

# The Friendly Line

## Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

Eleventh Month 2018 Vol. 5

*Quakers are not like-minded. We are like-hearted...It is not an individual path, a personal Quaker way, but a journey we have always taken together. We act our Quaker faith a-Quaker faith. We are not called to be a Quaker. We are Quaker.*

*Ben Pink Dandelion - Britain Yearly Meeting*

## Reflections on Trip to the US/Mexican Border

by Gordon Bivens

*[Editor's Note - Gordon traveled with a small group from the Des Moines Plymouth UCC to Arizona border from Eighth Month 26 to 30 to bear witness to the pain and injustice of family separation and to learn from people on both sides of the border. See Vol 4 Friendly Line for more logistics. This, then, is a report from Gordon about what he witnessed and how he experienced the trip.]*

My recent experience at the U.S.-Mexico border south of Tucson was intense and emotionally involved. Our local hosts, Suharita UCC, have on-going migrant outreach programs, including: desert searches, meals, help in support of a shelter in Nogales, Mexico, and a court watch program. They exposed us to their work by allowing us to go with them.

For me, one of the most impactful experiences was to hike into the desert and be struck by the vastness, and to think of being in the middle of it with no food, dwindling water supply, extreme heat, etc.; as must be the experience of those without documentation trying to make their way to the United States. We visited the site where a 26-year-old man had been found still with weak vital signs. Every effort was made to revive him but without success. The church's search group finds things left behind by wanderers in the desert, probably discarding the items before expiring, or perhaps already having died and the items were all that was left behind.



Dehydration and heat exhaustion are the primary causes of death for those trying to cross at the desert. In addition to searching for those in need, the group also fills 55-gallon barrels with water. To think of experiencing the severe conditions of the desert and with no directional guidance or knowledge is a very sobering experience.

Another moving experience was to visit the site where a 16-year-old boy died when he was shot (through the border fence of slatted metal strips) by our Border Patrol. The boy was shot for having thrown a rock. To think of the untoward response to a rather natural teenaged activity is sobering and saddening.



The wall at border of the United States and Mexico visited by Gordon and his travel companions through the Plymouth United Church of Christ (UCC) during their humanitarian visit in Eighth Month. (Photo courtesy of Plymouth UCC.)

The third area that affected me deeply was the mass processing of immigrant cases in the Federal Court. Groups of seven migrants are guided to appear concurrently before the judge.

*(cont'd page 2)*

*(Bivens cont'd from page1)*

Each migrant makes a plea in about a minute or two, then the judge renders his decision for each case and the group is guided out of the courtroom, to be replaced by another group, and on it goes. One can't help but be concerned

*.... the crime rate in the 100-mile strip along the border (known as the Borderlands) is lower than for the rest of the U.S. This makes accusations that migrants, including the group moving now toward the U.S., are mostly robbers, murderers, rapists, etc. seem misplaced.*

whether justice can be done in such a mass processing.

These, and other experiences sensitized me more than ever to the exaggerated claims about aberrant behavior of migrants. This was further reinforced by the realization that the crime rate in the 100-mile strip along the border (known as the Borderlands) is lower than for the rest of the U.S. This makes accusations that migrants, including the group moving now toward the U.S., are mostly robbers, murderers, rapists, etc. seem misplaced.

## Tenth Month Minutes

10/10/2018

Those in attendance included: Andrea Holveck; Pam Blackburn; Virginia Smith; Jack Holveck; Bill Howard; Joe Howard; Cindy Winchell; DJ Newlin; Fred Nelson; Dorothy Lifka; Dick Douglass; Claire Cumbie-Drake; Jean Sandstrom, co-clerk; Lynne Howard, recording clerk pro tem. Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business (MFWAB) began with a period of silent

reflection. Dick Douglass shared a Theodore Roethke poem entitled, *"The Serpent."*

## Ninth Month Minutes Reviewed

Ninth Month 9, 2018 Minutes were reviewed and approved. [Editor's Note: See Friendly Line Vol. 3 & 4 for those minutes.]

## Treasurer's Report

Pam Blackburn, Meeting treasurer, reported that we are 25% of the way through our fiscal year, with income at 18% and expenses at 20%. This discrepancy explains why we are \$702.69 in arrears. Eighth Month receipts were up, however.

## Property Management Report

No report this month.

## Library Committee Report

Virginia Smith, Library Committee co-convenor, reported on behalf of the committee.

Book Donated to Library – DJ Newlin donated a book entitled *Journey by Faith - A Quaker Odyssey of 1830*, by Lois Harned Jordan. It is a narrative about Quaker families who moved to Iowa from North Carolina.

Recommended book now in library – Peter Clay suggested a book, which has now been obtained for the library. *Young Water Protectors – A Story about Standing Rock*, was written by a young Native American child – Aslan Tudor.

