

University Friends State of Society Report 2019-20

Dear Friends at Great Plains Yearly Meeting,

The word that best captures the state of our Meeting is transition.

In January 2019 we learned that Cliff Loesch, our pastor of 25 years was resigning effective June 30. The six month period between receiving this news and his actual leaving was spent absorbing the idea, mourning the loss, and coming up with a plan forward.

A search committee was formed to seek new leadership and as we faced this challenge it was felt that because of the long tenure of Cliff coupled with a significant change in the size of the congregation a transition minister would be the correct approach. Sources we consulted recommended 1-2 years of interim ministry for a church in this position. By God's good grace we found two pastors to serve University Friends for portions of this period. David Wolf from Virginia was with us from September through November and helped us just carry on at that point. In January Catherine Griffith began her ministry with us. The focus of Catherine's ministry has been to take an honest stock of who we are as a Meeting, who do we want to be and how can we be that which we seek .

In January we were notified by Evangelical Friends Church, Mid America yearly meeting that we could no longer be affiliated with two yearly meetings. University Friends had been a member of two yearly meetings since 1970. The

process of disassociating with EFCMA was difficult and gut wrenching for many of us at UFM. This has fully been covered elsewhere but it was disruptive to our interim efforts.

In the interim we are facing squarely these facts, we have a building designed for 4-5 hundred people, we have congregation that averaged 87 in attendance for 2019. Our challenge right now is to clarify our mission and ministry and to merge who we are with what we have into that ministry.

Sincerely,

Doug Chambers, Clerk