

Heartland Friends Meeting, State of Society: 2023-24

***If you think you are too small to make a difference,
try sleeping with a mosquito. – Dali Lama.***



If you want peace, you don't talk to your friends.

You talk to your enemies. – Desmond Tutu.

As we contemplated this State of Society report together these words were brought forward: caring and sharing, hopeful, supportive, grounding. Friends are very grateful for our Heartland family community where we can be ourselves without pretense, be seen deeply and be a part of deep listening to each other.

Since December, our small meeting has been touched with loss and sorrow.

We held one of our members in tenderness as her husband lived through sustained cancer treatments to finally end his earthly journey this past February. Grief has come to her too early in life, and we continue to surround her with caring Light of Love.

Friends were drawn together in prayerful energy as several of our members gave daily care and attention to Jim Lynch when he was in the cardiac ICU and then in a rehab facility. We appreciated the helpfulness of technology by sharing text threads that kept our spirits joined in daily prayer, holding Jim in the Light of healing and peace. Jim was well-known for his wardrobe ministry; he intended that the social consciousness message on his t-shirts and hoodies enlighten and challenge all. A quilt created from some of his t-shirts hangs on Heartland's wall and keeps this dear Friend near us. At Jim's memorial service, the joy of his wardrobe ministry was shared as Heartland Friends and Song Circle friends chose t-shirts and sweatshirts to take home.

Heartland was blessed by hosting Stan Brown's family for his day of memorial in April. We continue to hold Eloise and Stan's special friend, Jim Perkins, in tender Light as their lives are much changed with Stan's passing.

Our year had some highlights of joy. In April, our meetinghouse was filled with the music of a public concert given by Aaron Fowler, followed by an enthusiastic sing-along with the Rise Up Singing Song Circle. In December we acknowledged our advancing age and reluctance to drive after dark by moving our Christmas Eve service up to Christmas Eve Morning with special music offered by a young Friend and brunch. We appreciated being tucked in by nightfall. We continue to combine fellowship with work by having community workdays to maintain our building and grounds several times each year. By being somewhat DIY, a greater percentage of our annual budget can go to local charities and Quaker agencies.

Wichita Friends School livens our meetinghouse with their midweek worship on Wednesday mornings. We also enjoyed being their school house for a day when their electricity was turned off for the final installation of their new solar panel array.

We have been viewing and discussing a QuakerSpeak video once a month and very much appreciate this ministry of Friends Publishing. This year our book study used Patricia Loring's *Listening Spirituality*, enjoying lively discussions. On the first Sunday of each month, a small group of Friends gather at 9:30 for Meeting for Healing, sharing personal healing intentions, family needs and concerns for our wider world.

As Quakers in the year 2024, we find ourselves challenged by Time and Business. Friends of old met for "Worship with Attention given to Business" for as much time as Spirit needed to move and find Sense of the Meeting in decision-making processes. With obligations and family needs that call to us on Sunday afternoons, we sometimes feel rushed in our discernment and decision-making. Valuing integrity, deep listening, respect, and tenderness in our communications we continue working for unity the centuries-old Quaker tradition and our 2024 pace of living.

In Peace, Heartland Friends