

**State of the Society Report  
Topeka Friends Meeting 2019 to 2020**

The Topeka Friends Meeting shared a joint meeting for worship on October 27, 2019, with Manhattan Friends Meeting and Oread Friends Meeting. We felt a renewed sense of community when we gathered with friends from Manhattan and Lawrence and plan to continue these types of events in the future.

We have been very fortunate to have Liz visit us with her daughter and then decide to return and become a valued member of our group.

The coronavirus / covid 19 pandemic has profoundly affected the country and the City of Topeka in 2020. Shawnee County issued a stay at home order that took effect on March 26, 2020, and the State of Kansas issued one that took effect on March 30, 2020. We are currently waiting for details about the lifting of these restrictions.

The last face to face meeting for worship of Topeka Friends Meeting was held on March 15, 2020. Liz has made available the use of her Google Meet account for virtual meetings. We held our first virtual meeting on March 29, 2020. Not everyone has participated in the virtual meetings but it is felt that under the current situation it is a good alternative to meeting face to face. The virtual meetings have enabled distant friends to join us. We have had a friend from Madison, Wisconsin, and another friend from Central City, Nebraska, have participated in the virtual meetings.

The Topeka Friends Meeting continues to struggle with the incarceration of one of our members. Friends continue to be in contact with James and have sent him a number of items to try and make his incarceration more bearable. One of our members has been in contact with a liaison from the governor's office to try and gain insights into the prison system and the parole process.

The state scheduled an opportunity for public comment on March 20, 2020, for James' parole hearing in June. Several members wrote letters in support of James and planned to attend the hearing. Because of the coronavirus the public comment session was cancelled and the parole hearing has been postponed several times. While incarcerated in Lansing State Penitentiary, James was infected by the coronavirus and was put in isolation. He has since recovered and will hopefully make a full recovery.

One of our members continues to be involved with the FCNL advocacy team at Oread Friends Meeting in Lawrence. The meeting recently went through a discernment process and submitted seven suggestions to FCNL regarding future legislative priorities.

The meeting has contributed money and food to Doorstep in support of their work helping those people in Topeka who are struggling. Because the State of Kansas is the largest employer in Topeka the need is not as great as it is in other cities but there are always those in need.

We continue to share the meetinghouse with the local Baha'i community. The meeting has given the Baha'is an unused upstairs room to house their lending and reference libraries.