

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

The Friendly Line July 2019



This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

~ Psalm 118:24

State of Our Meeting 2019 - Annual DMVF Report to Iowa Yearly Meeting

We seek to be faithful and attentive to the Spirit as we support each other and care for our meeting and for our members and attenders. We are thankful for the opportunity to worship together and to find community in our faith and practice.

“To every thing there is a season” (Ecclesiastes 3:1) and over the past year our meeting has experienced the changing seasons in many ways. A number of active members/attenders are dealing with serious health problems, the challenges of aging and/or deaths within their families. Several families have left our meeting due to moves from the area or the decision that Meeting was no longer meeting their needs. New individuals and families with young children have begun worshipping with us recently. We mourned the deaths of adult children of members, former attenders and friends of our meeting. These losses weigh heavily on our hearts and we continue to seek ways to be of comfort to their families and to each other.

Some of our committees have been less active than in the past, due to the loss of key members. However, our meeting has been blessed this year by beginning to become involved in the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) led in Iowa by Cheryl Sutton and Stan Sanders of Bear Creek Meeting. At their request and after much discernment, DMVF formed a support committee for their AVP work and several in meeting have participated in AVP trainings and workshops at the Newton Correctional Facility. Some of our members are now workshop leaders.

We continue to hold Second Hours after worship to nurture our spiritual well-being. They are generally well attended and have included: monthly query discussions, meeting for worship with

attention to business, committee meetings, presentations and socializing over soup lunches. Topics have included meeting finances and budget issues, FCNL, sanctuary and immigration, AFSC, climate change, Scattergood Friends School and Farm, and AVP. On third Sundays, we get together to sing before meeting for worship.

Our meeting is reaching out in new ways. Thanks to the volunteer work of several members, we now have a Facebook page (if you want to join, email Jan at jfalb0326@yahoo.com) and a website that has already brought us interest and visits for Meeting for Worship.

With the help of an ad hoc committee on finances, we have been reassessing our processes for setting budgets and our annual budget obligations. The committee sponsored two Second Hours to share information. The process is ongoing, and the ad hoc committee plans to bring several recommendations to Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business for approval. We recognize that many meetings and churches are dealing with similar issues, and that the concerns of stewardship of our resources are spiritual as well as practical.

Friends Book Discussion

DMVF will read and discuss *Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit* by Parker Palmer for a monthly book discussion beginning August 15. The get-togethers will take place each second Thursday evening, from 7:00-8:00, until we are done with the book.

The first assignment will be to read through Chapter 2. Willing participants will take turns facilitating. You are welcome even if you haven't read the book!

You can order a copy or read about the book at <https://quakerbooks.org/>.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, June 9, 2019

Clerk: Ann Robinson

Recording Clerks: Susan Meyers, Dorothy Lifka

Attending: Pam Blackburn, Claire Cumbie-Drake, Dick Douglass, Andrea Holveck, Jack Holveck, Mikel Johnson, Dorothy Lifka, Fred Nelson, Sandie Nelson, D.J. Newlin, Owen Newlin, Virginia Smith, Cindy Winchell.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business began with a period of silence, followed by a short reading from *Everyday Grace* by Marianne Williamson.

Review of May Minutes: approved as read.

Review of April Minutes: approved as read with the following corrections:

- AVP Report: Last paragraph: change “wishing” to “within”
- Building and Grounds: 7.b. change “Dorothy Steinbach” to “Dorothy Lifka.”

Library Committee (Virginia): The library has two new volumes by Patricia Loring: *Listening Spirituality, Vol. 1, Personal Spiritual Practices among Friends*, and *Listening Spirituality: Vol. II, Corporate Spiritual Practice among Friends*.

Ministry & Counsel (Andrea): Met May 5, with Dorothy Lifka, Ann Robinson, Andrea Holveck, DJ Newlin, Deborah Fisch present. We began with silence.

AVP Report: AVP Support Group met April 10, 2019. Present were Cheryl Sutton, Stan Sanders, Gordon Bivens, Andrea Holveck, Cindy Winchell, Bill Howard and Lynne Howard.

Cheryl reported that she had finished her AVP mini- workshops for Carol Spaulding-Kruse’s Drake University class. Topics for the four sessions were: Self-esteem, Listening, Transforming Power, and Where Do We Go From Here? She said that the students were very enthusiastic participants. Cheryl’s work there may lead to more classes opening up for AVP instruction at Drake.

