

APRIL 2020

FRIENDLY LINE

Staying in Community with DMV Friends

Des Moines Valley Friends have joined the worldwide virtual community of Quakers meeting remotely during this unprecedented time of social distancing, as we do our part to prevent wider spread of the coronavirus COVID-19.

We miss meeting in person, but our first foray into an online video meeting for worship on March 22 was pretty successful, with 11 households joining a Zoom video-conference meeting. We worshipped for our usual hour and then shared greetings, joys and concerns. Several expressed how happy they were to be together, even remotely. We know that others joined in spirit, worshipping from home without the intervention of technology.

For many of us, it was the first of what will be many Zoom-type gatherings for Friends meetings for worship and for committee meetings, for our jobs and to connect with friends and loved ones. A little clunky and decidedly less than being together in person, but easier than we expected and a blessing to have technology that so many can use to continue to stay close and enjoy each others company.

We will continue to meet this way during the weeks ahead as we do our best to stay safe and healthy and to keep from spreading a potentially serious illness. Dorothy hosted a small Mid-Week Meeting for Worship that several were able to attend on Wednesday evening, and she plans this coming Sunday to experiment with First Day School and a short child-care activity over Zoom. If you want to be part of one of those sessions, please contact Dorothy at dmlifka@yahoo.com.

For now, invitations to join the Zoom worship sessions will be sent out by email inviting Friends to join and providing a link and times. If you are not on the DMVF email list and would like to be added, please contact Ann at anny@mediacombb.net.

Other ways to stay in touch include the Friendly Line and the Des Moines Valley Facebook page. To be invited to the DMVF Facebook page, contact Jan Falb at jfalb0326@yahoo.com. If you have news for an article or "News of Our Friends," send it to Friendly Line editor Sandie Nelson at sandiebnelson4416@gmail.com.

And there's still the good, old-fashioned phone calls, and hand-written cards and letters. Stay in touch. We need each other more than ever!

-- DMVF Co-Clerk
Ann Y. Robinson

MidYear Meeting for IYM(C) Plans Zoom Sessions

The MidYear Meeting Committee of Iowa Yearly Meeting is planning to arrange Zoom sessions so that our extended community of Friends can gather virtually to benefit from presentations and discussion on the theme "Engaging Community, Conflict and Connection" the weekend of April 25-26. Friend Cheryl Sutton from Bear Creek Meeting will lead the sessions. The program schedule is tentatively planned to remain as planned in the printed program, available at iymc.org, with sessions Saturday at 1:30 and 7:00 p.m., and Sunday at 9:00 a.m. before meeting for worship at 10:30. Details and



Pandemic

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath

—
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.
Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Center down.

And when your body has
become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and
beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)
Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move,
invisibly,
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love—
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.

—Lynn Ungar 3/11/20

updates will be posted at the website.

We will miss the opportunity to gather in person with our extended community at Bear Creek Meeting near Earlham, but we will value the chance to gather remotely. We appreciate the members of IYM(C) who are working to make that possible through the wonders of technology.

-- Ann Y. Robinson

Query 8: Personal Responsibility Feb 2, 2020

Centering our lives in God the Spirit brought to mind a paraphrase of poet Rumi, that to find Spirit, better to stop searching scripture and rather look inside yourself. We recognize that to have a centering practice takes time. We shared practices, including daily meditation time in which we listen for Spirit and find refreshment. John Woolman suggested we go through our days with an attitude of prayer in all we do. Recognizing that we have the Light within, we are encouraged to allow everything, all experience, to pass first through the Light before forming a response. We shared that in these times, in which the news of the day can be so distressing, we find it is more important than ever to center and cultivate equanimity. Other practices for returning to Spirit are to use reminders, such as when a clock chimes or when we touch a pebble in our pocket. Ganilla Noris has a book about how we can experience even the mundane activities of daily life, such as doing laundry and grocery shopping, as holy. We have the choice of engaging in these activities with an attitude of love – which makes such a difference in our experience. One member uses walks across campus to raise her gaze up into the trees, and to expresses her love for the trees. Another spoke of the metaphor of Spirit as wind and breeze. She sometimes slips out to her back patio late at night to

experience the breath of God, wordless, inchoate and expansive.

