

Worship Sharing Summary 2025-9-7

Recently, many Friends at Third Haven Meeting participated in a worship sharing session, sponsored by the Worship and Ministry Committee. The following queries were used to guide the process:

1. How is my spiritual well-being in the current socio-political environment?
2. What can I do to enhance my spiritual well-being?
3. What can the Meeting do to support my spiritual well-being during the current socio-political environment?

While there was no attempt to develop minutes or a transcript of the session, the committee noted some expressed thoughts as it looks to working with other committees to identify next steps for the Meeting. Expressed thoughts, as noted, are below.

Our worship sharing session began with the expression of a concern about the potential rise of a dictatorship in the USA. This concern was met with reflections about noncompliance and resistance throughout American history, which may make the stated concern less likely to become a reality in the United States than in some other countries. Also, there were expressions of the importance of confronting our anxieties so that they do not drain our individual and collective energies.

Some Friends suggested that we view the current socio-political environment through the lens of people from diverse backgrounds, particularly those from historically traumatized communities, who may perceive the current environment as a continuation of the challenges they have faced all their lives. In that regard, it was suggested that we not yield to the temptation to view ourselves from a perspective of exceptionalism or to create false narratives about our always being on the correct side of history.

Finally, it was emphasized that spiritual well-being refers to our sense of inner peace, purpose, and connectedness, and that it does not necessarily mean physical or emotional health or safety. In response to this emphasis, it was suggested that fully engaging in meeting for worship, being in solidarity with like-minded organizations, taking advantage of continuing education opportunities, and engaging in small, courageous actions that are aligned with Quaker testimonies or values may be effective means to sustain, and perhaps strengthen, our spiritual well-being.

As the worship sharing session ended, it was suggested that Friends occasionally gather informally with a few Friends and others to discuss the current socio-political environment. It was emphasized that gathering with like-minded people is usually not fruitful; instead, inviting a mix of people allows us to learn to listen to, learn from, and relate to people we perceive to be different because of their political, religious, or other beliefs.