

NOVEMBER 2020

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

FRIENDLY LINE



Discussion for Query #4: Harmony in the Meeting

The pandemic has resulted in a craving to connect. As we worship together using Zoom, we often share more, especially during “joys and concerns”. It has deepened our relationships and brought us closer together. We have joyously welcomed attenders from far away who can join us by Zoom.

We do not think that gender affects the way we relate to each other. We are privileged to have strong women leaders in our Meeting.

When communicating with honesty and kindness, it is a way to show our integrity. Some in Meeting are very direct in their words to others. It was suggested that perhaps, if we cannot accept this way of speaking, maybe it is **our** problem.

We have had people attend our Meeting with more conservative views. We have tried to make them feel welcome, and we have engaged in some good conversations. It is important to come into a discussion with the idea that your views might be changed after listening with an open mind. A person could be “the fertilizer for the plant we are growing into.” Look for God in ourselves and seek it in others with whom we disagree. We hope we can be respectful when we disagree. Is keeping quiet for the sake of unity being respectful? Is it kind?

In our meeting we are appreciative of the differences in

spiritual journeys and diverse opinions. However, when trying to find unity in worship with attention to business or sometimes in committees, this can be a challenge.

When discussing forgiveness, there was a request for a second hour on this topic. This was expressed as a concern for several of us. Forgiveness implies that someone did something wrong. Are we too quick to forgive?

Next Query #5 Mutual Care November 15, 2020

ADVICE:

Friends consider the meeting to be a family in which the welfare of each individual is of utmost concern. For some, the meeting may be the only family in the community. In mutual caring we seek greater wisdom than our own. We listen to the silence within ourselves and to one another with openness of heart. Sharing our pain as well as our joy can bring us closer together, making it easier to ask for help when we need it. Each of us is both giver and receiver, ready to help and to accept help.

Friends try to be aware of those who require special attention with the meeting community. We believe friendly interaction benefits both adults and children. It is the responsibility of adults to recognize and give voice to the needs of children in the meeting. Inactive and absent members require the care of the meeting;
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November 22nd Second Hour

“Our Peace and Social Concerns committee has approved creation of an ad-hoc committee to reflect upon a growing concern for building “Right Relationship” with Indigenous/Native Peoples among Friends. The committee consists of Peter Clay (Convener), Jack Holveck and Jim Dietz-Kilen. This ad-hoc committee is conceived of as a vessel for our continuing reflection and exploration. From time to time, the ad-hoc committee may suggest a venue for our continuing discernment. This might be a 2nd Hour, a webinar, a film or a reading.

A 2nd Hour of worship sharing centered on how Spirit is working among us is scheduled for November 22nd .

All are welcome and encouraged to participate. It will be from 1 to 2 PM, using the same Zoom link as for our 10 AM worship.

The deeper purpose of the ad-hoc committee is to help us, as a community, move towards a sense of the meeting on what actions, if any, we can and want to take to build “Right Relationship” with Indigenous / Native Peoples, including the Meskwaki Nation in Tama. I encourage everyone to reach out to the ad-hoc committee with ideas and suggestions or to join us.

Peter Clay”

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business 10/11/2020

Those Attending Included–

Dorothy Lifka, clerk; Deborah Fisch, recording clerk; Dick Douglass; Peter Clay; Charlie Brown; Virginia Smith; Andrea Holveck; Jack Holveck; Bob Henderson; Steve Shivers; Kari Noble; David Drake; Claire Cumbie Drake; Ronnie James; Arianna XXX; and Pam Blackburn.

New Business

After a time of waiting worship, the clerk called our attention to the business of the Meeting. She explained that because we have guests from Des Moines Mutual Aid present to share with us about the work of their organization and specifically share a request they have of us, we would take up their business first before turning to reports and other business of the Meeting. Friends were easy with the suggestion.

Meeting with Representatives of Des Moines Mutual Aid

(DMMA)– The clerk introduced Arianna ??? and Ronnie James of Des Moines Mutual Aid and invited them to share about DMMA and their specific request for the Meeting.

Arianna shared about DMMA's request for use of the Meeting's kitchen to prep for meals that are given out to homeless camps and those that don't have the means to eat regularly. Arianna, who is a staff person for Des Moines Mutual Aid's office in Friends House, has volunteered to be there every week to work with the volunteers.

