

2022 MIAMI MONTHLY MEETING STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT

In 2022, Friends emerged from pandemic-imposed isolation with a renewed sense of purpose and joy in being a gathered community again. Throughout the year, we sought the guidance of the Spirit through corporate discernment in monthly meetings regarding tough financial and practical decisions critical to the survival of the meeting. Not only did we confront what at the time seemed an endless series of maintenance problems in our two buildings, but also upgraded our technological infrastructure in the White Brick. Our spiritual lives were nurtured by the resumption of the monthly Adult Religious Education Discussion Group focused on reading and reflecting on *Faith and Practice*. However, what really wove us together as an in-person and zoom-based religious community were the events we shared with one another and folks outside our meeting.

We tried very hard not to let burst pipes, leaky roofs, and an ailing furnace dominate over our spiritual life. We felt deep appreciation for the members who spent hours researching heat pumps and meeting with building inspectors, contractors, roofers, and plumbers. And at the same time, we recognized that this sacrifice was being made because we all want to preserve our meeting house as the center of our community and the repository of so much critically important Quaker history and family memories. Two highly significant choices were made by Miami Friends in 2022: first, retaining Mike Benton as property manager has been a true gift. We needed a trust-worthy, highly knowledgeable person to take on what had become an enormous burden for a small group of mostly older folks. And second, Friends found unity around the sad but necessary decision to sell the Red Brick Meeting House to a sympathetic, Quaker-friendly real estate agent. We may have future use of the Red Brick social room for special occasions but, in any case, are now free to channel requisite resources solely toward the preservation of the White Brick.

Because our community gatherings were at the heart of our religious experience this past year, we would like to share our joy through brief descriptions of four events, as follows:

- 6th Month, Orthodox Grave Yard Ceremony. After an exhaustive, years-long, unsuccessful effort, primarily conducted by Eula McDermott, Miami Friends determined that it was time to lay down the search for the lost names of Orthodox Friends buried in the grave yard. Joined by Gary Farlow, Wilmington Yearly Meeting Trustee, and Christine Snyder, a Dayton Friend who presently attends Springfield Meeting (WYM) and her husband, Gene, Friends held silent meeting for worship in the Red Brick, held a short ceremony in the grave yard that included historical details about the Orthodox meeting, and a potluck lunch. We welcome all members of Wilmington Friends to visit any time they wish.
- 8th Month, Butterworth Farm Worship and Picnic. With Ft. Ancient no longer available for Miami Monthly Meeting's annual outdoor worship, Gretchen and Phil Stone offered their home, Butterworth Farm, near Loveland, as a gathering place for Quarterly Meeting Friends. Adults and children found the lovely, rural setting an inspiring place to worship. Friends shared a hearty potluck lunch and enjoyed an array of recreational activities, including fishing, walking the nearby bike path, and playing games.
- 10th Month Cook-Selzer Wedding. Travis Cook and Becky Selzer married under the care of Miami Monthly Meeting at the White Brick Meeting House in a largely traditional Quaker ceremony.

The Divine Presence was felt throughout and love overflowed! Our community was thrilled to share our meeting house and traditions with around 150 family and friends of the couple, many of whom were young people new to Quaker ways.

- 3rd Month, 2023, Celebration of Life for Dr. Robert Finley. Miami Friends Meeting embraced another transition as family, friends, and colleagues gathered at the White Brick to celebrate the remarkable life of “Dr. Bob,” who passed away at his home with family near on 7th Month, 15th Day, 2022. Bob’s daughter, Anna Finley Schroeder, supported by her family and the meeting community, created a loving space in which to reflect on the spiritual meaning of Bob’s many medical and peace-driven accomplishments. We will long remember Dr. Bob’s messages of hope for humanity by discerning that of God in scientific endeavor.

In 2023, Friends are looking forward to resuming the work of our Futures Committee, especially now that much of the building maintenance needs have been resolved. We are already planning programming that will welcome more of the surrounding community into our doors. In the meantime, all are welcome to visit us on First Days at the White Brick Meeting House.