## Ministry & Counsel Report

Dorothy Lifka, convener, reported that Peter Clay has resigned as co-convenor of M&C. This leaves Dorothy as the sole convenor.

Dorothy submitted the following written report: "Andrea gave the Alternative to Violence Project of Central Iowa support committee report: Lynne Howard is filing the application for non-profit status under the umbrella of AVPUSA. She has already received the tax ID number.

*(Cont'd on page 3)*

*(M&C Report cont'd from page 2)*

Lynne will be the treasurer for AVP of Central Iowa. Anyone interested in taking part in the AVP workshops, must first go through the volunteer orientation the Newton Facility. Contact Jodi Rawlins in the Warden's office has forms if anyone wants to apply.

Anyone interested in taking part in AVP workshops must first go through the Newton Correctional Facility's volunteer orientation program. Contact Jodi Rawlins in the warden's office (641) 792-7552. Andrea has the application form if anyone wants one.

We considered concerns for our Friends including discussion of the memorial service for Merredith Goerdt.

Concerns & Memorials – We considered concerns for Friends including a discussion of the memorial service for Merredith Goerdt.

## Religious Education & Child Care

Cindy Winchell, convener, reported that the committee would be meeting next First Day to discuss concerns about the state of religious education in our meeting. Please hold members of the RE & CCC in the Light.

## Buildings & Grounds Report

Dick Douglass, convener, reported on behalf of the committee.

Broken Elevator –The elevator has had much attention this week. Thanks to Jon Krieg working with the elevator company, the issues plaguing us in the past few weeks are likely put to rest. A fuse was replaced that had blown with a long-lasting fuse, as well.

Painting Window Trim – The committee noted that there is a leak in the stairwell where there is now mold in drywall

Faucet Replacement – Bob Henderson will be replacing the faucet in the kitchen, as it has been determined to be the culprit behind the weak water flow in the kitchen faucet.

Window Replacement – Dick reported that there is a decision to be finalized regarding the window replacements in the lobby. The question being: Do we go with wood sills or do we replace with aluminum framing in bronze or white? Dick shared samples of what the aluminum would look like. The *aluminum frames would be essentially* maintenance free.

Buildings and Grounds has gotten seven plans:

## Hospitality Committee Report

Hospitality is ready for the upcoming memorial meeting.

Meeting Thanksgiving – The Meeting Thanksgiving will be on the 18<sup>th</sup> of Eleventh Month and plans are proceeding with that observance.

Thank You – Hospitality Committee extends a thank you to those who participated in the Talent Show/Show and Tell.

## Peace & Social Concerns Report

Bill Howard, co-clerk of P&SCC submitted the following written report.

The Committee discussed items about which they would like more information.

### Possible Second Hour Topics

1) *Gordon Biven's trip* to the border;

2) *Programs of Creative Vision*;

3) *Possible Collaborations* – There is an ongoing discussion about collaborating with other groups to best utilize speakers on the topics of militarism and peace issues.

A Suggestion from the Body – It was suggested that women's issues could be added as an area of interest. Friends were encouraged to be supportive of Planned Parenthood.

*(Cont'd page 4)*

(P&SC cont'd from page 3)

Donations – The committee approved a donation to Iowa Sanctuary Coalition, Walnut Hills account, \$100.

## Old Business

Ann Robinson, co-clerk presented old business on which Meeting still has unfinished work.

## By-laws & Articles of Incorporation

The preparation and filing of the meeting's bylaws and articles of incorporation are still in works and the hope is to be finished up by Eleventh Month.

## Clerking Workshop Update

Friends will consider attending the clerking workshop at FGC Summer Gathering in Seventh Month 2019, as it will be held in Grinnell, IA this coming summer. This would be an opportunity to receive clerking instruction without the additional plane ticket costs that Pendle Hill would

*If the only prayer you say in your whole life is "Thank you," that would suffice.*  
**Meister Eckhart**

entail.

An idea of creating a website for the meeting has been floated for DMVF. There are website venues that allow for email capacity that would allow sending large attachments. It was noted that Katie Jacoby is on the IYM(C) Website Committee and may have expertise in this area. Jan Falb has extensive experience, as well. Ames, Bear Creek and Laughing Water all have their own websites that are accessed by links on [www.IYMC.org](http://www.IYMC.org) "Bluehost" uses WordPress for design, costs \$175/yr. and might have "members only" access for part of the website. Friends

would like to investigate the possibility of establishing a website.

## Ad Hoc Fundraising Committee

This committee was charged with the following issues:

1) Consider the decline in regular contributions;

2) Consider memorial policy;

3) Address how funds for property management should be handled.

