

FRIENDLY LINE



Revisiting Quaker Process

Now and then, Des Moines Valley Friends revisit some of the tenets of our faith and practice. We have done that through our newsletters, second hours and sometimes educational sessions. Recently, on several occasions, we discussed the value of reviewing “Quaker process.” That term generally refers to the way meeting for worship with attention to business and related decision-making functions. The term also relates to other aspects of our practice, including our committee work and communications.

With the desire to consider how we can continue to understand Quaker process as we seek the light in the manner of Friends, here is the first in a series of several articles on the topic. We also plan to have at least one upcoming second hour (to be announced) devoted to the topic of Quaker process.

Guidelines for Meeting for Business

The following definitions and guidelines are from materials on Quaker process provided by Friends General Conference and available through *Quaker Journal*. These guidelines reflect centuries of practice. Even so, it is important to appreciate that we are always “practicing” as we seek to serve and to love each other and the world.

Consensus – a secular method involving a rational process and producing general agreement. The authority is the group.

Sense of the meeting – a religious method, involving a spiritual process and producing a spirit-led decision. The authority is the spirit as discerned by the group.

Meeting for worship with attention to business provides an opportunity for Friends to practice several of our testimonies as we carry out the practical work of maintaining our faith community. All are welcome as we seek to be Spirit-led to achieve “the sense of the meeting,” with as much efficiency as possible, achieving a sense of what Friends have long called “right order.”

1. When a person speaks in meeting for worship with attention to business, receive the words as you receive vocal ministry in meeting for worship – with an open heart and calm mind.
2. When you need to speak, ask the clerk to recognize you by raising your hand.
3. When you speak, please stand, speak to the clerks’ table, and keep your comments to the point.
4. To affirm something someone has said, simply nod or use the phrase “This Friend speaks my mind.” Please don’t ask to be recognized so that you may express the same thought in other words.
5. Friends will not generally be recognized to speak on any given issue more than once, except to acknowledge a personal change of perspective during the meeting.
6. When the recording clerk is developing a minute, sit in worship, and hold him/her in the Light. Please refrain from conversation with your neighbor.
7. If you feel that the gathering needs a break or a stretch, it is appropriate to ask to be recognized so that you may ask the clerk for one.

Other thoughts suggested by Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting Recording Clerk, Dorothy Lifka:
 - There may be a need to call for additional periods of silence during business meeting, for example, when emotions are strong or when we seem to be stuck.

- No decision is also a decision- an acknowledgment that we are not ready to move forward in unity.

QUERY #9 for discussion on March 1st CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

ADVICE

Because Friends believe there is that of God in all people, we strive for a world of freedom, justice and equality for everyone. Believing that progress toward these ideals is advanced by those who devote themselves to the shaping of a just society, we urge Friends to be active and conscientious citizens. This means staying informed on Social issues, and on the opinions and activities of our elected representatives and of those seeking office. It is important that Friends speak truth to those in power. We recognize that, in our world, power in government and private sectors lies disproportionately with those of economic means. Speaking out on a personal level in our communities may be difficult, even dangerous, yet by doing so we may encourage others to work for justice.

Our first allegiance is to the Holy Spirit. In general, Friends support the laws of the State; but if those laws directly violate our religious convictions, we may be led to oppose them. When contemplating civil disobedience or unpopular personal testimony, we must carefully consider the spiritual basis for, and honestly face the consequences of, our actions.

QUERY

What conflicts do we perceive between the laws of the State and our religious convictions? How do we resolve those conflicts in our lives? In what ways do we assume responsibility for the government of our community, state, nation and world?

How do we share our convictions with others? Do we express our opinions with courage, yet with love, mindful of the Divine Spirit within everyone?

How do we maintain our integrity when we find ourselves in a position of power? How do we respond when we feel powerless? Do we really respect and help those we seek to serve?

Are we careful to reach our decisions through prayer and strengthen our actions with worship? Are we open to divine leadings?

Query #7 Home and Family January 5, 2020

We let others know they are welcome to come to visit. We wish, in hospitality, to encompass Rumi's poem that urges us to welcome it all – the hope, the love, the meanness, the smallness, the doubt. As we are open to these desert spaces in our own hearts and homes, we are then open to welcoming the friend and stranger who is in these other emotional spaces that we rarely associate with hospitality. Hospitality is welcoming it all.

