends Meeting as a nonprofit, and 11 Conscientious Objector letters amongst other things. Due to fiscal constraints we have had to reluctantly eliminate contributions to AFSC, FCNL and CHIP. Individual members are encouraged to contribute and a thank you letter from CHIP was received in November for contributions they had received. We continue to collect voluntary contributions for the Ramallah Friends School. Our challenges and concerns going forward are to meet the financial needs of the Meeting without reliance on drawing down reserve principal.

The Ministry and Counsel Committee reflects our Meeting as a whole. We feel the quality of worship is settled and seems to be deepening. We have attracted some new, younger regular attenders and have welcomed Friends who have transferred their memberships here from elsewhere. Another member transferred her membership to Boulder Colorado where she had moved. Along with Pastoral Care, we are concerned that a few members and attenders are no

longer coming due to unresolved conflicts and we plan to reach out and listen to those who feel disenfranchised. We changed monthly potlucks on the first Sunday of each month to a simple soup and bread meal provided by one or two members. Childcare is now being provided by a local teenager whom we pay a modest allowance, this makes it easier to guarantee that parents can attend on any given Sunday. In June, the granddaughter of a Friend, sponsored by this Meeting for travel under the Pickett Endowment for Quaker Leadership, shared her moving experience attempting to work with the Women's Foundation of Nepal and travel after the major earthquake that occurred while she was there. In June, a letter published in several local newspapers in response to the Orlando shootings was composed by an *ad hoc* committee of the Meeting and signed by several members on behalf of the Meeting. It was posted to the NEYM web site and picked up as an example by another Meeting in New York. Many members held a dawn to dusk Standing Rock Fast and Prayer vigil in the Meetinghouse and on the Damariscotta-Newcastle Bridge on Sunday, November 20. In prayerful solidarity with the Water Protectors at Standing Rock.

The Midcoast Outreach and Peace Center (MOPC) Sue Rockwood has continued to maintain office hours on Monday and Wednesday from 10-2 in the Meeting as our outreach coordinator. She has worked to create programs for young families and to attract new members. Numerous successful programs have attracted people from the community in larger numbers than we have seen before. As part of our continued engagement with local community we have been actively participating in a program in collaboration with 8 other local churches to provide diapers through the local Food Bank. Members have made voluntary contributions to support this effort and our co-ordinator is actively engaged in distributing diapers to those in need. During the summer, a busload of young Friends participating in programs at Chewonki were attending meeting with us. An informational event about our proposed Solar Farm attracted around 60 people from the community. One of our members, following a leading and with a grant from The Lyman Trust (a Quaker Foundation), created a film called "Down to Earth: Climate Justice Stories". The film and discussion was previewed at the Meeting House and was well attended by the larger community. A "War is Not The Answer" film series began in November with attendance in the teens. We mounted a large poster that is visible from the road which states "Love Thy Neighbor (no exceptions)". We are working to discover what kinds of offerings best serve our goals of outreach and can sustain us over the long term and to secure our long-term finances while developing our outreach activities. Increased rentals for use of the meetinghouse has added to both our outreach and income.

A Friend has been led to hold Meeting for Worship on Wednesdays from 9:30am to 10 a.m. that began in August and has been expanded to a full hour starting at 9:30am with several regular attenders.