

# Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

## FRIENDLY LINE

### September 2020



#### Observe International Day of Peace, Sept. 21

“Shaping Peace Together” is the theme of the 2020 International Day of Peace Observance, co-sponsored by Des Moines Valley Friends.

This year’s interfaith observance, will be held September 21, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Due to the pandemic, there will be no public gathering. This year’s event will be live streamed on the “Des Moines Faith Committee for Peace” Facebook page and an event video will be posted on Face Book shortly after the live event.

The virtual event will feature artist Ted Lyddon Hatten as he creates an ephemeral art installation, accompanied by harpist Kristin Maahs. The video will include responses from faith leaders to the question, “How can we shape peace together in this time of pandemic, uprising and immense change?”

This event is one of a series organized by the DM Faith Committee for Peace since 2002 that included prayers that the United States would not bomb Iraq. This year it has been clearer than ever that we are not each other’s enemies, that war is not the answer, and that the urgent work of peace-making is essential to the survival and well-being of humanity.

Contact Eloise Cranke with questions, at [ecranke@mchsi.com](mailto:ecranke@mchsi.com).

-- contributed by Eloise Cranke and David Drake

#### Change Ahead for AFSC & Friends House

AFSC Iowa and Iowa JFON (Justice for Our Neighbors) are combining programs to become the Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice (Iowa MMJ). AFSC Iowa staff will eventually be leaving their offices in Friends House, and AFSC Midwest/ Regional Communication Specialist Jon Krieg will also vacate his office at Friends House to work from home.

These moves will have ramifications for Friends House Board and tenants and Des Moines Valley Friends. Friends House was purchased for AFSC’s use in 1953. A separate entity, Friends House Incorporated, owns and manages the entire property and Friends House itself. DMVF Meeting owns the Meeting House, built in the 1960s. DMVF is a tenant of Friends House and has a long-term, \$1/month lease.

We wish them well through their transitions and look forward to learning more in the months ahead.

#### Care of Self & Well-being During Pandemic: Message from Peter Clay

Hello Friends,

I’ve just read an article “Not Giving Up on Happiness: Care of the Self and Well-Being in a Plague Year” in Truthdig.

Although written in March, this brief essay remains wise and good counsel! Whether you are solving challenging problems in rehabbing a house, cutting and stacking cordwood or writing a book, a blog or a poem diving into truly creative endeavors DOES help us to stay optimistic and keep a hopeful, positive perspective. Expressing gratitude on a daily basis is a great way to reframe the present times and stay centered. Even the act of writing and sending this message is bringing me positive and optimistic feelings!

May we all encourage one another each day with positive, grateful, hopeful and creative outreach. We really need one another right now more than ever.

Watching the birds at my feeder or bathing/drinking in the water that I provide lifts my spirits every day. For the first time in my life, I am continuing to feed the birds throughout the summer. I need their company!!

-- continued on page 5

## **Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Aug. 16, 2020**

Attendees included: Dorothy Lifka, clerk; Deborah Fisch, recording clerk; Fred Nelson, assistant clerk; Pam Blackburn, Claire Cumbie-Drake, David Drake, Dick Douglass, Bob Henderson, Jack Holveck, D.J. Newlin, Ann Robinson, Cindy Winchell [Note: The recording clerk forgot to jot down the names of everyone in attendance so please peruse this list more closely than usual and email her if your name needs to be added or removed from the attendance list. Apologies folks!]

Meeting for worship with attention to business met on 08/16/2020 via Zoom. After a time of worship, the clerk opened the meeting for business with a quote from George Fox, “Stand still in that which is pure.”

### **Minutes from Previous Month**

The minutes from 07/12/2020, are printed in the July 12, 2020 *Friendly Line*. There being no corrections or additions, the July 2020 Minutes were tentatively approved with the understanding that if someone finds an error or omission and notifies the clerk/recording clerk within the next week, the edits will be made pending approval at the next meeting for worship with attention to business.

