

JANUARY 2020

FRIENDLY LINE

QUERY #8 for discussion on February 2nd PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

**“LIFE IS MEANT TO BE
LIVED FROM A CENTER, A
DIVINE CENTER—A LIFE OF
UNHURRIED PEACE AND
POWER IT IS SERENE. IT
TAKES NOT TIME, BUT IT
OCCUPIES ALL OUR TIME.”**

ADVICE

Historic testimonies of the Society of Friends against taking oaths, joining secret organizations, gambling and using addictive substances grew out of efforts of Friends to live with integrity and consistency. To swear an oath implies that one is obliged to be truthful only under oath. Joining secret organizations, gambling and using addictive and/or consciousness-altering substances were recognized as practices which diverted resources from useful purposes, distracted attention from the Inner Light, and placed obstacles in the way of Friends seeking to lead lives of integrity. We recognize the spirit of these testimonies and endeavor to apply the same principles in our lives today.

Honesty and simplicity are essential parts of personal responsibility. We manifest our commitment to Truth in all we do. We can have joy and beauty in our lives without allowing material things to dominate them. We need to free ourselves from distractions that interfere with our search for inner peace, and accept with thanksgiving all that promotes fullness and aids in service to the divine Center.

QUERY

How do we center our lives in the awareness of God the Spirit, so that all things may take their rightful places?

How do we structure our individual lives in order to keep them uncluttered with things and activities? How does Meeting help us examine our personal lives for simplicity?

Do we choose recreational activities which foster mental, physical and spiritual health?

How are our lives affected by tobacco, alcohol and drug use? What can we do to deal with problems resulting from their use? What can we do to recognize and deal with unhealthy ways we treat ourselves?

How do we ensure that we act with fairness and integrity?

Are we sensitive to our own use of language which may be offensive or oppressive to others?

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business December 8, 2019 Minutes

Meeting began near the appointed time with a period of worshipful Silence.

The following F/friends were present: Ann Robinson, presiding clerk; Deborah Fisch, assistant recording clerk; Pam Blackburn; Cindy Winchell; Charlie Brown; Dick Douglass; David Drake; Claire Cumbie-Drake; Katie Jacoby; Fred Nelson; Virginia Smith; Bob Henderson; Sandie Nelson; Jack Holveck; Andrea Holveck; Mikel Johnson; Patti McKee; and Charlie Day.

The clerk shared a poem by Hafiz found in *Healing the Heart of Democracy* by Parker Palmer; the book recently read by the meeting's book group.

Clerk proposes a change in the agenda order - The clerk suggested that since there was a proposal in



Dawnland

is the untold story of Indigenous child removal in the US through the nation's first-ever government-endorsed truth and reconciliation commission, which investigated the devastating impact of Maine's child welfare practices on the Wabanaki people. The 86-minute original film will be followed with discussion.

Please join us!

January 10th 6:30 to 9 PM

Friends Meetinghouse

Presented by Des Moines Valley Friends and The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

A free will Donation for the cost of the documentary is appreciated-

Contact Peter Clay with Questions.

peterclay1@me.com
515-599-1980

New Business that could need more time for discernment than usual F/ friends move it to the beginning of the agenda to be sure there was enough time for careful discernment.

It was suggested that Meeting first review the minutes from the Eleventh Month Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, as they had not yet been approved. Friends were in unity with that suggestion.

Minute 12.19.01 Meeting approves the clerk's amended proposal to move one item from New Business that she believes will take more time for careful discernment toward the front of the agenda following consideration of the November minutes.

Review and Consideration for Approval of Minutes for Eleventh Month 2019 - Friends reviewed the November minutes and approved with corrections.

Minute 12.19.02 The minutes for 11/10/2019 published in the Twelfth Month 2019 Friendly Line were reviewed and approved with the following corrections:

1. Adding David Drake's name to those who were in attendance at the 11/10/2019 meeting for worship with attention to business;
2. Amending the final minute under New Business as follows:
 - a) Deleting the first sentence of the first paragraph replacing it with the following:
Peter Clay requested that Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting support Deb Haaland's (US Representative from NM) request that the International Olympic Committee amend the official Olympic records book so that it correctly reflects the achievements of James "Jim" Thorpe (Wa-Tho-Huk, of the Thunder Clan of the Sac and Fox Nation) and also, that the International Olympic Committee corrects the 1912 Olympic records to reflect that Thorpe's two gold

medals were reinstated on 10/13/1982.