Ronnie shared about the organization's history and answered questions. DSM Mutual Aid was begun a couple of years ago by him, his wife and two friends at Ronnie's request. Ronnie was looking for a way he

could contribute to the solution rather than only worry about what could be done. The group and its work are growing quickly. They often work with other groups wanting to do similar work. By finding other small groups with similar goals they can accomplish much more than any single group could accomplish alone. Anyone in need can get help. At this time the group is prioritizing those most vulnerable and affected by COVID-19: the sick, disabled, quarantined without pay, those limited in work, undocumented, queer, and People of Color. All of their work is financed by donations and carried out by volunteers. When a request for aid is made, they will go into their network of community members who have offered services ranging from delivering groceries/medicine, providing transportation assistance, donating money, etc. and they match the person who made the request with the person/people who can provide support. Their work has included: providing bail money for people arrested during the Black Lives Matter demonstrations in Des Moines, providing funding, picking up and or delivering medicine, food, and necessities to people who are sheltering in place and have lost jobs, have special medical needs, etc. and the project for which they sought use of the Meetinghouse kitchen - providing a hot meal for homeless and those who can't count on a regular meal.

After careful consideration, F/ friends found unity of Spirit in approving the proposal of DSM Mutual contingent on a mutual trial period through the end of November. It will be a time when both organizations can determine if the proposal is a good fit for them. Meeting agreed to waive the customary rental fee for use of their space. Friends hope that the arrangements work well. If so, Meeting's arrangements with the

DSM Mutual Aid proposal will likely continue. It could become another example of how small organizations can work together and thereby accomplish much more than any one organization might do by itself.

Peter Clay and Deborah Fisch were appointed Meeting liaisons for DSM Mutual Aid and some F/friends indicated they would be interested in volunteering time or making donations to DMMA. Anyone interested in more information or in learning about other programs they may feel a nudge to join are invited to contact Ronnie at DSM Mutual Aid in Friends House.

Minutes from Previous Month–

The minutes from 09/13/2020, printed in the current *Friendly Line*, were reviewed, and approved.

Committee Reports

Treasurer's Report (Pam Blackburn)–We have received \$1,955 in memory of Owen Newlin and it has been added to the General Fund. Due to the donations and gifts from Owen's Memorial and regular donations from members we have been able to pay all outstanding bills and commitments.

If any member or committee has questions about revenue and expenses, please don't hesitate to email the committee.

Approved Minute – We accept the Treasurer's report

Ministry & Counsel Committee Report (Gordon Bivens, convener)

Ministry & Counsel continues to try to be sensitive to the spiritual condition of the Meeting, its attenders, and members. And, where some special or critical

need is present, we try to be responsive in appropriate ways. We encourage members and attenders to alert us to any special needs which may be appropriate for our committee's attention.

Library Committee Report (Virginia Smith) – There was no written report as the Meeting's library has not been used since the onset of the pandemic and closing of the meetinghouse.

Peace & Social Concerns Committee Report (P&SC) (Patty Wengert, convener) – The Committee met on 10/10. They will be presenting a Second Hour on right relationship with Indigenous Peoples. Peter Clay will serve as convener and the purpose will be for the Meeting community to continue to wrestle with these concerns and challenges.

Finance Committee–

The Finance Committee met September 23. We continue to learn more about the way the Meeting's finances are structured as we work towards a budget proposal for fiscal year 2020-2021. The committee hopes to have that ready to present to the Meeting in November.

Building & Grounds– Dick Douglas reported on damage to the floor tiles in the area right before the door into the original house. A toilet in the room above broke and went unnoticed for long enough that water came through the light fixture in the ceiling. A plumber has since repaired the toilet. Dick will investigate the cost of repairing the damage.

Other Business

Advice & Queries– Andrea Holveck volunteered to convene discussion for next Advice & Queries reflection. Friends will meet via Zoom on 10/21 at 7:00 PM.

Holiday Celebrations During the Pandemic–

Since the end of the pandemic is nowhere in sight Friends took time to consider ways in which F/friends can still celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas with each other, holding on to the importance of the fellowship and Love that is so deeply held and nurtured, perhaps especially during these times. All agreed they want to find a way to celebrate these upcoming holiday seasons.