### **Committee Reports**

**Treasurer’s Report** (Pam Blackburn) The treasurer reviewed the tentative end-of-year report given last month and updated it including donations

received for FY 2020 after last month’s report. She then reviewed an updated or “second tentative” end- of -the year report.

As originally presented, the budgeted expenses exceeded revenues by \$2,013.70 for the 2019/2020 fiscal year. Meeting has received an additional \$868 in General Fund donations and \$400 in Property Management Fund donations which reduced the General Fund budget deficit to \$831.40. Meeting’s usual year-end adjustments (for Unused Repairs & Maintenance budgeted monies to Property Management and Affiliated Contributions have not been made.)

Fund activity budgeted expenses have exceeded budgeted revenues in July. Payments to Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) and the Property Management Fund were booked but not paid. The Meeting has received \$400 in memory of Owen Newlin - \$200 as a memorial gift and \$200 as a contribution to the General Fund.

The Finance Committee will meet this week to review last year’s financials and plans to make recommendations for a FY 2021 budget to the business meeting in September.

### **Approved Minute** –

Before his death, Owen Newlin requested that Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting General Fund be one memorial option named in lieu of flowers. The Meeting affirms the intention to follow current practice of conferring with the family concerning memorials received by the Meeting in the name of

their loved one and how the gifts will be used, being clear that final decisions on whether or not Meeting can accept designated memorials rests with DMVFM. Meeting members have been in touch with D.J. and family. We deeply appreciate the love shown by Owen and his family in naming the Meeting General Fund in this way. Memorials made out to DVFM General Fund and those received with no special designation will be placed in the General Fund. \$400 has been received thus far. If gifts are received with designation other than to the General Fund, Friends will let D.J. and the family know and confer with them about designation of the donation.

It was suggested that Meeting does not need to have the meetinghouse cleaned twice a month as long as it continues to be closed due to the pandemic Meeting moved it from once a week to twice a month when COVID-19 started. The clerk suggested this matter be turned over to the Opening Committee and/or to the Hospitality Committee to bring back a recommendation to the September Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. This was approved.

**Ministry & Counsel Committee Report** (Gordon Bivens, convener) Ministry and Counsel met on August 2nd to consider the concerns of our F/friends. We also discussed our budget request for next year.

**Finance Committee Report** (Ann Robinson, convener) The Finance committee held two meetings in July, as the first was

interrupted by a storm, July 14 and 28. Members present: Pam Blackburn, Dick Douglass, Kelsea Gillespie, Ann Robinson, and Cindy Winchell. Andrea Holveck joined us on July 14 as DMVF representative to Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative).

**July 14** –The committee had a short discussion about the committee's charge, which was updated in September 2019. We discussed some additional language to add and Ann agreed to revise and bring back to the committee for further consideration.

The Committee was able to have a short, initial review of DMVF's year-end financial summary, presented by Pam. As a result of the budget shortfall, it was decided that we could not recommend that DMVF pay the same level of apportionment that we did last year, which was in the IYMC proposed budget. We recommended to Andrea Holveck as our representative to IYMC that we pay \$14,500, down \$500 from last year (which had been reduced \$500 from what we had paid for several years previously). IYMC apportionment represents approximately 45% of our budget. The committee agreed that we need to spend more time considering this in advance prior to next year's Yearly Meeting. Facilitating this consideration in a more timely way would be one reason to change DMVF's fiscal year to a calendar year so that we have ample time to develop a budget for DMV Friends Meeting before having to make the decision about apportionment. This was also

discussed at the July business meeting, and it was recommended that there be a second hour on this topic to get more input from Friends.

Pam reminded us of Quaker traditions around Spirit-led financial decision-making. Kelsea also reminded us of the vital role of the committee in being stewards of the Meeting's financial health and its future. Ann sent follow-up links to *Friends Journal* articles about Friends' finances to read and consider as we take on Finance Committee responsibilities.

