

Heartland Friends Meeting: State of Society – May 2026

O Lord, awaken the consciousness of all peoples and their leaders; raise up men and women full of love and generosity who can speak and act for peace, and show new ways in which hatred can be left behind, wounds can be healed, and unity can be restored. --Henri J. Nouwen

We were saddened at Heartland Friends Unprogrammed Meeting in March by the passing of long-time member Dorlan Bales, who has deep ties to Heartland, University Friends, and GPYM. The legacy Dorlan left with us continues to strengthen and teach us.

Friends celebrated our first wedding “under the care of the Meeting” in August, and welcomed the couple as new members of Heartland with an after-Meeting party in March. In May, we gathered for another “new member” party, welcoming a Friend from Cincinnati.

Heartland Friends embraced several outreach efforts this year. We are now a member of *Justice Together*, a group of more than 40 Wichita-area faith congregations working toward grassroots change by lobbying our local elected officials to support and implement actions toward reduction of homelessness, safety, and accessibility to services for those who are unhoused, and reduction in gun violence.

This past March Heartland responded to FCNL’s call for participation in discerning their next national lobbying priorities. As in the past, FCNL’s request spawned a deep and vibrant discussion during our adult education hour.

Led by Spirit a new witness is growing in our midst, with desire to speak to and effect change in our troubled times by delivering “Letters” to our elected representatives. A first Letter in Spring 2025 focused on immigration and ICE enforcement violations. A second Letter in April 2026 addressed the “cost of war” to U.S. military people and was delivered by a delegation of Heartland members, attenders, and friends to Senator Jerry Moran’s Wichita staff. Our

desire is to continue this witness ministry, developing a dialog relationship with some of our local officials and members of Congress.

During the summer of 2025, Aaron and Laura traveled in ministry, visiting Friends meetings and worship groups in Newberg, OR; Jackson, WY; Central City, NE; and Fayetteville, AR. The opportunity to combine travel in ministry with Aaron's Summer Teaching Artist Library Tours is a blessing for all. This coming summer their travel plans include Quakers in Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Arkansas, and Kansas.

For several years we have been holding a long-time friend of some of our members (who lives in Portland, Oregon) in prayer for resolution of personal and financial crises that resulted from being scammed out of her life savings as she was caring for her dying husband. We are grateful for the opportunity of this personal ministry and thankful for the Everence Sharing Fund and their "matching" support of financial gifts given to this friend in her need.

While our well-built Meetinghouse was new in 2002, it is requiring us to do foundation work for flooding in our basement. We look forward to the upgrades and to having our space ready for use this summer.

We enjoy opportunities to welcome various groups to our Meetinghouse. We hosted Joe Jenks in concert in February, and the Great Plains Dulcimer Alliance workshop and concert in April. We anticipate having a home-school art class use our space next year. Each August we host the teachers and staff of Wichita Friends School for a beginning-of-the-year evening cook-out, and the students and staff continue to have their mid-week Wednesday morning Worship in Song and Waiting Silence in our meeting room. These are good opportunities to share our presence of Peace and Spirit with Friends and friends.

While we are a small Meeting, we are growing in numbers and cohesiveness. We are finding joy in the presence of a variety of young attenders who seem to deeply appreciate the quiet listening of unprogrammed worship and the opportunity to be in a welcoming community.