Palouse-Clearwater State of the Meeting

2026-04-12

Each year we hold a Worship Sharing/Discussion session in January to gather our thoughts and feelings for our State of the Meeting report. This year we took our queries for this session straight from Philadelphia's Faith and Practice on recommendation of a 2020 article by Donald C. McCormick about how to make these reports more useful. Each person responded to one or more of the queries that spoke to them. During the meeting we not only offered our thoughts and feelings about the year in review, but actually demonstrated some of our strengths, weaknesses, and failures to ourselves. It was an interesting meeting!

<u>We found that we have several strengths:</u>

We have consistently supported those in need in our local communities by donating regularly to three food banks and the two Family Promises in our region.

Meeting for worship in-person has strengthened our quality of worship. This year we increased our time together to twice monthly. This also potentially increased our visibility in Moscow. All of our in-person meetings are hybrid to allow those who cannot attend in person to be with us, including an occasional attender in New Hampshire.

We changed our name to Palouse-Clearwater Friends Meeting to better reflect where we are by location. Immediately our Treasurer ran into obstacles opening a bank account in the new name. They need us to register in either Washington or Idaho and to get an EIN even though we have no employees. When she brought the problem to Meeting for Business she found that we listened deeply, and she felt thoroughly supported.

Our after-meeting "check-in" time has helped in creating a sense of community.

About 75% of us participate regularly in both Quarterly and Yearly Meetings. This is where we get a sense of beloved community which is very important to us.

The Nurturing Committee kept in touch with members and regular attenders who do not do Zoom meetings, to-include them in our caring.

Meeting for worship with attention to business includes most of our community.

<u>We also found that we have several weaknesses:</u>

We have not yet followed up on our visibility in Moscow with more imaginative advertising about our presence there. People need Quakers especially now, so it is critically important to let the public know we are here.

We are currently in "survival mode" – not attracting younger people and families. Normal attendance at Meeting for Worship varies from 4 to 12 people.

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We are scattered geographically which challenges our ability to build a stronger sense of community. Zoom helps us connect, but is not the same as meeting in person. As a meeting, we have not with intention set aside time to seek spiritual growth.

Our Nurturing Committee is our only committee (our “everything committee”). It is doing the best that it can. There are challenges to meeting on a regular basis. The committee has prioritized addressing the State of Meeting report and encouraging visitation with our non-Zoom folks.

And we have had some failures with ramifications:

During the summer of 2025 we considered a process for personal spiritual growth described in “A Guide to Faithfulness Groups” by Marcelle Martin, a member of the Swarthmore meeting in Pennsylvania. A member obtained copies of her book in preparation, but we never came to unity to proceed, as a Meeting.

Last year we said “For the past several years we have not had any interpersonal conflicts in our Meeting. Thus we are in a sense a meeting at peace with ourselves and supportive of one another.” In fact, there are some interpersonal conflicts among some people in our Meeting, and we have simply glossed over them. Now is the time to acknowledge them, and hopefully to resolve them.

Our Awareness Project, to increase our understanding of the history of the land and the Nimiipuu (Nez Perce, as named by French trappers) and Palus people in this region, as well as Quaker history regarding Indigenous people, and land, has been in limbo this past year. This is not necessarily a weakness of the Meeting. To be respectful of the land and people, we need to wait for a “way to open” for us to act appropriately.

Finally, we have some hopes to accomplish for next year:

We have already acknowledged our interpersonal conflicts. Going forward we must try to reduce them if possible.

We seek to improve our individual and collective spiritual growth.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Young, Clerk
Palouse-Clearwater Friends Meeting