



Update from Northside Friends 2014 Fall Retreat

bill.esler, Friday 17 October 2014 - 19:09:00

The Northside Friends Meeting Fall Retreat was held Saturday September 13, 2014 at The Admiral at the Lake. The retreat was well-attended and received positive feedback from all participants! Here are some key points brought to the meeting for further consideration and discernment.

WORSHIP

Friends consistently speak of worship as one of the things they most appreciate about Northside, yet it is not visibly articulated on our website or in our meeting space. We would like to consider how to make this a more visible and stated part of our presence. We would like to specifically focus on our experience of worship, not just the general Quaker experience. This might include quotations from attenders on the website (i.e. What does Quaker worship mean to you?), second hours on our experience in worship, revising our Welcome to Northside handout, a plaque or card in the meeting room about worship, etc.

INTENTION, INSPIRE, RADICAL

A series of four questions came up in relation to the key words above (INTENTION, INSPIRE, RADICAL) that we would like to examine corporately.

Who are we?

Who do we support?

What do we do?

Why would you want to join us? We feel Northside has a strong understanding of who we are, based on the work done a couple of years ago and posted on our website in the About section. As individual members, we feel we have a partial understanding about who we support, but it could use further development to become a strong, corporate statement. We feel a distinct uncertainty about how to express what it is we do as a Meeting. We would like to look at this.

The final question, why would you want to join us, seems to flow from the previous three. We feel that once we have done additional work around the earlier questions, it will be much easier to address this last question, which can then allow for more effective outreach and advancement.

CONTEXT

Northside does not exist in isolation within our Chicago community nor within our Quaker community, even though we often operate as if it does. There are resources and opportunities outside our Meeting that we would like to consider. What does it mean to be a Quaker meeting in our context? Why do we want a space? Why do we want money? What do we want to do with it?

One Friend proposed a very interesting flip on these questions: What kind of Meeting does the north side of Chicago need that we can provide? This would require asking those beyond our own community to help identify needs.

3 SPHERES

We were struck by the image of the 3 spheres, brought to us by a new Friend.



COMMUNICATION, CONNECTION

We would like to examine our processes around communication and transparency within the meeting, as a way of increasing participation and connection among our members. Specific ideas raised were reexamining how we use the listserv, revising our Welcome to Northside document and distributing committee and business meeting minutes. We would also like to provide more opportunities for connection within the meeting, for both new and seasoned attenders.