We agree that structuring our lives in order to keep them uncluttered with things and activities is an ongoing challenge. We wish to live acknowledging everything we have as gifts from God, in order to be open to giving our possessions and time back to others. We note how our possessions can weigh us down and impede our experience of God. One member shared how she and her partner are working to reduce the size and cost of their home, as well as trim their possessions, in order to increase the experience of freedom. How do we watch our engagements – even in Meeting – to be sure we are less encumbered and more free to worship? ‘Live simply so that others may simply live’ helps us discern where our priorities are. Asking for guidance in prayer is one way we can let go of worry and stress.

Coming into Spirit and actually seeing one’s life can be unsettling. Perhaps it reveals our addiction to busyness, or to work. Becoming attuned to what one is meant to be doing can open us to an experience of grace as though being carried along by a stream. Conversely, when we are engulfed with too much busyness, we feel overwhelmed, as if caught in a whirlpool. One member shared that when she experiences this, she knows that it is time to get back to the calm of the stream through prayer and meditation. We considered a clarifying question: ‘if I knew I had only one more year to live, what are the changes I would make in my life? What would fall away, what would become more important?’

As for recreation, one member shared his concern about the state’s apparent addiction to gambling revenue, particularly with the recent addition of on-line sports betting. We are reminded of the option to “affirm” a vow rather than to swear it. Recognizing the great suffering early Quakers endured to allow this freedom may motivate us to be

mindful to use this alternative so that we maintain this freedom.

We are grateful for the query discussion process, which helps us remain accountable to these standards for personal responsibility and simplicity. Ministry and Counsel has also offered guidance and encouragement in these practices.

Query 10: Environmental Responsibility March 1, 2020

What are we doing about our disproportionate use of the world’s resources? Many of our members are involved in addressing environmental responsibility in diverse ways, including voting and contributing to get-out-the-vote activities. Climate change is a major concern. One of our members spearheaded Des Moines’ Climate Crisis Parade, which attracted 70 co-sponsoring organizations and at least 1,300 attendees. The march was timed to occur just before the Iowa caucuses, in order to draw media election to coverage the climate crisis as a key election issue. The international media covered the movement more than did local news outlets. The parade was covered by the Canadian Broadcast Corporation and Telemundo, for example. Several meeting members helped coordinate the parade and more participated in it. We experienced it as empowering and hopeful, and felt energized by participants’ age, ethnicity and class diversity. The cooperative structure will help people to continue to mobilize as the election year continues. We are encouraged to tune into the work of three organizations to stay informed and active: Mobilization, Extinction Rebellion, and Climate. One member reported feeling hopeful as she sees that even conservative farm organizations are stepping away from denial and beginning to address climate issues. Another step we can take is to learn more about proposals in the Green New Deal, an easy 14-page read (and there are video as available too). It addresses

the impact of climate change in a comprehensive way, including, for example, the impact on labor.

To what extent are we aware of all life and the role we play? What can we do in our own lives and communities to address environmental concerns?

Many of us are working to reduce the use of plastic in our lives. As a meeting, we've stopped using paper plates, plastic cups and cutlery. We look to use biodegradable, compostable and recyclable products if and when we need to use disposable goods. One of the challenges of the query is that there is no free lunch – for example, while it is important to avoid antibiotics in soap, paper towels help remove germs from our skin after washing. It is a small step, but one member encourages the use of bees-waxed cloth (which can be purchased) to wrap sandwiches and treats rather than disposable plastic bags.