One member recalls a friend who opens her home with such welcoming. She is disabled, so she encourages friends to come visit her. Her home may not make it into Better Homes and Gardens, but she is always ready for friends to come by – and even stay overnight, if desired. One friend puts the FCNL poster in his window, "Love Thy Neighbor, No Exceptions," and laughs. sharing he hopes this may protect his home. He notes the competing impulses of

wanting to be open and hospitable, and at the same time, wanting to be secure. When he closes his gate to the fence which encloses his property in the country, he sometimes wonders if this conveys a contradictory message.

We have increased our meeting's signage, increasing our visibility, yet in a rather modest way. We note that visitors still have trouble sometimes finding our meeting house. We are a bit contradictory in our own messaging, as we have signage at our small parking lot that states "Parking for Friends Meeting," suggesting others should stay away.

We considered beginning a round of our "Friendly Eights" gatherings, with a more spontaneous approach. For example, after meeting, a friend might say, "I'm putting on a pot of chili – I have room for 6 folks who might like to join us." This might give us an opportunity to welcome people to stop by – no expectation that the house will be spotless. Is simplicity that my house will be so orderly anyone can come by OR does it mean, you are my community, come on in, mess and all.

Do we unnecessarily limit our openness to guests and friends because of preoccupation with making our homes immaculate first? If we grew up with a family who became stressed for a week before hosting a gathering, welcoming people in a spontaneous way, letting go of these expectations can be a real challenge. But it can also be an "answering to faith" and burden lifted.

We discussed learning to welcome people to our homes, without seeing them as reflections of ourselves and our value – particularly for women. Women often feel our job is to make sure the house cleaning gets done, and the man's job is to put this off as long as possible! We are unable to speak clearly or to be fully present if shame about our home is present. We recognize that this group gathered is of an older generation. We wonder how the next generation is doing. The expectation that women would be responsi-

BOOK SALE

Please join us!

February 23 Second Hour

ble for the home, how is career development limited? Will this generation get the balance a little better?

Our meeting also reflects that we appreciate gender balance in our hospitality committee – men and women participate fully in preparing food for gatherings and cleaning up afterwards. We also have a good gender balance in property management committee and childcare. We hope this models shared responsibilities for our children.

We seem to downplay the gift of storytelling in our culture. We need to spend more time encouraging people to share their stories – our heritage is important – the happy and the not so happy ones. Sharing stories is one of the most important ways of sharing who we are through the generations. Some of our stories connect us to our own childhoods – stories our elders have told us tell us who we are. Such as the story of John Woolman, who threw a stone at a bird that proved a fatal blow, knocking the little bird out of the tree. We are told that he was crestfallen having taken this little creature's life and vowed from that time forward to never again do such a thing. We value the talent shows

we've had here in DSM Valley Friends Meeting.

Letter writing is another form of storytelling that we seem to be losing. Some treasure our family history as captured in letters to sweethearts during WWII, and from a son to mother during a war. We would like to suggest having a second hour of storytelling at Meeting, in which we could share about our stories and our faith journeys.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business January 12, 2020

Present: Deborah Fisch, Katie Jacoby, Dick Douglass, DJ Newlin, Mikel Johnson, Sandie Nelson, Fred Nelson, Virginia Smith, Patti McKeene, Bob Henderson, David Drake, Cindy Winchell, Steve Shivers, Patty Reynolds
Clerk: Ann Robinson
Recording Clerk: Dorothy Lifka.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business began with a period of silence and a quote from Friends Consultation on Worship Interest Group II:

The purpose of our meetings for business is to build up the community of faith through seeking God's will for us as a community. We are here to worship and not to get through an agenda. The meeting for business is over when the worship is over.

Minutes: The following corrections were made:

- There was a Nominating Committee report. (It is included in full below.)
- The book title, Healing the Heart of Democracy was omitted from the library report.
- The correct deadline for items for the Friendly Line is the last Friday of January.
- It was incorrectly stated that the finance committee will become the budget committee;

the budget committee will become the finance committee.

Nominating Committee Report (Andrea Holveck): November 2019.

- Deborah Fisch has volunteered for the Assistant Recording Clerk position which was vacant.
- Bob Henderson will be replacing Claire Cumbie-Drake on the Property Management Committee.
- Andrea Holveck's term is up on the Nominating Committee. She will be replaced by Virginia Smith.
- A newly formed Finance Committee will replace the Budget Committee. Members are Cindy Winchell (convener), Catherine Dietz-Kilen, Owen Newlin, Kelsea Gillespie and Pam Blackburn. A description for the committee will need to be written.

The minutes were approved as corrected.