b) Making similar changes in the approved minute so it reads *-Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) supports Deb Haaland's (US Representative from NM) request that the International Olympic Committee amend the official Olympic records book so that it correctly reflects the achievements of James "Jim" Thorpe (Wa-Tho-Huk, of the Thunder Clan of the Sac and Fox Nation) and also, that the International Olympic Committee corrects the 1912 Olympic records to reflect that Thorpe's two gold medals were reinstated on 10/13/1982. We believe that acknowledging the contributions and successes of all cultures and all individuals is important. While we cannot undo the actions of the past, we can work to restore the truth as we seek to heal broken relationships with Native nations.*

[Note of explanation: Jim Thorpe won two golds at the 1912 Olympic Games but was stripped of those medals after it was discovered he had violated amateur rules by being paid to play semi-professional baseball in the summers of 1909 and 1910. Several other athletes also received payment for participation in one sport or another and they were not stripped of their medals. Many believe racism was at work because the International Olympic Committee singled out Thorpe. In 1982 Thorpe's gold medals were posthumously returned by the International Olympic Committee. However, the records were not corrected to reflect this at the same time, thus the need for the resolution by Haaland urging the US House to call for the change.]

Consideration of AFSC Proposal - The clerk invited the Meeting's representatives to Friends House Board (Pam Blackburn and Deborah Fisch) and Friends House member-at-large, Dick Douglass to bring meeting

members up to date on the request before the Friends House Board concerning the request by Des Moines AFSC staff to place a display on Friends House property meant to draw attention to the over 50,000 men, women, and children being held by ICE in make-shift detention centers at the Mexican border and across the U.S.

Meeting representatives shared that in late November they received an email from Jon Krieg stating that Erica Johnson, the AFSC Iowa Immigration Program Director, was proposing an immigration display in support of the Iowa Sanctuary Movement on Friends House lawn from Dec 1 - Feb 3 (Aimed at making a statement during the Christmas season and when press is in town for the Iowa caucuses). She told Jon the display would be something like a traditional Nativity scene surrounded by a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire - aimed to remind passers-by of the U.S. detention centers on the Southern border. Possible signage in Spanish and English: All Families are Holy.

One concern for all three Friends, as well some others on the Board, is that they were notified in late November and expected to make a decision by the weekend after Thanksgiving if possible, before the next scheduled Board meeting. In order to have any chance at meeting the requested timeline, Jon asked members to respond to him via email as soon as possible, hopefully by the end of the week. The Board does their business in the manner of Friends, and the timing made it next to impossible to do that faithfully and with careful discernment. Jon Krieg stated that it was clear the board did not have unity. Also, the proposed display was not in the Des Moines AFSC budget and so the staff was in the process of looking for other ways to find funding in order to purchase the Nativity and fencing. The lack of funding and the failure of the board to reach a sense of unity via email relieved pressure on the Friends House Board to make a quick decision and allowed Meeting reps time to seek

guidance from M&C and the meeting as a whole.

After that brief overview, the clerk invited F/friends to settle into worship and share as they felt led. The clerk called on Friends when they indicated they wanted to speak, helping to pace the sharing and give time for Friends to hear the messages of the Spirit as spoken from the heart. There were both strong support and strong concern about the proposed display. Friends asked, "What is the message?" "Who is the audience?" "Will the display and the proposed signage get that message across?" "Is it in Right Order for us, when we purposely turn away from religious symbols, to use the Nativity in a way that could be offensive to those who find meaning in it?"

It became clear fairly that F/friends in general deeply support what they believe to be the message behind the proposed display - If the holy family sought refuge at the U.S./Mexican border would we be willing to hold them in cages as we are doing with Central and South American refugee families at our border?

There is a great diversity of religious belief among us, but there is a strong unity of Spirit that the practices of the U. S. government at the Southern border are inhumane and must be stopped. We were not in unity that the proposed display was the way to do this.

We spoke with some awe about how deep our time together felt, even though it was clear as time passed that we were not going to be able to find unity as a meeting to support the placement of a Nativity on the Friends House property. The wonder of it, was even though we could not reach unity, we did experience being in a covered meeting. We found joy in the rare opportunity to really learn about and from each other. Now we must discern how we are called to action and speak up if the display is not the way. We must find the courage to risk being persecuted for the sake of Love in action.

The clerk suggested that though we could spend more time considering how we are called to respond to the border crisis and as a meeting,

we had been discerning around this request for over an hour and we still had other work to do.

We trust our representatives to the Friends House Board will care the message back that though several individuals supported their request, the meeting did not find unity to approve, and then they will Listen with the same depth, and trust as other board members share their own feelings and with the help of the Spirit will find clarity as to whether they approve the request or feel called to stand in the way or stand aside from the decision. We turned our attention to other business before the Meeting.

