

Heartland Friends Meeting
State of Society, Fifth Month, 2017

As we open ourselves to become the channel of God's healing grace we shall find that healing is given to those who pray as well as those for whom we are praying. Jack Dobbs, 1984, Quaker Faith and Practice/Personal Journey, 21.73

As a Meeting we are working to make our presence known and to inform our community that we offer respite from the noisy world, quiet reflection, time for active listening to God, and encouragement to be faithful to God's call as individuals and as a group. We have welcomed three new members – Aaron Beach, Laura Dungan and Ellen House. We are enjoying an increase in attenders and visitors.

Heartland Friends members were challenged in 2016 by member Wendell Hendricks to reach out as a Meeting and risk being visibly and publicly Quaker. While individual members of Heartland are actively involved with peace and social justice efforts on the local and state levels, we had not found a significant 'activist' presence as a Meeting. Wendell's challenge led us to have a discernment group last summer and fall, gathering information and exploring ways that our Meeting might be more active in our community. We want the world to say, "Wow, the Quakers are doing this!"

Our discernment led us to form a Friends Committee on National Legislation "Advocacy Team." In March, Heartland hosted FCNL lobbyist Jim Cason for an evening introductory workshop attended by 35 Wichita and Hutchinson area individuals from a variety of faith backgrounds. Eleven attendees from that evening made commitments to form a Wichita Advocacy Team and have begun relationship-building processes with our members of Congress and their staffs. Seven Heartland members/attenders are on the team, and our Meeting is being enriched by their experiences lobbying for a reduction in Pentagon spending.

Our Advocacy Team is especially dear to us because Wendell, who challenged us be more, died this past February. Like others who have passed through Heartland, his integrity and love are ever present when we gather.

During adult education hour, we have become great fans of *QuakerSpeak*. The videos deepen our Quaker understanding and stimulate lively discussions. We devoted time to queries and presentations on healing through faith, prayer, and divine/holistic presence. We also shared how we imagine our own deaths. A special adult education hour was presented by Susie Ternes and her children Luke, Riley and Sophie, who told us about their family's ministry to a Congolese refugee family in Wichita.

Maintaining our building and grounds provides opportunities, yet challenges us. On work days young and old weed, trim, oil woodwork and wax floors which helps us build community. A special project this year has been the terracing of our west Meetinghouse grounds to create a memorial garden. With landscaping complete, we look forward to designing a way to memorialize Friends. We were recipients of two special trees – an elm sapling descended from the William Penn Treaty Tree in Philadelphia and a Weeping Japanese Maple planted in memory of Wendell Hendricks.

As we grow, our attention to community becomes more important. We are building community by listening to each other and showing our love for one another even when we don't agree. Because we truly believe that God is love and that love is our central theme, then our collective Heartland challenge is to manifest that love to each other and to the world. We recognize that we have not arrived. Together, we are on a journey.

On behalf of Heartland Friends Meeting,
Angela Young, Presiding Clerk