Cindy Winchell and Peter Clay have one session left to complete facilitator training.

We discussed the upcoming April 28th second hour discussion where Cheryl and Stan will talk about introducing AVP to the community and spreading the work to folks outside the prison.

An update will be given at business meeting.

Yearly Meeting: the responsibilities of DMVF were discussed. Our meeting sends two representatives and one caretaker. Religious Education and State of the Meeting reports need to go to our June business meeting for approval before being sent to yearly meeting. Andrea and DJ will do the statistical report.

We considered the needs of our F/friends.

Update from M & C: We could use more assistance with helping Jean for her travel to radiation treatments. Many thanks for those who have assisted. Ann will email ongoing needs to meeting members.

Update to AVP Report: Cheryl reported attending a statewide meeting. The next workshops at Newton will be the Advanced Training on June 14-16.

Ann read the State of the Meeting Report written in collaboration with Ministry & Counsel (see page 1 of this Friendly Line).

Treasurer’s Report (Pam): As of the end of May, revenues have exceeded distributions by \$4,846.28. Pam noted that we have not yet had a discussion as a meeting of whether we want to pay all of the affiliated contributions for meeting at one time.

The General Fund made its monthly contribution to the Sharing Fund; The General Fund transferred \$1,300 to the Property Management Fund; \$400 was received toward a new fund, “Planned Outside Painting & Repairs.” We received a P&SC donation of \$33. The library purchased \$85.55 in books and pamphlets.

May 31, we are 92% through the year, and we have received 92% of planned income. We have disbursed 79% of the planned expenses: If members and committee chairs have held back on requesting reimbursement, it is better, from a budget planning

perspective, to be reimbursed, and then, if desired, the member may donate that amount back to the meeting. We have sufficient funds to pay our full apportionment to Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) by June 30, 2019.

At the July business meeting, the Ad-Hoc Committee on Meeting Finance will bring a recommendation regarding our apportionment for 2019-2020 for Iowa Yearly Meeting.

Members suggested and approved that the meeting pay the remaining affiliated contributions of \$600.00.

The treasurer is sending letters to committee conveners requesting they provide requests for any changes in their budgets by end of June so that we have recommendations for the FY 2019-2020 budget.

The Treasurer thanks Friends for their generous contributions that got us back into the black.

Religious Education: No report.

Building & Grounds (Dick). The main projects are to repair leaks over the south stairway and the west stoop. We have a bid from Eric Hedburg who will come down behind the gutter and replace the metal roof with a membrane. We will make the repairs before we paint the windows. There is rotten wood around a window on the west side of the building. Primarily the roof is good. Eric's estimate was \$300 - \$800 for the project, depending upon how much of the flashing needs to be repaired. After those repairs are made, we will be able to do the painting around the windows. We do not have three bids to do these three small roofing jobs. The general consensus of building and grounds is that this is a reasonable bid. Eric has done good work for us in the past. Building and Grounds has invited other bids; some companies either would not bid or would not provide a bid without charging to come out.

Regarding carpentry, stucco repair and painting, we are looking at \$3000 - \$5000, expenses that will be incurred in the next FY.

The Building and Grounds Committee

recommends approval of Eric Hedberg's estimated bid to make the 2 roof repairs at cost of \$650 for the west stoop leak and \$300 - \$800 for the south roof leak. Approved by business meeting.

Property Management (Claire): Property Management agreed with the recommendations of the building and grounds committee. The treasurer queried: Do we still need to keep the budget for property management at \$6,000/year? The treasurer would like property management to have input into the budget for FY2019-20.

Peace & Social Concerns (Jack): The committee was contacted on April 24 with a request for emergency funding to cover housing costs for Christine Noblise, who is representing UNPF at the UN Headquarters in New York City from April 26 - May 3. Peter Clay brought the request to the committee and noted that the majority of her expenses were paid by CedingSovereignty. Peter emailed members of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee. Members agreed this was an appropriate use of funds and recommended sending Ms. Noblise \$200. Because of the time crunch, a committee member paid the \$200 out of personal funds, which were then reimbursed by the treasurer. Christine spoke at Yearly Meeting two years ago about working with Native American issues and Quaker collaboration furthering indigenous peoples' concerns.