Pam Blackburn, Claire Cumbie-Drake, Jim Dietz-Kilen, Owen Newlin and Ann Robinson were appointed to serve on the Ad Hoc Fundraising Committee. They have met and have made three preliminary recommendations:

1) Encourage Regular Donations – Encourage Meeting members/attenders to consider regular monthly donations;

2) Budget Committee– Recommend the Budget Committee purpose/charge be restructured to consider the whole budget, income as well as expenses;

3) Recommendation for Budget Committee Structure – It is recommended the **Budget Committee be directed to restructure**. Friends suggest that Buildings and Grounds Committee, as well

Too often today, we see our communities solely as groups of people who voluntarily decide to gather together in order to meet our individual needs and to support each other. If that is true, the community exists to serve those inside it, not to serve God or to confront the world and dare others to join us. Paul Buckley *Primitive Quakerism Revived* p.5

as Property Management Committee members, have input on this ad hoc committee.

The Committee has plans to meet again in a timely manner.

## New Business

### Concern Over Difficulty Hearing

The co-clerk reported that a concern was raised up to them concerning the difficulty to hear one another in meeting for worship, as well as other activities in the meeting rooms.

(Cont'd page 5)



*(New Business cont'd from page 4)*

**Trial Period** – A suggestion was made to have a trial period using an inexpensive handheld microphone and evaluate the pros and cons.

## Meeting Concludes

There being no other business, meeting for worship with the attention to business was closed after a period of Silence.

Ann Robinson, clerk

Lynne Howard, recording clerk pro tem

## Bible Trivia Question

What are the three shortest verses in the Christian Bible? Answer on page 7.

## Peter Clay Sends Letter to DVFM

October/November 2018

Dear Friends,

I am sitting at a table in our cabin looking out at Shadow Lake. I am on what I now refer to as our stolen land in northeast Wisconsin. Often, I think of the Menominee, Ojibwa and Algonquin Nations that inhabited this place thousands of years before my family came. Much of my life's focus is now on being a good and respectful steward of this sacred land where my parents are buried.

The leaves are all glowing yellow, brown and various shades of red. The Autumnal melancholy is a good time for thinking. It is a good time to take stock and to focus on gratitude. I am grateful to my family for the opportunity to come into relationship with this place, where I am overseeing a major selective logging operation.

We are harvesting many of the now eighty-foot-tall Red Pines that were tiny seedlings when

I helped my father plant them 60 years ago! Those that remain will thrive (with more sun, moisture, oxygen and space. The wild creatures (deer, turkeys, grouse, bear and many others) will benefit from good management of the forest. They are already exploring their changed and changing world. I just saw six deer and

twelve turkeys wandering around together from the window!

I need to lay down my formal responsibilities



**Peter on family land in NE Wisconsin where he is overseeing the harvest of 80-foot-tall red pines that he helped his dad planted 60 years ago. The harvest will allow trees that remain to thrive because more sunlight will get through and they'll also get more mois-**

to Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting. Effectively, through many days of discernment and deep reflection I have come to understand that I have become a part-time resident in Iowa. Much of my time, energy and focus is now needed elsewhere and I seem to be traveling frequently out of state. Through the more than fourteen years that I have been worshipping with you I have been very blessed! For this I am, and always will be, very grateful. Thank you, Friends!

At 18, at Earlham College, I encountered Friends for the first time. Now, at age 68, I celebrate  
*(Cont'd page 6)*

*(Peter cont'd from page 5)*

brate the many ways that choosing to be Quaker has enriched my life and stretched me to challenge my limits. In numerous ways, my Quaker life has opened new vistas, both for my spiritual growth and for my efforts to do good work in the world.

Friends, I wish to convey to you my profound gratitude for everything that your presence in my life has meant to me! I am not departing from your midst. This is not goodbye. However, I am acknowledging that it is now time to lay down some things in order to restore better balance to my life.

Your loving Friend,  
Peter Clay

## Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

Friends feasted on turkey, mashed potatoes, and gravy at their annual Thanksgiving meal.



Friends from Bear Creek Meeting and Indianola were invited to join us. Many of us had family members and friends visiting. A big thanks to the volunteers

who took on the formidable job of providing turkey, gravy, etc. And special thanks to DJ Newlin for volunteering to coordinate it all!

## Update on Refugees

by Lynne Howard

Since I haven't updated in a while, I will just throw out there some of what has been happening with the Marias. I send this out, so all will know what is being done, hoping to reduce confusion and duplication of efforts.

We took Maria O. to her ICE check-in and they said come back next Tuesday. ICE - arbitrary, cruel, never held accountable.

The apartment was fumigated for bed bugs. We bought four new, nice air mattresses to go in after fumigation. Vaccinations are ongoing for the kids.

Maria O. was seen by the family practice doc and is doing well. I'm not sure what the plan is for the cardiologist.

We learned that they can be doing laundry at school for free which is wonderful news!

