

**Salem Quarterly Meeting
State of Society 2016-2017
New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends**

The quarter continues to struggle this year, although it also has had some successes. We've had excellent programs this year including an insightful presentation by Amesbury Meeting's Peace and Social Concerns committee in the Autumn and excellent talks by Brian Drayton and Greg Williams about the value of Quaker processes in social action and Quakers reaching out to communities of color respectively in January. In April we heard from several Friends talking about the "Cambridge Interfaith Sanctuary Movement." Our winter gathering also featured an excellent potluck.

Likewise, the quarter's Funds Allocation Committee continues to support Quaker activities by issuing small grants. This is the one committee that the quarter does not struggle to fill positions on. The quarter had more grants than it could afford to fill in the autumn, but then a dip in the Spring. This seems to be a sign that word is getting out, but reminders of the availability of funds are key to making the granting process successful.

The quarter is working to set up a calendar of events within the quarter so that Friends will know what events are happening at other meetings in the quarter. Friends from Amesbury Meeting suggested this as a way to help meetings to stay connected and the idea quickly got support.

The quarter continues to struggle with identifying Friends willing to serve on the quarter's committees as well as representatives the quarter has to other organizations, such as Beacon Hill Friends House. This year both our Recorder and Ministry and Counsel Clerk are stepping down and the Clerk is unable to identify Friends to fill these roles. The quarter recognizes that it cannot function at full strength with so many unfilled positions. The quarter intends to send out a nominating questionnaire to contact as many Friends in the quarter as possible with the hope of creating some interest among Friends who do not yet know the quarter and might wish to serve if they knew.

After four years of service the Clerk also intends to step down at the end of his term in April 2018. It is hoped that the questionnaire already mentioned may help to identify a future Clerk. Also the quarter can contact the clerks of the monthly meetings to discuss the future direction of the quarter.

Moving forward Quakers are very interested in addressing the extremism brought to light in the most recent political election in the United States. Moving in this direction may allow the quarter to remain relevant in the evolving currents of our faith. The quarter may seek to re-establish a Peace and Social Concerns committee or similar to assist to that end. The quarter may consider moving toward a greater role in assisting monthly meetings with outreach efforts. This could take the form of a new committee as well. We can have faith that if we are truly called in these directions that Friends will step forward.