

Takoma Park Friends Meeting, Preparative
Spiritual State of the Meeting, 3/29/2026

We met on February 22, 2026 to consider five queries posed by Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Participants offered the following responses.

(1) What do I mean by Spirit/spiritual? Do others in my Meeting mean something else? How do we react to that diversity?

We heard from multiple voices that the spiritual encompasses everything. Messages spoke to the broad scope of the spiritual and a potential distinction between the spiritual and Spirit:

- The spiritual is universal, omnipresent in the fabric of everyday life; but the Spirit feels different.
- The spiritual is a wisdom voice, which comes in many forms, such as messages about nature, direct connection with the universe, not limited in scope but from a higher power.
- Spiritual feels like the grain of wood of our lives and time; to be aligned with Spirit is to be aligned with that grain, and we feel it when we aren't.
- The spiritual is related to something divine, but not the same as religion.

There is agreement that the Meeting is a welcoming, accepting, and open spiritual space where people can share anything about where the Spirit is in their life. We heard appreciation for the many sources of inspiration, and a suggestion that the important thing is "to be inspired."

(2) Does my manner of living flow from my deepest beliefs? Do my Meeting's actions accord with its deepest shared beliefs?

Discussion centered on individual experience, with varied responses.

- For one member, the word "flow" does not describe the process: "It's more like a fist fight. I know what I'm led to do but I don't feel like it. It comes with struggle."
- It's hard to see that of God in everyone in these times, but it's critical.
- Our government is run by Nazis; I should protest but don't do very much.
- My manner of living flows from the Quaker saying "Let your life speak," even if I don't think everyone is listening.
- My manner of living flows from my beliefs, but thinking back to George Fox and Margaret Fell, they were immensely effective in the world and I am not.

We heard the suggestion that we take comfort from the idea that we are different. One person might worship outside the fence at the White House each week, another might act through their work or caring for others, some by their spiritual power in the world. Holding people or communities in the Light is also powerful.

(3) Have we helped each other recognize and follow leadings? Have we connected and grown in Spirit as a community?

We agreed that by being open and welcoming of different points of view we do help each other recognize and follow leadings. In addition, we recognize and appreciate each other's gifts. One noted that the Meeting "is a wide enough space that I feel like I won't knock into walls as I flail on my spiritual journey." Another noted that the second hour sessions have provided a welcome spiritual focus. There was agreement that the Meeting has grown in size and spirit and in connections.

(4) Have we helped one another tenderly, in body and spirit? Are any needs within the meeting going unanswered?

There was agreement that we help each other, for instance with rides and with emotional support, as when we are asked to hold someone in the Light. However, the question was raised as to whether we could do more to help members in distress. We also heard that there is a need for more people to take on the work of the Meeting. "On a practical level, it doesn't feel sustainable to have the work of the Meeting carried out within a narrow band of people."

(5) Has Spirit led us to take social action as a whole community? Am I/are we satisfied with what we are doing together in the world? What do we long to do?

Discussion focused on the broad meaning of social action and both the limitations and opportunities that exist for a small meeting.

- There are many ways to take action, including our gifts to community organizations. While it can be hard for a small meeting to take on collective social action, we have done so in the past, such as with gleaning for Shepherd's Table and a fundraiser for CASA long ago. There is interest in doing something of this kind together. There are opportunities for collective action by working with groups at Adelphi or with other Meetings and organizations. Several members/attenders are now active in Takoma Park City Council issues.
- We recognize the value of the work individual members and attenders have done on social issues, such as on Gaza and racial justice. For members whose day jobs involve social justice, the Meeting provides needed time to reflect on other parts of life.
- "I'm not satisfied, and we shouldn't be satisfied" until the world is how it should be.