We have not yet heard if Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON) will be able to take their cases for asylum. Big shout out to the amazing attorneys and support staff at JFON! They do monumental work daily! It truly is a discouraging time to be seeking asylum in America. Sigh.

Both Marias have court dates in Omaha set up for what is referred to as a Master Calendar Hearing. Maria C is on January 16 and Maria O is on March 20. Maria C has her next ICE check-in at the Federal Building in DSM on February 11.

The keys for their mailbox at the apartment complex finally arrived - so they can now access mail at the site.

The biggest need remains monetary donations. Rent alone is \$750 a month. If you have the means to do so, please give a donation. Make checks out to First Unitarian Church c/o Charles Lewis, 1800 Bell Ave. DSM 50315

## Opportunities to be of Service

*Volunteer drivers* - Some of you have graciously volunteered to drive Maria C and son, ELL, to Trinity on Thursday evenings. I will try to get this going by end of Eleventh Month. There have been some problems with communication and other things cropping up.

*(cont'd on page 7)*

*(Update cont'd from page 6)*

***Both Marias will be needing rides to Omaha for their court dates.***

I will be sending out the specifics of their appointments in the future. In the meantime, be thinking if you could set aside an early morning to make that trip. Appointments are at 8:30 am.

The biggest need remains monetary donations. \$750 per month rent is coming due in January. It seems to go and on and on. It is so-boring for us. We can't begin to imagine what it must be like for these families! Again, here is the best way to make donations: checks made out to First Unitarian Church, c/o Charles Lewis, 1800 Bell Avenue, DSM, 50315. Memo line: ISM Asylum Support.

Thank you to the many of you who have responded in a variety of ways to make these families welcome! They appreciate the donations and efforts on their behalf.

## Advice & Query Six

Second Hour on 12/02 will be discussion on Advice & Query Six, Education, found in Faith & Practice – the Discipline of IYM(C).

***Advice*** – *Friends seek an education which integrates our intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions and enables us to face difficult moral issues with courage.*

*While the religious education of our children is primarily the concern of parents, everyone benefits when the entire meeting is concerned with nurturing them. If a spirit of common concern is present, children will gain a sense of belonging to the larger community, and knowing they are loved and respected will be able to face the mysteries of life with trust.*

*Friends promote learning throughout life and encourage freedom of thought and inquiry in all educational pursuits. Our complex and changing world demands that we learn to think and act creatively to meet its challenges.*

***Queries*** – *How can we most effectively foster a spirit of inquiry and a loving and understanding attitude toward life?*

*What effort are we making to become better acquainted with the Bible the teachings of Jesus, our Judeo-Christian heritage, the history and principles of Friends, and the contributions of other religions and philosophies to our spiritual heritage?*

*In what ways can we encourage an educational process that is consistent with the values Friends cherish?*

*How do gender based expectations affect the goals we set and the way we learn?*

*Do we take an active and supportive interest in schools, libraries and other educational resources in our communities and elsewhere?*

*How do we prepare ourselves and our children to play active roles in a changing world?*

## Peace vigils & walks

Join members of local peace groups who gather each Fifth Day (Thurs.), 11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. in front of the Civic Center, 221 Walnut, DSM to protest war and the coming of drones and to insist that “War Is Not the Answer!”

**Answer to Bible Trivia – What are the three shortest verses in the Christian Bible? #3 - Job 3:2, “And Job said.” #2 - I Thessalonians 5:16, “Rejoice always!” And the #1, shortest verse in the King James and other modern translations is (*Drum roll please*) John 11:35, “Jesus wept.” Or literally translated, “Jesus shed tears.” This is not the shortest verse in the original texts. In fact, different Biblical scholars disagree with each other about whether the shortest verse is, “Jesus wept,” or “Rejoice always”**

## *Down the Line*

**Meeting for Worship** First Day, 10 a.m.

**Meeting for Query** First First Day of each month,  
11:30 a.m.

**Meeting for Worship/Business** Second First Day of  
each month, 11:30 a.m.

**Meeting for Music** Third First day of each month, 9:15  
a.m.

### **Hospitality Committee**

If we are running low on kitchen or bathroom supplies  
or you see a housekeeping problem that needs  
attention, please contact the Hospitality Committee  
member on duty or Charlie Brown at 689-6470.

## *Eleventh Month Vol. 5*

### **Building & Grounds Concerns**

Any questions about the building or grounds of the  
Meeting House can be direct to committee convener  
Dick Douglass at 864-1119

**Submissions for Friendly Line:** Send info to  
[dsfquaker+friendlyline@gmail.com](mailto:dsfquaker+friendlyline@gmail.com) (please include  
FRIENDLY LINE in the subject line) or give to Deborah or  
Katie.

The Friendly Line  
Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting  
4211 Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50312