A company in Iowa, Moxie Solar, offers long-term financing for installing solar panels – both 20- and 30-year plans. We would like to have a member's partner to come and present a program on solar energy and then explore whether installing solar panels would be a possible move for the meeting house (recognizing that we have a lot of shade at our location and we love our trees). Interfaith Power and Light encourages faith communities to adopt as much solar power as possible. Our meeting has already installed geothermal heating. Several have purchased carbon offsets to offset their own contributions, for example, after air travel. Interfaith Power and Life has endorsed Terapass, one option for purchasing offsets. A high percentage of people's home energy is used by the clothes dryer. One member reports she and her partner love to hang laundry outside, spring through fall, and use drying racks inside during the winter – which also helps humidify the dry inside air.

One member suggested creating a large idea board where we

demonstrate “instead of **THIS** (plastic sandwich bags), do **THIS** (beeswax wrap).” This would provide ideas to all the people who use our building. We're also thinking about doing a show and tell about sustainable alternatives to wasteful practices.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business March 8, 2020

Present: David Drake, Dick Douglass, Fred Nelson, Virginia Smith, Mikel Johnson, DJ Newlin, Charlie Day, Andrea Holveck, Claire Cumbie-Drake, Cindy Winchell, Wesley Winchell, Deborah Fisch
Clerk: Ann Robinson
Recording Clerk: Dorothy Lifka.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business began with a period of silence and a quote from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: “We are not human beings having a spiritual journey. We are spiritual beings having a human journey.”

Minutes: Friends were reminded to send “News of Our Friends” to Sandie for the Friendly Line. The minutes were approved as written.

Treasurer's Report: No report.

Finance Committee (Cindy Winchell): The committee will meet next week. A change of banks will be discussed. It was expressed that we should use a local bank. If you have opinions about changing the meeting's finances from a credit union to a bank, please let a member of the finance committee know. The committee members are: Cindy, Owen, Kelsea, Catherine, Pam. Jean's family has not yet made a decision about their wishes for use of the memorial funds.

Library: (Virginia Smith): \$203.00 was raised by the book sale. Money from book sales currently is split between the Library and General Fund.

New books: Love Your Enemies by Arthur C. Brooks; Money and Soul by Pamela Haines.

It was suggested that a space be used in the child care room cupboards to store book donations over the year for next year's book sale.

M & C (Gordon Bivens): Our meeting was small due to conflicts and illness. Present were: D.J. Newlin, Ann Robinson, Deborah Fisch, and Gordon Bivens.

Two items of a specific nature were considered: (1) Follow-up on expression of interest by Tom Goodhue for transfer of his membership. DMVF will contact the Washington, D.C. Meeting. Also, anticipating the transfer, a clearness and welcoming committee will plan to meet with Tom to discern this decision, share with him about IYM(C), and make a formal recommendation for consideration by the Meeting.

(2) We considered Peter Clay's request for partial monetary support (\$250.) for his attendance at a Pendle Hill conference, “Working Toward Right Relationship with Indigenous Peoples”, April 30-May 3, 2020. We found ourselves in agreement that this was an appropriate use of our meeting's Education and Enrichment Fund and recommend it to the Meeting.

Individuals having special needs at this time were held in the Light.

Discussion of the M & C report: Clarification of the process for transferring Meeting membership was provided. Ann has communicated with tom, and he will be in touch with his previous meeting about transfer - for just himself at this time.

AVP (Andrea Holveck): The committee will be meeting later this week. Cheryl Sutton will be speaking at Midyear Meeting, including about AVP.

Religious Ed: The committee met but has no report.

Building & Grounds (*Dick Douglass*): The committee did not meet in February but will meet March 22 at 9 am to plan a work day and discuss the issue of window maintenance and any other concerns.

Dick met with the Pella Windows representative and a contractor to discuss the condition of the windows. They said the east wall of windows is in amazingly good shape for circa 50 years. Based on just a visual inspection of the south and west windows from ground level, they identified no immediate problem but recommended that we replace them down the road.

We plan on inspecting each of the side and west windows, looking for signs of rot and developing a long-range plan.

They did recommend refinishing the inside wood on the east bank of windows, floor to ceiling. The contractor Josh Johnson gave us a bid of \$1500.00 for sanding, staining, and sealing all the wood. We will get an additional bid or two and have the Meeting decide whether to move forward on this project.

