

Red Cedar Friends Meeting  
State of the Meeting Report  
Fifth Month, 2009  
submitted by Becky Payne, clerk

Construction of our meetinghouse is well under way. After meeting in rented spaces for over fifty years, our intention to acquire a meetinghouse of our own was minuted in December 2000. The resulting Meetinghouse Committee looked at many available properties, and together with Meeting, weighed how to make this move with concern for the environment and wise use of our money.

After much discernment, way opened for us to buy a vacant lot at 1400 Turner Street in Lansing and build a new building. We hope that having a permanent meetinghouse will help us be more visible to those who may be searching for a gentle, welcoming spiritual home.

The building will have a 30x30 meeting room, with an adjoining library, a 30x30 social hall, two classrooms and a kitchen. It will meet LEEDS certification and ADA accessibility requirements. It makes good use of a brownfield site in a revitalizing section of Lansing. We chose to use mostly on-street parking to minimize paving, and native landscaping to use no added watering or mowing.

We agreed to forego getting a mortgage from the Friends' Meetinghouse Fund and rather use money loaned to us from individuals in our meeting.

This process has not always been easy. Some have not felt in unity as the process moved forward, but we hope that through it all, there has been enough grace and understanding to keep us moving forward in community. But there has been much joy seeing this building become real. Let us hope that the effort brings positive fruit as the years go by.

In October, we held a groundbreaking ceremony at the site coordinated by the Membership and Outreach Committee. Local churches, Old Town neighbors and friends in the peace community were invited to hear a few short speeches and then gather at a nearby gallery. Several local officials attended, including Lansing's mayor, along with many from the community. You can see photos of this and the continuing construction at [redcedarfriends.org](http://redcedarfriends.org).

We are expecting to move in this summer, with finishing work (painting, landscaping, etc.) to be done by us and other friends. We will let our wider community of Friends know when help is needed. We are grateful for those in other meetings who have already helped us by hosting fundraisers, or giving advice and help with legal or design issues.

The Building and Grounds Committee has written a thoughtful list of conditions for renting the meetinghouse. They also have been instrumental, along with the Ambiance Subcommittee for choosing colors, fixtures and designs.

Since our meeting hours will no longer be restricted by rental agreements, Worship and Pastoral Care and Religious Education Committees proposed a new schedule for meeting times. Our early morning meeting held at EVERYbody Reads Bookstore, will move to the new building, too.

The Religious Education Committee has been creative in putting together a more intergenerational first day program that requires fewer classrooms. We currently have 38 children attending, each of whom will be honored at an annual book-gifting in May. At Christmas, our children gathered gifts and necessities for a local family in need. They continue to have business meetings and work creatively on building consensus.

Membership and Outreach continues to offer certificates of attendance to children of meeting, whether formally named to membership or not. We hope that these certificates would bolster any future claims of conscientious objection to a military draft, if needed.

Adult Religious Education provided us several opportunities for learning and fellowship this year. Last fall, as part of a tour sponsored by LEYM, Mary Anne Downey led us in a retreat on deepening the quality of meeting for worship. January brought a retreat on Social Class hosted by Jeanne Burns of Twin Cities Meeting. Su Penn led us in studying Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself* over several evenings. Paul Pratt and Elizabeth Graham taught a session about our local waterways. The ARE committee recently hosted an intentional potluck and discussion on eating local foods, with Jane Bush talking about a CSA program starting from her farm.

Acknowledging that attending wider Quaker camps and gatherings has often been formative for children of meeting, the Finance Committee led us to agree to take group responsibility for helping them attend. Called "Connecting Kids to Quakers" this initiative will pay expenses of Meeting's children to attend Quaker camps or retreats. We are thrilled to see beginning fruits of this effort as at least eight meeting children are planning to use the funds this summer.

Worship and Pastoral Care administers these and other scholarships to Quaker gatherings to those of meeting who may need financial help. Worship and Pastoral Care also is supporting those who have leadings in the ministry. It continues to be available to facilitate clearness committees, being quite active in two upcoming weddings.

Our meeting is also host to a spiritual formation group, which welcomes new attenders.

Peace and Social Justice Committee and many individuals are involved with social justice activities. We were a significant part of a movement to ban the use of cluster bombs by the United States, and facilitated a Cluster Bomb Survivors Tour to speak to the community. After the Israeli incursion into Gaza, Jack Smith drafted and circulated a minute on our behalf decrying the violence in Palestine.

We continue to send a representative to the local Peace Education Center, and support the Greater Lansing Network Against War and Injustice, Michigan Peace Team

and AFSC's Faith Action Network. We remain involved with Friends Committee on National Legislation and with the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT). We share a NRCAT banner against torture with Edgewood United Church of Christ, where we now meet, and displayed it outdoors here last June.

Red Cedar continues as the statewide host of the AFSC-led Eyes Wide Open exhibit and added the Cost of War exhibit to our charge as well. Ann Francis coordinates this for us, she is also on the executive committee for the Great Lakes Regional Office of AFSC. The EWO displays were circulated several times last year and are still available for loan. We hosted one showing of Eyes Wide Open at our county seat in Mason, and we displayed the Cost of War banners near our new meetinghouse site.

Preceding the November election, Dorean Koenig was instrumental in getting grant money to hold a series of four forums to educate the public on voting and health care availability. Many in meeting worked during the election to bring social justice issues to the forefront and to promote candidates that would work for the same. Deb Nolan was reelected as County Commissioner.

The Hospitality Committee has been collecting and categorizing kitchen items for the meetinghouse in addition to making sure that we are adequately prepared for social time at the rise of meeting. They have worked with other committees on the groundbreaking celebration and celebrations for births and welcoming newcomers and new members.

Our faithful librarian has continued to make books and other materials accessible to us through the year, and will be glad, no doubt, when the books no longer have to be kept in her home.

In more personal news, we are happy to have gained two members, Terry Grant and Sue Emmert. Babies Ethan Charlot, Alexander Leroy, Yehva Dierauer (and Helena Kempainen in absentia) were welcomed in a meeting for worship last November.

Karrie Potter and Martin Richards are to be married under our care in May. We send our well-wishes to those who moved away. We ask you to please join us in holding Harriette McAdoo in the light, she has remained hospitalized since last fall.

We would like to thank Edgewood United Church of Christ and EVERYbody Reads Bookstore for having allowed us to hold our meetings for worship in their buildings. Though excited to be moving into our new home, we will miss the close relationships we formed with them.

As we move into this new phase of our meeting, we hope this turning of the soil, so to speak, will open us to rewarding opportunities in the coming years. We extend an invitation for all who read this to visit us in our new Lansing meetinghouse and help us fill it with joyful worship and fellowship.