

## **Jacksonville Friends Spiritual State of the Meeting 2014 12/13/14**

**Attendees:** Bess Wilson, Mike Shell, Bonnie Hall, Ken Hall, Al Geiger, Elaine Martin, Doug Halpin

The Jacksonville Friends Meeting held a worship sharing relating to the current spiritual state of the Meeting following our regular Meeting for Worship.

### **Deepening of Worship**

The resounding theme spoken by nearly all Friends was of the deepening of spirituality during first day worship. Some spoke of feeling fulfilled and the silence becoming deep and rich. Others spoke of finding it easier to settle into the silence. One Friend spoke of feeling safer in being able to express their faith and their feelings openly and of how they had begun to feel a kinship with those in Meeting.

### **Meeting for Business**

Several Friends spoke of a welcome shift in the direction of business meetings. They felt this process was becoming more meaningful and productive for decision making within the meeting. It has provided better structure for discerning the sense of the meeting and developing unity within the meeting.

### **Social Interaction**

Many Friends spoke of the pleasure they gained from the many social events undertaken this year. Some of the variety of events held as a Meeting this year included regular monthly pot lucks, a canoe outing, visit to the Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice, end of summer and Christmas Meetings held in St. Augustine, and a birthday party in honor of Wendy Clarissa Geiger. All Friends hoped to continue these types of social events into the coming year as means of further getting to understand one another.

### **Healing**

All Friends spoke of pain and sorrow felt about the conflict that occurred earlier this year and the resulting unhealed wounds. Friends often do not like conflict, but one mentioned that from early Quakerism a significant challenge has always been how to deal with unpleasant issues and differences. Throughout history mankind has not been good at it. Although sensing pain, Friends did not see a clear path forward in finding resolution. One Friend spoke of being still and working as a meeting to create that place where God can work through us to find peace for all.

### **Outreach**

All Friends spoke of the phenomenal year with regard to outreach. The Jacksonville Meeting has been involved a wide variety activities. Meeting has representatives participating in social justice programs with ICARE, sponsored a presentation on Moral Injury and hosted representatives from Quaker House, hosted the SEYM youth group, continued involvement with the Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice and Wage Peace, and collected donations for the Clara White mission. Friends hope these initiatives will continue into the coming year and that we continue to search for outreach opportunities that speak to the entire Meeting.

## **Meeting House Committee**

Another initiative begun this year was the establishment of a meeting house committee to develop a short and long term plan for a permanent meeting location. Friends feel strongly that this initiative would improve the health of the Meeting through growth and stability. Permanent facilities would provide a better opportunity for greater involvement of families and better support development of First Day School.

## **Ongoing needs**

The following issues were raised by Friends as challenges to continue to work on in the coming year:

- Continued outreach and local community involvement
- Expand the ability to embrace new families into the meeting
- Continuing to build on the foundation and structure of Quakerism
- Investigate conflict resolution training
- Investigate the addition of a worship and ministry committee
- Expand the participation of younger persons and a need to nurture our children

Prepared by:  
Doug Halpin