

**Jamestown Friends Meeting  
State of Society Report  
November 11, 2024**

As Jamestown Friends Meeting celebrates the 60th year of our Meeting, we are engaged in long-range planning for future years of worship, fellowship and service. A group of four Friends known as the Pathfinders has been working over the past two years to explore the history of the Meeting, identify the opportunities and challenges of our current situation, and offer strategic plans for the Meeting's future. This initiative began under the leadership of Catherine Griffith, our former pastor. In August 2024, the Pathfinders submitted a 24-page report offering plans for the Meeting's future. After holding one "threshing session" and planning another one, the Meeting is preparing to implement the strategic plan.

Our Meeting has returned almost full circle to the size of the initial chartered Meeting founded in 1964. There currently are approximately 34-36 members and attenders who attend worship and/or participate regularly in other activities of our Meeting. There is a weekly average of 22-24 individuals in Meeting for Worship. We have recently accepted into membership several individuals. The notable difference between the 1964 membership and the Jamestown Friends membership of today is that the original group consisted primarily of younger adults with children. Our congregation today consists primarily of older adults.

The following core values generally guide decision making as well as activities sponsored by Jamestown Friends Meeting:

Central to our core values is the belief that "there is that of God in everyone." This historic Quaker value insists that every person deserves to be treated with dignity and honor. Every person, regardless of condition in life, is a "child of God" who is capable of having and sharing spiritual insight and truth, both through word and action. Sometimes we speak of the "Inner Light" that, when allowed to shine, tends to motivate each person toward a more wholesome and engaging life of spiritual growth and service to others.

As we worship, fellowship, and work to serve our community together, we strive to hold to what has come to be known as the "Quaker SPICES." These are values that inform our decision making and our way of communal life. The SPICES consist of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship.

We understand that the SPICES are not, in and of themselves, a "testimony" in the traditional Quaker understanding of that term. They are simply guidelines that help us find direction, limits, and focus in our shared decision making.

With that understanding, at Jamestown Friends Meeting we place the Meeting for Worship at the center of our shared life. We greatly value the traditional un-programmed worship of historic Quakers, and make sure that a large portion of our worship services includes this historic experience of expectant waiting for the divine Spirit to speak to and through us. However, we also value the sharing of music, spoken prayers, and thoughtfully prepared messages. We especially value prepared messages that allow Friends to speak out of their own personal experiences and studies. Through these, all of us may be enlightened, inspired, or spiritually lifted up in unexpected

ways. Therefore, at Jamestown Friends Meeting, we have elected to employ a semi-programmed form of weekly worship, including not only expectant waiting, but also the judicious use of music, verbal prayers, readings, and prepared messages.

Another core value of Jamestown Friends Meeting is the intentionally participatory nature of our shared life. This is true not only in worship, but in all other aspects of our ministry together. While our Meeting may employ paid professional staff from time to time, our members and attenders remain fully engaged in providing leadership for all aspects of our Meeting. Almost every active member and attender will be found taking leadership for one or more responsibilities of the Meeting at any given moment.

At Jamestown Friends Meeting, we seek to continue and expand on this historic tradition. We tend to ignore social symbols of status that are common in our society, including the use of titles. We make little distinction between those who are formal “members,” and those who are regular (and often significantly contributing) “attenders.” We recognize both intellectually and through direct experience that everyone has something important to contribute to the overall health and ministry of our Meeting. We genuinely welcome all who come into our fellowship and who are sincerely seeking a way forward for their own lives. We make no distinction concerning gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity, religious identity, or any other social determinant.

We have chosen to state our mission at Jamestown Friends Meeting as follows:

We come together

- To listen to the Spirit within,
- To grow in our faith,
- To support each other,
- To help one another live by our highest understanding.

The people of Jamestown Friends Meeting continually look beyond ourselves for ways to serve God by serving our fellow human beings. We search for justice in an unjust world; we seek to feed, clothe, and shelter those who have a need; we respond to specific needs of missions, both locally and globally. We want to ‘give the cup of cold water,’ but we also seek to minister to one another’s spirit as well.

Over the next several years, as we work together to fulfill our mission, we will continue to refine the goals and objectives set for us by the Pathfinders Strategic Plan.

(Major portions excerpted from the Pathfinders Strategic Plan submitted by Mark Sills, Kathy Coe, Jan Purser, and Susan Bulla.)

Kathy Adams, Presiding Clerk of Monthly Meeting

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