

State of the Meeting Topeka Friends Meeting June 2017 - May 2018

After several years of consideration and visitation by Great Plains Yearly Meeting members, Topeka Friends Meeting affiliated with Great Plains Yearly Meeting – GPYM. At the 2017 Yearly Meeting Session, we celebrated our new relationship and began to learn about being a part of a Yearly Meeting for the first time. For decades we had resisted such a move, but the accepting structure of GYPM caused a change of heart and mind.

There have been several changes in our membership over the past year. Two regular attenders, Nancy and Phyllis, moved out of state to be with family. They are greatly missed. Another regular attender, James, chose to stop attending due to conflicts with the conditions of his parole. He has been a valued member of our community for his many contributions, including the skillful maintenance of our meetinghouse and grounds as well as his thoughtful contributions in discussions.

We have had occasional visitors, some repeating several times, but no consistent attendance nor indications of interest in membership. An occasional visitor from Adelphi Meeting in Maryland, had come to visit his elderly father in town. The father has now died, so we don't expect to see his return. Overall, our Meeting is aging and that is a concern.

In other concerns Meeting has supported one member through cancer treatment and recovery, as well as celebrated Duane Herrmann's successful publications of his writings in print and online.

Our weekly worship is followed by a Second Hour which varies on a predictable schedule. The Second Hour of the second First Day of each week is a meeting for worship with a concern for business. The Second Hour of the fourth First Day of each week is a potluck lunch. No matter how small the pot, there is always something to share. The Second Hours for the first and third First Days are open for varied content.

During these Second Hours, for a series of several months, Jane has led us in sessions of Spiritual Deepening based on the program of the same name provided online by Friends General Conference. We have found them helpful and inspiring. Also, together, we have watched several interviews of QuakerSpeak, sponsored by *Friends Journal*. Marjorie has linked several of these interviews to our Facebook page for easy access. That has been the major addition, and updating, to our internet presence. Other Second Hours we have discussed articles from *Friends Journal*, or favorite writings which members have brought to share. Sometimes the subject is general worship sharing. It is through these Second Hours that we grow together and closer with each other.