Tacoma Friends Meeting

State of the Society Report 2025

This year, mixed joy and grief as we gained new friends and mourned the loss of dear, dear loved ones. The meeting's spiritual life reflected a sense of relevance and community that drew people in. Throughout the year, we welcomed a diverse group of new attenders who brought rich insights and fresh spirituality to the meeting's culture. Maureen McMurray formally joined the Religious Society of Friends (Tacoma Friends Meeting) in September. Friend Erika Kerr transferred her membership from University Friends Meeting in October. These joyful occasions were interspersed with loss.

Our caretaker's beloved spouse, Suzie, died unexpectedly at the end of March. Long-time friend of Friends, Randall Mullins, gently let go of this life in June, and lifelong Tacoma Friends Meeting member, Kathryn Willard, succumbed to her long battle with cancer in September. And then, on Christmas Day, Michael Parker died. These dear ones will all be missed.

The Peace and Social Justice work of the meeting as a whole had many opportunities to address significant issues from the perspective and practice of Friends. Tacoma Friends Meeting recorded a Minute Calling for a Ceasefire and Humanitarian Aid into Gaza and began work on a foundational document describing Tacoma Friends Meeting's interpretation of the Peace Testimony. The metaphor from the Stone Soup story serves well to describe the many contributions that were made as people, including children, brought their gifts of service to every aspect of the meeting's life. We sought to live into our Quaker Testimonies in a variety of ways, including service with advocacy groups, letter writing, protests, participation in PRIDE and intercultural festivals, and direct service to immigrants and people living homeless.

We have come to understand that Tacoma Friends Meeting has a unique "place, purpose, and practice." This overall context informed our discernment about the building, grounds, and by extension, the community itself, as a well-stewarded sanctuary for all. The word sanctuary has a multi-faceted meaning for Tacoma Friends. It encompasses everything from being a recognized place of worship and physical safety for immigrants to a refuge for people seeking spiritual sanctuary and community in this time of "culture wars" and division. Our discernment and action steps continue. We do not yet know where the path will lead, but we are committed to a future that honors the indigenous people who stewarded this land before us, nature, and the community.