

Mark reported to our group that at the recent Ministry & Counsel meeting there was a request that we tell the greater Meeting community at this coming Sunday's meeting for business about what activity is emerging from our Quakerism 201 gatherings. Here is our short presentation:

We learned Quaker Testimonies, one every week. But what is a Testimony? A testimony is not a belief but to express a belief through behaviors and choices.

At last we reached "Community". Does that mean how we interact with other Friends? We thought not. It is living with others' needs in mind, and expressing love through empathy and action. We knew there were people in our community without the comfort of a home, perhaps cold, perhaps hungry. How can we help? We said "it would be great if there were a group who could..." and one of us said "We ARE a group!" That was supposed to be the last week of our course, but now we wanted to remain joined in learning our testimonies through lived experience.

We needed to listen, not rush in with assumed answers. We are still listening and learning...from those recently affected by their own homelessness; by providing items to those without homes and hearing whether that was effective; by advocating for, and supporting some people struggling to stay housed; by asking questions of organizations and municipalities. Our little class has expanded to a few more Friends and welcomed a very talented man who was recently homeless as a valued member.

The testimony of Community is when we say "How can I help? If you'll tell me, I will listen to it all." Then, we do.

*Peace,
Kathi*