Nominating Committee Report (Dorothy Lifka):

Gordon Bivens volunteered to be interim convener of M & C. DJ agreed to be interim assistant convener.

Treasurer's Report (Pam Blackburn):

As of December 31, the Meeting was 50% through the fiscal year. Revenues and expenses are breaking even at about 44% (\$16,000) each. While total revenues for July-December 2019 were about the same as total revenues for the same period in 2018, 2019's revenues were more consistent from month to month with only a small increase in year-end giving. So, hopefully, we will not see the dramatic decrease in giving in early 2020 that we experienced in 2019.

Comment from the clerk: other banking options are being explored because of limitations of current credit union's services.

The treasurer's report was approved.

Library: (Virginia Smith):

A gift from Gordon Bivens, 4 volume set, "The Legacy They Gave to Us," a Quaker history. Book sale is 4th Sunday in February.

Ministry & Counsel (Jim Dietz-Kilen):

The committee gathered in silence at our appointed time of 8:30 a.m. on the First Day of the month, 5 January 2020. In attendance were Gordon Bivens, Ann Robinson, David Drake, Deborah Fisch and Jim Dietz-Kilen.

We began with expressions of appreciation for the many Friends who had hands in making the memorial service for Jean Sandstrom a time of shared warmth and fond memories. We are grateful for the caring of Friends and were struck by the many overlapping networks of people whose lives were touched by Jean.

Jim Dietz-Kilen has asked to be replaced as M&C convener. Ann will convey this to the Nominating Committee. Jim will remain a member of M&C.

We spent the balance of our time talking about ways we can provide comfort and care to various folks in Meeting. We also had a clarifying conversation about the effort to compile a list of folks who are willing to be part of a "Responders & Helpers" list.

This list is intended as a way for a member or attender to be able to put out a general call for one-time or occasional assistance. When a need or wish arises, an email can be sent to Andrea (who has volunteered to coordinate this list), and she will send the request out to the full current list. The first person to respond that they are able and willing to fulfill that request is asked to use "reply all," so everyone knows it is being handled. If there is a need for further coordination, Andrea will connect the two individuals.

This effort is not intended for long-term or ongoing needs. Those are more appropriately conveyed to M&C for establishment and coordination of longer-term schedules. We would like to build the list of Responders & Helpers beyond the few people who have volunteered so far to be part of this effort to minister to each other.

We closed with silence and left to join Meeting of Worship.

There was discussion of how to get word out about the First Responder list: We suggested including the information as a boxed item in the Friendly Line listing Andrea as contact, on the hallway bulletin board, and during announcements at circle.

Religious Ed (*Patty Reynolds*):

Request to place rocking chair at the back of the meeting. Approved.

Building & Grounds (*Dick*

Douglass):

The Committee did not meet in December. We plan on meeting Jan. 26 at 9 a.m.

The geothermal system biannual maintenance was done by Green's Appliance on 12/17/19. The repair to the freon system done in the fall continues to be sound. We needed to replace a "contractor," which the tech said was normal with the age of this system. He replaced a capacitor at no charge by using one already on our system that wasn't being used.

Otherwise the system checked out. Total cost for seasonal maintenance and the repair (including our church discount): \$222.35.

Property Management: No report.

Peace & Social Concerns (*Patti McKee and Steve Shivers*): Discussion of banner for Climate Chaos Parade which reads: CLIMATE CHAOS BRINGS WAR! JOURNALISTS MUST SPEAK TRUTH! DES MOINES QUAKERS

Concern was expressed that the wording might express possible negative messages about journalists, whose work some of us feel is al-

ready unfairly maligned in many cases. Concern was also raised about the importance of following Quaker process even when under time pressure; this is the second time recently that full Quaker process was not followed due to time pressures. Approved to replace "truth" with image of the earth.

Hospitality (*Cindy Winchell*):

Appreciation was expressed to the hospitality and M & C committees and to the meeting overall for Jean Sandstrom's memorial. An updated checklist is being developed to help with coordination of future memorial services.

Old Business:

Deborah Fisch gave an update on the proposed Christmas display by the AFSC. (For more information, please see the December minutes in the January Friendly Line.) She reported that she clarified with other members of Friends House Board that the meeting doesn't dictate what AFSC does; as one of our representative, she speaks for the meeting but understands that the board makes the decision about Friends House property. The meeting's representatives on the board are charged to listen closely to the sense of the meeting, to bring that sense to the board and are given the responsibility to act on the meeting's behalf after having considered the opinions of the other board members. Currently there is no display.