Treasurer's Report - Pam Blackburn reported that the accounting software used to keep Meeting records had a major malfunction, but she hopes to be back up and running by later in the week. The malfunction, however, means that she is unable to provide a detailed financial report. Meeting asks the treasurer to prepare a summary of the past month's transactions to be inserted in this month's minutes, as well as a full report of expenditures and deposits as soon as possible and make paper copies available at the meetinghouse. It was also suggested the report be posted on the private section on the Meeting's website. The full report will be added to the Twelfth Month Minutes kept in the record book.

[Addendum from the treasurer: As reported at the December Business Meeting, our accounting software suffered a major malfunction. We have good backups of all data through October 31 and are in the process of reconstructing data entered originally in November. The treasurer has not been able to complete the reconstruction in time to present a summary by this Friendly Line deadline.]

F/friends are reminded that if they want to give Meeting end of the year donations for the purpose of use as donations as a deduction for their 2019 tax returns it needs to be done by the 31st of Twelfth Month.

Library Committee Report (Reported by Virginia Smith) - Virginia reported we now have a second copy of by Parker Palmer. This is the book read recently by Meeting's book group.

Ministry & Counsel Committee Report (Submitted by Jim Dietz-Kilen) - Des Moines Valley Friends Ministry & Counsel Committee gathered at our appointed time at 8:30 am on the first First Day of December (1 December). David Drake, Andrea Holveck, Deborah Fisch, Ann Robinson & Jim Dietz-Kilen were in attendance.

Updates - Updates were shared regarding care and concern for several Friends.

AFSC proposal - There was also considerable discussion of the AFSC request to the Friends House Board for the support of a fenced-in Nativity display outside the Friends House with a sign stating that all families are holy. This request was made with a short timeline that did not really allow for Quaker discernment. M&C requests time on the agenda during the next meeting for worship with attention to business to discuss both this specific request and also how we should, as a general practice, respond to requests with timeframes that do not accommodate our process.

We closed with Silence.

Alternatives to Violence (AVP) Support Group Report (Submitted by Andrea Holveck on behalf of the AVP Support Group) *[Note -The support group reports directly to Meeting's M&C Committee. M&C believes Meeting will benefit from hearing their entire report and not simply a summary about it in the M&C Minutes.]*

The support group for the Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP) met in the home of Cheryl Sutton and Stan Sanders on the evening of December 4, 2019.

In attendance were: Cheryl Sutton, Stan Saunders, Andrea Holveck, Bill Howard, Lynne Howard, and Peter Clay. Kent

McClelland in Grinnell by speaker-phone.

The discussion centered around the confusion of next year's workshops at the Newton Correctional Facility. Early this year AVP had been cut back from monthly to every other month. In September a new facility coordinator sent an email saying AVP would be meeting monthly, so Lynne sent a calendar with the dates for workshops for each month through the coming year. Communication came back stating AVP was being cut back to quarterly workshops.

Most recently, in response, Kent McClelland sent a letter to the warden explaining the importance of the cycles of AVP workshops in the development of both inside and outside facilitators and the necessity of meeting monthly. Kent told us he had not heard from the warden but would call her the next day.

We have heard she didn't take his call but sent an email saying that due to other programs and scheduling of rooms, AVP could only meet quarterly. The committee will have to discern if quarterly workshops will be beneficial.

Religious Education Committee Report (Submitted by Dorothy Lifka) - The RE Committee met during the November Soup Lunch.

Child Care Policy

Dorothy reminded committee members about the Child Care Policy Statement approved by Meeting. Those present agreed to work to get background checks completed in January for all Friends working directly with children through Child Care and First Day School.

Dedicated Outdoor Recreation Area

The committee continued the discussion about the proposed outdoor recreation area on the west side of the building. Deborah reported that the Friends House Board is very interested and supportive of Meeting continuing to explore the idea. They ask that all organizations continue to have access to the two backdoors for their staff. We will continue to update the Board.

The trees whose branches had been hanging low over the fence onto the Meetinghouse property have been trimmed back to allow better access to that area.

Dorothy will get estimates for a shed and for temporary fencing as we continue to gather information for use of our west yard.

Building & Grounds Committee

Report (Submitted by Dick Douglass) - The committee did not meet in November since we had no pressing business. However, members of the committee worked on the following activities:

1. Fred Nelson initiated cleaning gutters by east and west entrances
2. Fred finished setting rocks in the flowerbed to prevent erosion.
3. Bob Henderson planted more bulbs around the property
4. Dick Douglass scheduled the regular seasonal check-up for the geo-thermal system for Tuesday 12/17 in the morning.