Send along any ideas or concerns.

Discussion of the B & G report: The need to replace chairs in the meeting room was discussed, including the possibility of chairs that interlock to make up benches. It was also brought up that needs of aging members and those with disabilities should be considered.

Property Management: No report.

Peace & Social Concerns (*Jack Holveck*): Peace and Social Concerns Report – March 2020

Des Moines Valley Peace and Social Concerns Committee met on February 16 with five members present. Peter Clay expressed his

concern that we focus further attention on Right Relationship with Indigenous Peoples. Members of the committee support this concern. A second hour has been scheduled for June 28th to explore the issue. Members of P&SC Committee will gather prior to this date. Other members and attenders are invited to participate. Bear Creek Friends, who are also interested in this issue, will be invited. See Peter's article in the March Friendly Line.

Hospitality (*Cindy Winchell*): Family Fun Night is Saturday, March 14th, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Please bring finger foods to share. [Family Fun Night later had to be postponed due to coronavirus response.] The committee discussed the annual June picnic with more information to follow.

Old Business: Membership of Nancy St. Claire has been transferred from DMVF to Decorah Meeting.

New Business: Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative will be July 22 to 26th this year. DMVF is on the planning committee. Speakers will include: Ebby Luvaga from Ames Meeting, speaking on a Quaker service project in her home area of Kenya, Wednesday night; John McCutcheon, music ministry, Friday evening; Helen Thorpe on immigration issues, Saturday evening; David Drake, on Hope in a Time of Existential Crisis Sunday morning; The clerk asked for suggestions for Thursday night Collection; ideas include a talent show and a panel on sustainability.

Discussion of contingency plan for infection control: People who are sick should not come to Meeting; if they have Meeting responsibilities such as hosting or child care, others can fill in. The possibility of using Zoom for a virtual meeting for people who cannot come to Meeting was raised. There was discussion of cleaning and disinfecting the meeting house. The formation of an ad hoc committee balancing hygiene

concerns and sustainability and other concerns was proposed. Dorothy, Deborah, Andrea and David, will be on the committee; Dorothy will convene. The question was raised: How will we help Friends who may be quarantined or in need of other care?

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

NEWS FROM OUR FRIENDS

Peter Clay spent two weeks visiting with his brother Scott in New Hampshire just prior to the near universal move to social distancing in our country. Luckily, his drive back to Iowa went smoothly. While in New Hampshire Peter helped Scott to collect over 80 gallons of sugar maple sap from trees on his land in rural New Hampshire. Tending the boil over an outdoor wood stove for many hours was a wondrous experience. Peter returned home with two quart jars filled with delicious maple syrup! He sends warm greetings to all DMV Friends who are, as he is, sheltering in place.

PLEASE WATCH YOUR EMAIL FOR INFORMATION ABOUT MEETING.



Peter Clay and his brother, Scott.



**Sign of Spring
in Meeting Garden**

**INFORMATION TO BE EMAILED FROM A CO-CLERK IF FRIENDS MEETING TO BE HELD
ONLINE DURING THIS CORONA VIRUS CRISIS.**

PLEASE WATCH YOUR EMAIL FOR INFORMATION.

Meeting Hosts:

SUSPENDED DUE TO CORONA VIRUS

Child Care:

SUSPENDED DUE TO CORONA VIRUS

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

Second Hours:

SUSPENDED DUE TO CORONA VIRUS

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.

Worship by Zoom via email invitation from clerks, in-person meetings temporarily suspended due to corona virus

Meeting for Worship/Business, 11:30 a.m. second First Day each month - currently not being held due to corona virus.

Meeting for Music: Third First Day of each month, 9:15 a.m. - currently not being held due to corona virus.

Friendly Line:

Please send info for next Friendly Line to Sandie Nelson no later than April 24, 2020, last Friday of month, at sandiebnelson4416@gmail.com