Spiritual State of the Meeting:
A Report for Agate Passage Friends Meeting (APFM) in 2025[1]

Agate Passage Friends Meeting experienced losses and gains, continuity and change, and challenges and opportunities in 2025.

Losses and Gains

Friends George Bevis, Kema Larsen, and Paul Larsen died in 2025, and we mourn the loss of their personal friendship and spiritual gifts:

- George's kind and traumatized heart, evident in his stories about the horrors of being a medical corpsman in Vietnam.
- Kema's mystical relations with nature and her creative ideas about the interface of physics and spirituality.
- Paul's scholarly understanding of the law of outer space (He wrote a new edition of his seminal book on space law in 2024) and his leadership of the Working Group, where he was an especially strong advocate for immigrants.

The Meeting was blessed in 2025 by having several new Friends begin attending. They bring new energy and fresh spiritual perspectives, and they lower the average age of the Meeting. We cherish their presence.

Continuity and Change

Despite diminished leadership resources, in 2025, Agate Passage Friends prayerfully decided to continue to function as a "monthly" Meeting, but we initiated a one-year experiment to reduce and spread-out the demands on the Meeting's leaders. Starting in December 2025, and continuing through 2026, we will convene quarterly, instead of monthly, Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business. Facilitating and recording the meetings will be the responsibility of a rotating team of four people instead of the previous two. We also moved the mission of the Working Group to a new Peace and Social Concerns Committee. We strengthened pastoral care to support Friends in the Meeting who are experiencing health and loneliness issues, including expressing our care for each other by issuing a weekly email request to hold people and situations in the Light. Finally, continuing the traditional Quaker devotion to the Bible, we initiated,

[1] APFM's Worship and Ministry Committee recorded data for this report from comments made at a worship sharing meeting held on February 15, 2026, and from comments provided by individual AP Friends. The comments were, in part, responses to a set of queries that are shown in the appendix to this report.

via Zoom, and plan to continue gatherings to “Contemplate Scriptures” by deepening our understanding of the historical context and opening our hearts to the ispiration of Bible passages, beginning with the Book of Jonah.

Ongoing Challenges and Opportunities

We have several interrelated challenges which we addressed in 2025, but which remain unfinished. These continuing challenges may also be viewed as opportunities for improvement. They are:

1. Strengthening the Meeting Community

When new Friends arrive in our Meeting, they find groups of people who have histories of personal friendship, which shape their conversations, but that do not necessarily include newcomers. New Friends encounter expressions of Quaker faith and practice that can be considered unconventional and that use unusual terminology. Newcomers meet Friends who are mostly quiet and energized by internal rather than external sources. For these reasons and more, new Friends’ arrival experiences can impede their sense of belonging to the Meeting.

Knowing that impediments exist to developing community provides an opportunity for the Meeting to design experiences for both new and seasoned Friends that are inclusive and revealing of people’s hearts. Knowing the challenges exist motivates the Meeting to work harder and smarter at building our community.

2. Letting Our Light Shine

In general, residents of Kitsap County, where most Agate Passage Friends live, know little about our Meeting and about Quakers in general. Our outreach activities continued in 2025 through membership in the Bainbridge Island North Kitsap Interfaith Council and the Council’s Climate Circle. We added a webpage – *apfriends.org* – that is attracting an increasing number of viewers, and we printed bookmarks, with the URL address for giving to friends who express interest in the website. We developed a handout for newcomers to the meeting in Kingston that welcomes people and explains, briefly, Quaker faith and practice. Every Sunday, we offer two options for silent worship: one at Village Green in Kingston, WA; and the other by Zoom. In 2025, the Clerk of the Meeting provided a Quaker view of climate change at the United Church of Christ on Bainbridge Island, spoke at a large interfaith gathering about Friends’ perspectives and actions regarding the environment, and talked about and led a period of silence at an interfaith gathering for Thanksgiving. By our actives with Quaker Voice for Washington, we engaged our State Senator and Representatives during the annual legislative session in order to express our values and priorities.

We realize, however, that we can do more to let our light shine. Additional initiatives could include:

- More openly living out our testimonies – especially by co-organizing and participating in peace, democracy, social justice, and environmental events in Kitsap County.
- Sharing more information and literature with friends and acquaintances about our Meeting's existence and about the contents of our website.

3. Being a field hospital

We live in cruel, xenophobic times. Our less-privileged neighbors in Kitsap County and across America – for example, immigrants, people of color, and the poor – are being called by extremely wealthy and powerful people, substandard beings, even "garbage" – and "not deserving" of Americans' empathy or public support for a leg up.

Agate Passage Friends Meeting donates about $2,000, annually, to local organizations that feed the hungry, house the homeless, protect the vulnerable, and support immigrants. In 2025, we made a concerted effort to better understand what local, national, and global organizations are doing and how their missions relate to our values. We can continue this effort and deepen it.

<u>Conclusion</u>

We regard the annual process of writing a Spiritual State of the Meeting Report as an opportunity to share our sense of the Meeting with other Meetings in the Pacific Northwest and, equally important, to look into our collective "mirror" to know how we are doing and what we could do to improve.

AGATE PASSSAGE FRIENDS MEETING

APPENDIX

Queries provided by the Worship and Ministry Committee for the Worship Sharing on February 15, 2026 and for individual comments were:

1. In 2025, how did our Meetings for Worship and other activities broaden, enrich, challenge, or mobilize you?
2. How well did our Meeting foster and support leadings among Friends?
3. How well did the Meeting provide resources for living in these turbulent times?
4. How well did the Meeting serve as a "field hospital" for those hurting in our local community and beyond?
5. How can the Meeting grow in the Spirit?