

## CQM Small Meeting Support and Getting the Work Done Threshing October 19, 2023 7-8:15 PM

Nineteen Friends and attenders from the Quarter attended a Zoom Threshing session titled: Concord Quarter Called Meeting on Small Meeting Support and Getting the Work Done. Birmingham, Concord, Goshen, Middletown, Westtown, and Wilmington Monthly Meetings were represented.

The session was clerked by Debbie Murray-Sheppard who asked the group to respond to three questions:

What are the greatest challenges facing your meeting?

What are your meeting's greatest resources?

What roles can we play as meetings of the quarter to support each other and to leverage our resources to better attend to the work of Spirit?

### **What are the greatest challenges facing our Meeting?**

Lack of an overall sense of community

Difficulty staffing committees

Aging members who are moving away as they retire

Quakers are and active, but aging, faith community.

Property upkeep – some 60% of budget is consumed by it.

Property upkeep – legal responsibilities to maintain a school and burial grounds.

Lack of Young Families – need to ask systematically “how is what we are doing attractive to young families”

Time of Worship (early morning) is difficult for young families.

Too few members and attenders to carry workload.

Not good at doing things differently.

### **Suggestions to help:**

Concord Meeting has started a Montessori school in their Meetinghouse

Westtown recognizes its gift in not having a property to care for

Consolidating small meetings – maybe for alternating worship services, children's programming, etc. We were reminded that nobody goes to restaurants where there are no cars in the parking lot!

Larger Meetings might open their activities and/or participation in social justice committees to a smaller meetings

Invite a discussion leader to lead a threshing session on outreach.

Discuss the Meeting's specific character – what do we offer newcomers? How do we make that clear?

Attend workshops on outreach -PYM has a thread-gathering on Saturday, 10/21 at 1:00 at Downingtown!

Be mindful of how target populations prefer to receive information now (it is not by reading a hard copy of Friends Journal!) Do you/we need to hire someone to do social media work as a key part of outreach

Develop and host events that attract the public, especially to our beautiful outdoor spaces.

Take worship to places other than the meeting house and at times other than Sunday mornings

Be purposeful in the creation of events – think about who we are expecting to participate

Change the name of First Day School to Children and Youth Programming

Go door to door in the neighborhood talking about the Meeting like Dorothy and Douglas Steere did at Radnor

Apply for a small grant from the PYM Membership Development Committee

Be aware that young friends are attracted to participate in programs with other kids! Can smaller meetings share youth events with other meetings?

Ask ourselves: “Why do we want to grow our meeting? What are our resources? What do we need? How can we meet those needs?” What do we have to offer that our neighbors are seeking?

Develop a plan with metrics and a time line for revitalizing the meeting. Open up the discussion and reach out to include voices we often don't hear without soliciting input (young families, children, friends from afar).

Share resources across meetings in the quarter – we have friends with expertise in finances, law, property, technology, strategic planning, membership development, planned giving, etc.

Don't conclude that doing the same thing we have always done will sustain the meeting into the next generation.

### **What role can meetings and the Quarter play to support each other?**

Create lunch affinity groups at Quarterly Meeting where various Meeting interest group gather to share ideas and concerns!

Rotate Quarter based children's programs into small meeting at other times than at just Quarterly Meeting

Encourage attendance at Quarterly Meeting by suspending local worship on the 4 dates of quarterly meeting.

Share the hybrid link with the monthly meetings so friends can worship remotely as well.

Have the Quarter fund an ad campaign on the internet – do a grant to support this.

Do an overnight at the Quarterly Meeting for youth with good programming.

Do special youth-oriented programs at Quarterly Meeting like the one at West Chester making water filters

Be sure to send a delegation from your monthly meeting to the Quarter's business and planning meetings – we are better for having more voices.

### Concluding announcements:

- The intergenerational worship at Westtown on Sunday will be an example of trying something different. Friends are encouraged to attend (in-person or virtually) and to encourage their meetings to also participate.
- The Quarter is looking for a recording clerk and will need a treasurer in July. If you have a gift for either of these roles (or know someone in your meeting who does), please bring the names forward.
- We also need a clerk or a group of friends willing to share clerking responsibilities for the Climate Action Working Group. This group has done really good work but is struggling to find a clerk.
- This is the start of the work – not the end. It was wonderful to have so many participate. It would be great to have the energy of this evening continued at the Business/Planning Committee meeting at 1:00 on Sunday, October 29 at Westtown (also a hybrid meeting).

The session closed about 8:15 pm with the clerk telling us that this topic would be on the agenda at next Quarterly Meeting for Business to be held at Westtown Oct 29 at 1 pm. **Notes from Rich Ailes**