Kelsea and Cindy are drafting a policy for use of a debit card. When we agree on a draft policy, it will be presented to the Meeting for approval.

**July 28** –We reviewed the revised language for the Committee's charge and still felt more editing was needed to include language about safeguarding the financial future of the meeting. Here is the updated draft:

*Finance Committee – Comprised of at least three members/attenders with varied experience and viewpoints. Meets regularly to monitor the health of the Meeting's finances, review income and expenses, and prepare the annual budget for approval at the Meeting for Worship/Business, with input from committees. The Finance Committee has responsibility to assure the long-term financial stewardship of the Meeting by considering financial-related business for the Meeting and making recommendations to keep the Meeting's finances in good order. The Committee will review budget requests that exceed*

*already approved budget line items and present recommendations to the Meeting for Worship/Business. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer meet with the Finance Committee regularly as important advisors and provide timely documentation to support the committee's work.*

-----  
We discussed options for an audit or financial review. The Meeting has not had an outside review of its finances for a number of years, and we consider that important to do every few years. In between, we would likely plan to have an in-house review, but at this time, since it's been so long, we did not have members who felt confident in taking that on. Ann talked to two entities recommended as potential "auditors" by Meeting members. The first entity, the McGowan Hurst Clark Smith CPA firm would be able to do an official audit, at a likely cost of \$9,000-\$12,000. We would want this type of professional audit if, for example, we were concerned about any financial wrong-doing. They offer other levels of financial review, including a "agreed-upon procedure report," a much less in-depth review of our finances that would include some comments about our procedures and suggested improvements. This level of financial review would cost from \$2,000-\$5,000.

The second entity, Randy Adams, is an enrolled agent. He could not do a professional, official audit, as he is not a CPA. He is experienced in providing financial reviews to nonprofits

that include review of their financial processes and how they can be improved. He would look at samples of our financial statements and books/treasurer's reports from 2-3 years to provide a "compilation review." His review could be done in the price range of \$200-\$300 per year, depending on the number of samples. However, his best window of opportunity this year would be August, and we're not sure we could get approval in time to secure his involvement in a timely way.

Committee Decisions – The Committee approved a recommendation to take to Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, to *ask Randy Adams for a compilation review, looking at financial information from two different recent years with approval to pay up to \$1,000.*

We also decided to *meet monthly on the third Tuesday evenings at 7:00.* In the future, when Friends can gather again in person and likely resume committee meetings on soup lunch Sundays, we would tentatively plan to meet on those third First Days.

We need to appoint a member to the Property Management Committee but have not been able to do that yet.

Communicating with Committees re budget proposals for next year – Pam is editing pages for Committees budgets and spending for the last year. Ann has sent out to committees and is starting to get input back from them.

### Approved Minute –

The Meeting approves: 1) The revised description of the Finance Committee. The clerk will change the description in the Nominating Committee's Committee description document. 2) The recommendation that Meeting hire Randy Adams for a compilation review, to look at financial information from two different recent years with approval to pay up to \$1,000 for his services.

Meeting thanks the Finance Committee for all the good research and discernment they have done on behalf of the Meeting. Friends look forward to receiving a proposed FY 2021 budget at the September business meeting.

### Other Committee Reports –

There were no reports submitted from Library, Peace & Social Concerns, Religious Education or Property Management committees. Fred Nelson verbally reported for Buildings & Grounds that the heating and cooling system is working.

### Old Business

Zoom – The clerk will continue research on purchasing a Zoom account for Meeting and will report to the next business meeting.

Reports– The clerk requested that committee conveners email written reports of their committee meetings to the Meeting clerk and recording clerk no later than the Friday before a scheduled meeting for worship with attention to business.

Having reports prior to business meetings helps the clerk develop an agenda that allows those present at business meetings to carefully discern matters needing decisions of the Meeting. The reports give the clerk an idea of what kind of decisions are being requested of Meeting. Reading the written reports prior to business meetings also helps the recording clerk be better prepared to write proposed minutes because s/he will know and understand matters requiring decisions.