Minute 12.19.03: We appreciate the good work done by Dick Douglass as clerk/convener and the committee's work.

Property Management Committee Report - no report

Peace & Social Concerns Committee Report (Submitted by - Jack Holveck) DMVF Peace and Social Concerns Committee met on November 10, 2019. They report the following:

Donation to Center for Development in Central America - The committee agreed to contribute \$100.00 to the Center for Development in Central America. This is the organization through which Bill Howard has volunteered his medical skills in Nicaragua.

Request for Meeting Approval of Proposal - Members of the committee were encouraged to bring concerns and needs that fall within the purview of peace and social concerns. Recently we convened a short meeting to consider Peter Clay's request that DMVF Meeting co-sponsor the showing of the film, *Dawnland* at our meetinghouse on

January 10th. We approved the recommendation that Meeting co-sponsor the showing the film and recommend that Meeting approve this request. Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF) is the other co-sponsor.

Minute 12.19.04: Meeting is happy to approve Peace & Social Concerns Committee's recommendation that it be listed as a co-sponsor of the showing of the movie *Dawnland* which will be shown at our meetinghouse on 01/10/ 2020.

Hospitality Committee Report - No report

Minute 12.19.05: We thank this committee for all they did to provide such a lovely Thanksgiving Dinner for the Meeting and guests.

Nominating Committee Report

There was no written report received, however at the clerk's request names of Friends being nominated to begin service upon approval of Meeting were brought forward.

The following names and changes were brought forward: Finance Committee will be replaced by the Budget Committee; Matthew and Kelsea Gillespie will join the rotation of Meeting Hosts; Deborah Fisch volunteered to serve as assistant recording clerk, (a new position recommended by Nominating Committee so there is a person in place to serve so the recording clerk can occasionally be absent on Second First Day of the month without having to scramble to find someone to serve in her/his stead); Nominating Committee members for the coming year are: Claire Cumbie-Drake

Minute 12.19.06: Meeting approves all nominations and thanks the Nominating Committee for their hard work.

Old Business - There was no old business brought forward.

New Business - Announcements

- The Christmas Party with carol singing and treats will follow meeting for worship on 12/22/19.

- It has been suggested that with the rise of coughing, sneezing, colds, stomach viruses, and flu that Friends not be expected to shake hands at the rise of meeting or hold hands in Circle following worship. Friends can experiment with linking elbows instead of holding hands in Circle, or bumping elbows instead of shaking hands at the rise of meeting for worship, for example.

There being no other business meeting concluded after a brief time of worshipful Silence.

Comments from discernment around Nativity display

Friends might be interested in some of the ministry, questions, and statements that were raised up during the discernment concerning the AFSC staff proposal for a lawn display -

- We can use this [experience] to help us become more faithful in our own leadings.
- We are all immigrants and we welcome others.
- Our own discomfort about this is insignificant!
- What else are we called to do? Putting up signs is not enough!
- Having a fence around the Nativity might make people think we are trying to protect it against vandalism.
- The sign needs to say more because it doesn't really point people to what is still happening on the border.
- This is an urgent time! What is happening at the border is an abomination!

NEWS OF OUR FRIENDS

Jean Sandstrom passed away on December 26th. Our beloved Friend and DMVF Co-clerk Jean Sandstrom has passed into the light. How we will miss her.

Andy and Family will update us with memorial arrangements as they become clear, though it is likely that the services for her will be planned for Saturday, January 4. (NOTE: Her memorial was January 4th.)

Please continue to hold her family in the light. You can send cards to Andy Shaffer, Neal and Noemie, to 3927 Waveland Drive, Des Moines, IA 50311

Jon Krieg had a bike mishap and is healing several broken ribs.

Patti McKee will have heart surgery in January. Date unknown as of this time.



Catherine Dietz-Kilen and Fred Nelson at meeting on 12/29/19.



Claire Cumbie - Drake & David Drake presenting 2nd hour on Co-Housing-December 29, 2019



Friends listening at 2nd Hour on December 29, 2019.

Meeting Hosts:

1/12 & 1/19 - D Lifka & P McKee
 1/26 & 2/2 - C & D Douglass
 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)

1/19 - Virginia & Fred
 1/26 - Deborah & Andrea
 2/2 - Catherine & Jim
 2/9 - Patty & Bob
 2/16 - Dorothy & Cindy

Second Hours:

Jan 19 - Soup Lunch & Committee Mtgs
 Jan. 26 -Ralph Moisa, Native American leader
 Feb 2 - Query #8

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 January 31, 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 jfal-b0326@yahoo.com