

**South Central Yearly Meeting**  
**State of the Meeting Report**  
**March, 2024**

The last year was a time of challenges and growth for SCYM. Our worshipping communities are mostly stable in attendance, post-Covid, with several meetings experiencing growth. With increases in the numbers of children and young families, our programming is evolving with the changing demographics of each monthly meeting. Many of our meetings now offer hybrid worship (online and in person) which extends our communities beyond our meeting house boundaries.

While attendance is growing for many meetings, some of the smaller meetings continue to be concerned about declining or stagnant membership. Creative solutions are helpful in embracing the issue of numbers. An example of creativity is evident between Baton Rouge Friends and Acadiana Friends Meeting. These two small meetings offer a BOGO opportunity (Buy One – Get One). With the help of Skype, folks from both meetings often join together for worship, business, First Day School, and other activities.

Spirit consistently illuminates and leads Friends in all we do. It is the bedrock in the silence and vocal ministry of our worship. It is present whether we meet in person or online, and it leads our meetings in the work we do in the wider community. Several meetings have midweek worship, often online, in addition to our Sunday times together. Monthly meetings shared news of their activities and there were common threads between the individual groups. Quaker 101 classes, adult forums, First Day School and fun activities for children and adults, library development, and Quaker history studies provided many opportunities for broadening everyone's perspective.

There were several shared social concerns identified in our State of the Meeting reports. Friends across our Yearly Meeting care about conflicts in the Middle East, increased militarization in America's communities, and forms of violence perpetuated by our local, state, and federal governments, such as the death penalty and developments like Cop City in Atlanta, Georgia. A border of our Yearly Meeting shares many miles with Mexico, so immigration is a major concern for all of us. Our meetings are working in several directions that address problems for the un-housed populations in our communities. During the last year throughout SCYM, 11 deaths, 3 marriages, and 5 births were reported. For the year 2023, Friends worshiped with open hearts and minds, grounded in silence, and listening for the Spirit to speak through us. Live Oak Meeting summed up the year saying, "We built fellowship and had fun. Gratitude was shared by all involved."

Submitted by the SCYM Ministry and Care Committee