### Business Forwarded to Next Month's Business Meeting

Report from Peace & Social Concerns – The committee was asked to make a recommendation to Meeting on whether we should continue as a member of the Iowa Sanctuary Movement. As of July 2020, no one has asked for sanctuary, but the organization has in the meantime 1) Helped people seeking asylum in the United States; 2) Provided assistance for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival) recipients and; 3) Supported families whose main breadwinner have been detained by ICE.

DMV Peace & Social Concerns Committee gave \$250 to the program in FY 2020. Since P&SC has not yet had an opportunity to meet, this is forwarded to Sept. business meeting.

There being no other business before the meeting, Friends ended with a period of worship. The next business meeting is scheduled for 09/13/2020.

## NEWS OF OUR FRIENDS



Sandie and Fred Nelson (pictured) and Claire and David visited Charlie Day (reaching out through plexiglass) recently at Wesley Acres.

### QUERY #2: Outreach

**ADVICE:** 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.

As we work and share with others within our communities, we may find opportunities to invite them to attend our meetings for worship and other meeting activities. A genuine welcome to everyone is consistent with Friends' testimony of acknowledging the Divine Spirit in each person and of our belief in the dignity and worth of every human being.

### QUERIES:

Do we encourage intervisitation within yearly meeting and with other Friends? What are we doing to share our faith with others outside our Friends' community?

How do we speak truth as we know it and yet remain open to truth as understood by others? In what ways do we cooperate with persons and groups with whom we share concerns? How do we reach out to those with whom we disagree? How do we make the presence of our meeting known to the larger community?

Do we invite others to share in our meetings for worship and other meeting activities? Do we welcome everyone and appreciate the gifts that differences such as race, creed, economic status, disability, age, gender or sexual orientation may bring to us?

### Peter's Message

*Continued from page 1*

This morning I loved watching a chipmunk who managed to get up to the water and was drinking from the bird bath. Walking along the shore of Easter Lake in a local park yesterday I felt the nearly magical healing powers of water. A couple of wonderful phone chats with dear friends contributed to my sense of well-being as well. Every day we all have unlimited opportunities to show that we love and care for one another. I try to find these opportunities and to act on them. This continues to be very healing and helpful.

I am so very grateful to EACH of you for your presence in my life! Thank you!

-- Peter

**Meeting Hosts:**  
SUSPENDED DUE TO  
CORONA VIRUS

**Child Care:**  
SUSPENDED AT MEETING  
HOUSE DUE TO CORONA  
VIRUS.

**Building & Grounds:**  
Any question about the building or grounds of the Meetinghouse can be directed to Building & Grounds Committee Convener, Charlie Brown, 515-689-6470.

**Hospitality Committee:**  
If you see a housekeeping problem that needs attention, please contact the Hospitality Committee Conveners Cindy Winchell, 515-720-5516

**Meeting for Worship:** First days at 10 a.m. by Zoom via email invitation from clerk, in-person meetings temporarily suspended due to corona virus.

**Meeting for Worship/Business:** Regularly held on the second First Day each month at 1 p.m.

**Second Hours:** No second hours are currently scheduled.

**Friendly Line:**  
Please send info for next Friendly Line to Ann Robinson and Sandie Nelson no later than Sept. 25, 2020, the last Friday of the month. Send to:  
[sandiebnelson4416@gmail.com](mailto:sandiebnelson4416@gmail.com)  
[anny@mediacombb.net](mailto:anny@mediacombb.net)

Find us online at:  
[www.desmoinesvalleyfriends.org](http://www.desmoinesvalleyfriends.org)

Check out our Facebook group for members/attenders. To be added, email Jan Falb, at [jfalb0326@yahoo.com](mailto:jfalb0326@yahoo.com)