Peter shared that Boulder (Colorado) Friends Meeting Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples Committee is presenting a program, Roots of Injustice – Seeds of Change, three times across Iowa. DMVF has been invited to co-sponsor this project. Other sponsors include WILPF, Scattergood and the First Unitarian Church of Des Moines. The Peace and Social Concerns Committee recommends that this meeting co-sponsor this program. The Des Moines event will take place July 9, at the First Unitarian Church, 1800 Bell Ave. The workshop presenter is Paula Palmer, director of Toward

Right Relationship with Native Peoples, a project of the Indigenous Peoples Concerns Committee of the Boulder Friends Meeting. RSVP to Linda Lemons at lemonsling@gmail.com or at 515-229-1404. The event may be preceded on July 8 at DMVF Meeting House with a film, *Two Rivers*. Plans are still in development.

DMVF agreed to co-sponsor the series. As a co-sponsor, we would like to have as many members present and supporting the Des Moines event(s) as possible.

Hospitality Committee: The Hospitality Committee was thanked for facilitating the spring picnic and for helping to support Bear Creek Meeting at the time of Michael Sutton's memorial. We felt honored to support Bear Creek.

Nominating Committee (Andrea): The committee presented their report. Several corrections were made. The committee will provide a list of the committees with descriptions of each committee's work. It is requested that conveners read the committee description to committee members in their first FY 2019-2020 meeting in July.

Questions were raised about the duties of the audit committee. A pamphlet about audits within Friends' meetings can offer guidelines. A date for the audit will be set in consultation with the treasurer and the treasurer's support committee.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Iowa Yearly Meeting will be Tuesday, July 23rd through Sunday, July 28th at Scattergood Friends School and Farm near West Branch. The theme is "Accompaniment and Giving Voice." Registration information and other details are available on the IYMC website at www.iymc.org/. Please register in advance.

Christine Ashley of Friends Committee on National Legislation (and a previous Scattergood Head of School) plans to attend DMVF Meeting on June 30. She invites Friends to join her for lunch nearby after second hour to visit and have a conversation about FCNL.

Meeting for Worship with
Attention to Business closed with silence.

News of Our Friends

A Whole Family of New Attenders! Kelsea writes: Matthew, Kelsea, Adeline (ADD- uh-line)(4), and Ezra (2) Gillespie live on an acreage near Martensdale with their dog, Thoreau, and eight ducklings. Matthew works as an assistant attorney general and Kelsea stays home with the chaos.

Dorothy and Mike will be driving to Oregon in August for **Ted Welch's** wedding. They would like bring a basket of tchotchkes to remind Ted of his friends in Iowa. Please let them know if you have anything to send.

Dietz-Kilen news--Jim's mom, Joyce Kilen, passed away at age 90 in May. She was in good health and good spirits right the end and died peacefully in her sleep. Also in May, Nora graduated with a Master's in Philanthropic Studies and Graduate Certification in Nonprofit management. She has a part-time job in development, while seeking a full-time position in Indianapolis. Catherine, her parents and Jim plan to travel to Australia at the end of August to visit her sister and family.

Peter Clay recently returned from seven weeks of travel to Africa, the U.K. and the Republic of Ireland. In Rwanda, Peter visited and stayed with old friends from his many years of work there and visited Gishwati, the small forest that he helped make a new national park. The time in Rwanda reconfirmed his sense of deep connection there, although so much has changed over the 34 years since his first visit. After flying to London, he traveled overland to Wales for several nights and then to Ireland via the ferry from Fishguard. Once there he traveled by bus to Galway and then out to visit Inishmaan, one of the Aran Islands off of Galway, a place that is very special to him. Finally, Peter met up with an old English friend and spent a week hiking in the Lake District. Friends who would like to read his

trip journal should get in touch with Peter, at peterclay1@me.com or 515-599-1980.

A recent letter from **Christy Bailey** tells of the death of both of her parents. Her mother Margaret died in Dec. 2017 as a result of a one-car auto accident, and her father Frank died in July of 2018, after suffering ill-health for some time. DM Valley Friends greatly appreciated having the family as an important part of our meeting the few years they lived in the Des Moines area. Frank was especially helpful and generous in sharing his time and knowledge in caring for the Meeting House as chair of the Building and Grounds Committee. Christy continues to live in the family home at 604 Preston Drive, Seymour, TN, 37865. Her email is quakermiss@aim.com.

Query 1: Meeting for Worship July 7, 2019 Discussion

Are our Meetings for Worship held in a spirit of expectant waiting and communion with the Holy Spirit?