New Business: Initial discussion of ideas for use of memorial donations for Jean. Suggestions included: outside space for children, purchase of more Quaker song books, a fund to support regular tuning of the piano, contributing to funding for a John McCutcheon concert at Iowa Yearly Meeting, contribution to B & G for a building maintenance project, scholarship to Scattergood in Jean's name. Ideas will be forwarded to the Finance Committee.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business closed with a period of silence.

NEWS FROM OUR FRIENDS

David Drake shares that he was recently selected to a national office as president-elect with Physicians for Social Responsibility. He has been involved with PSR since his medical school days at Des Moines University. He is honored to take on this 3 year position - becoming president in one year and then immediate past president. PSR focuses on the health consequences of the climate crisis and the necessity of eliminating all nuclear weapons. David wants to use his new position to educate and advocate for ways out of these dual existential threats. He continues his involvement and support of PSR Iowa with the well known physician coordinator Maureen McCue. Please contact David if his position and organization can be of assistance to your own efforts on these issues.

Ella Steinbach was in her first motorcycle accident. While visiting an exhibit on redlining at Franklin Junior High, she bumped into a motorcycle on display and cut her leg, needing 7 stitches.

Chuck Day is temporarily in Brio (room 403), the retirement community just five minutes north of his house in Johnston, while he continues to recover after a fall and hip surgery. He would enjoy seeing people from Meeting, especially around lunch or dinner time, or in the evening or on weekends to play cards, dominoes or Scrabble. His family suggests a couple of visitors at a time, since large groups can tire him quickly.

DMARC Anti-Hunger Day on
the Hill

Tuesday, Feb. 25

Iowa State Capital

Breakfast Advocacy training

8:15-9:45 a.m.

Activities on the Hill, 10:00 a.m.

- Noon

FOLLOWING IS TAKEN FROM AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER MIDWEST DIGEST OF JANUARY 10, 2010

AFSC says loud and clear: No War With Iran!

Hundreds of protests around the region and around the country are calling for the US to back away from a war with Iran.

Progress in work for peace and justice in Palestine-Israel

Over the past year, we've seen signs of progress in working to change government policies and corporate practices that support inequality and the Israeli occupation.

Iowa program looks back at 2019 successes, forward to changes

Erica Johnson writes that the Iowa Immigrant Rights Program is "so proud of all we've been able to build and the services we've been able to provide. We also know that there is much more to be done. We're excited for what is in store as we continue to work on uniting with Iowa Justice For Our Neighbors (JFON). We know that together we will build a strong organization dedicated to immigrants' rights work in our state!" Catch the latest news on Facebook.

Bits and Peaces

Prior to the holidays, the AFSC Michigan Criminal Justice Program organized a card-writing party to send wishes of liberation and hope to many of the 3000 prisoners in Michigan with whom the program collaborates.....Register for AFSC's Changing Systems, Changing Ourselves webinar series. This month we're launching our e-course for congregations and other groups working for immigrant justice....

Jean Sandstrom, co-clerk of the Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting, an accomplished environmental engineer, loving mother and dear friend, has died at 64.



CLIMATE MARCH 2/1/2020



FIRST HOUR CHILD CARE

Meeting Hosts:

2/9 & 2/16 - J Falb & E Munro
2/23 & 3/1 - D Fisch & K Jacoby
3/8 & 15 - B Henderson & P Reynolds

Child Care:

Adult Volunteers will provide child care during Meeting for Worship and second hours (as needed)
2/16 - Dorothy & Cindy
2/23 - Virginia & Fred
3/1 - Deborah & Andrea
3/8 - Catherine & Jim

Second Hours:

Feb 16 - Soup Lunch & Committee Mtgs
Feb 23 - Book Sale
March 22 - Remembrance (Jim Dietz-Kilen)
March 29 - FCNL Legislative outlook (Claire)

Building & Grounds:

Any question about the building or grounds of the Meeting-house can be directed to Building & Grounds Committee Convener, **Dick**

Douglass, 515/864-1119.

Hospitality Committee:

If we are running low on kitchen or bathroom supplies or if you see a housekeeping problem that needs attention, please contact the Hospitality Committee Co-Conveners, **Cindy Winchell, 515/720-5516 & Charlie Brown, 515/689-6470**

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.

Friendly Line:

Please send info for next Friendly Line to Sandie Nelson no later than February 28, 2020, last Friday of month, at sandiebnelson4416@gmail.com

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

The Friendly Line
Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting
4211 Grand Avenue
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