Many of us prepare for meeting during the week by practicing centering and devotional reading. We read poetry and writings of ‘weighty’ Quakers such as Parker Palmer in order to remind ourselves of the essential and our true self. Music and appreciation of nature also bring us into contact with the divine.

Perhaps our First Day youth could query friends with ‘what do you do to prepare for Meeting?’ Another recommended Friends’ Journal’s weekly “Quaker Speak” videos. It is helpful to have these resources, as our faith tradition seems often to be communicated through osmosis – these can help make our traditions more overt.

How do we refer to that which is divine? How does ascribing gender to the Holy Spirit affect our worship?

Friends have been intentional in looking at how gender affects our worship and the life of our meetings. In our tradition, we have used many names for God – the Creator, the Light, the Life. Assigning gender to our spiritual experience just doesn’t make sense to many of

us. Ascribing gender to the divine may also risk framing our relationship with God through the lens of our relationship with a parent of that gender – for good or ill. *How does the vocal ministry of the meeting contribute to its spiritual life? In what ways do we recognize and nurture vocal ministry and other spiritual gifts?*

We welcome messages as tremendous gifts. The gifts come from the heart and speak of compassion. Often our messages move beyond the duality of good and evil. We recognize the gift in vocal ministry by individuals approaching the speaker and offering thanks for the message given. Perhaps we could do better in helping members/attenders (and children) recognize when the spirit is prompting a message. We would like to provide nurture for our vocal ministry in a way that encourages people to bring even more meaning to their messages.

This meeting also nurtures the spirit in our members by providing scholarship support to attend events, such as Friends General Conference. We need to let members know that we are often able to provide financial support to those who would like to experience more of the wider Quaker community and bring their learning back to meeting.

We considered the concept of eldering related to vocal ministry during Meeting. We reflected on the challenge of nurturing members who may offer messages that seem problematic. Perhaps the lesson is for our members to learn patience and loving care. We want to avoid “drive-by eldering,” in which one person, after Meeting, speaks to a person about what they did not like about sharing in a critical way. True eldering -- loving correction – within meetings is the primary responsibility of Ministry and Counsel.

Finally, we appreciate the practice of having the Advice *and* Query questions read during Meeting for Worship (even earlier), to allow our worship to be influenced by the Query.

Down the Line ...

Meeting Hosts

7/14 & 7/21 - D. Fisch & K. Jacobi

7/28 & 8/4 - C. Winchell & P.

Wingert

8/11 & 8/18 - K. Bragg & D.J. Newlin

8/25 & 9/1 - C. & D. Douglass

9/8 & 9/15 - B. Henderson & P.

Reynolds

9/22 & 9/29 - E. Munro & J. Falb

Child Care

Adult volunteers will provide child care during Meeting for Worship and second hours (as needed)

July 14 - Patty & Bob

July 21 - Dorothy & Cindy

July 28 - Fred & Virginia

August 4 - Deborah & Andrea

August 11 - Catherine & Jim

August 18 - Patty & Bob

August 25 - Dorothy & Cindy

The Meeting is taking a summer break from First Day School.

Building & Grounds Concerns

Any questions about the building or grounds of the Meeting House can be directed to **Dick Douglas**, convener of the Building & Grounds Committee, at 864-1119.

Meeting for Worship, 10 a.m. First Day

Meeting for Worship/Business

11:30 a.m. second First Day each month

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

Second Hours

July 14 - Meeting for Business

July 21 - Committee Meetings

July 28 - No second hour due to Iowa Yearly Meeting

August 4 - Discussion of Query

August 11 - Meeting for Business

August 18 - Committee meetings

August 25 - Highlights IYM, FGC

Hospitality Committee Duty

If we are running low on kitchen or bathroom supplies or if you see a housekeeping problem that needs attention, please contact a Hospitality Committee member or Ella Steinbach or Dorothy Lifka at 991-1358.

July 2019

August Query #2: Outreach

Friends believe it is essential to express in words and deeds the faith that sustains us and the convictions that arise from that faith. It is important to speak with integrity and courage ourselves as well as to listen to others with open hearts and minds. We seek fellowship with all branches of Friends and with other seekers of Truth. We recognize the oneness of humanity in the Spirit and believe that in learning from one another, we may come to respect differences. Truth is greater than any of us may know, individually or as a group.

Find us online at:

www.desmoinesvalleyfriends.org

Check out our Facebook group for members/attenders. If you'd like to be added, email Jan Falb, at jfalb0326@yahoo.com.

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