Thanksgiving – Since the pandemic prevents us from gathering for our annual turkey dinner with the trimmings the clerk suggested that we get extra Zoom rooms so people could gather in small groups for sharing. Friends would obviously need to provide their own food. Charlie Brown volunteered to provide turkey for anyone who otherwise wouldn't be having turkey (for example, because only one or two people would have a hard time eating a whole turkey). Friends said this sounded like a wonderful idea. The clerk said she will take this to Ministry & Counsel for further consideration.

Christmas – It was suggested that Friends gather for the Christmas carol singing. The clerk said other groups have done this by having everyone mute their mics except whoever is playing the instrumental accompaniment.

Others suggested we might have some special worship and go around the group with each person sharing about something for which they are thankful.

Since we have time to make this decision, we will come back to this next month.

Meeting Concludes

There being no other business before the Meeting, the clerk concluded the business meeting and invited Friends to end with a period of worship. The next business meeting is scheduled for 11/08/2020.

Dorothy Lifka, clerk
Deborah Fisch, recording clerk

Second Hour on Apportionment **October 24, 2020**

Thank you to Carol Spaulding-Kruse, Ann Robinson, and the finance committee for organizing and facilitating a second hour on DMVF apportionment to Iowa Yearly Meeting – Conservative (IYMC) and thank you to Rebecca Bergus, treasurer of IYMC and member of the West Branch meeting, for meeting with us. The purpose of the second hour was help us be better informed about what the apportionment is, its history, what it is used for, etc., to help us thoughtfully evaluate this portion of our budget in the future.

We began with silence. Rebecca then answered questions about apportionment. She reminded us that answers can also be found in the yearly minute book of IYMC.

What does the apportionment pay for?

1. About ¾ of the apportionment goes to Scattergood School/ Farm: \$54,000 to the general fund plus \$2000 earmarked for facilities upgrades
2. Initially intended to cover the cost of two boarding students attending Scattergood – falls far short of that now
3. Although Scattergood is the primary "project" of IYMC – "our beliefs in action" as a safe

and inclusive place for non-traditional students, IYMC contributes a small percentage of Scattergood's budget

4. When Scattergood has funding issues, it goes to supporters for additional help rather than to IYMC
5. About 11% of the total goes to donations to Quaker organizations
6. Delegate expenses to attend FCNL, Earthcare, etc.
7. Trustees get \$1000 – maintenance of Hickory Grove Meeting House
8. IYMC expenses which include:
 - Printing and distributing the minute book
 - The clerk's expenses
 - Some of the expenses for Mid-Year Meeting, including support for speakers and children's programming. (Expenses for IYMC gathering and MidYear Meeting are primarily supported through freewill donations.)

How many monthly meetings pay apportionment to IYMC?

1. Only 11 official monthly meetings contribute
2. DMVF is the largest and contributes about 20% of the apportionment; West Branch contributes about 16%
3. Meetings are not told what to contribute; they decide for themselves
4. Meeting representatives to IYMC need to know ahead of time how much the meeting intends to donate to the apportionment

Why are the budgets for the IYMC and IYMC gathering budgets considered separately?

Rebecca did not know the answer to this.

Doesn't a lot of the money get used the same way? (Aren't

some of the organizations that IYMC supports the same as ones DMVF supports)?

- Yes and they are Quaker organizations and the financial support is nominal and meant as support and recognition of the organizations' work, as well as to provide partial support for staff of the organizations who often send representatives to IYMC gatherings to present and bring information.

How has the apportionment changed over the years, as the number of monthly meetings and members of monthly meetings has declined (if you know). Is this a practice that goes back to the beginning of Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)?

- IYMC budget generally stable from year to year
- Budget and apportionment done simultaneously
- DMVF has decreased our contribution for the past two years; the first year Decorah made up the difference

Comments/Questions to Consider

- Is Scattergood School and Farm the best use of DMVF's funds (through our apportionment)?
- What can DMVF afford to contribute? Does our apportionment appropriately match the size of our budget?
- Just because we've always done apportionment this way doesn't mean we have to keep doing it this way.
- To feel more a part of IYMC, attending and participating in the mid-year and yearly gatherings is key.
- How can we continue to think and talk about our priorities as individuals and as a meeting and what it means to be a Quaker?

There was interest in scheduling another second hour to continue the conversation.

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those who do not currently attend meeting may be contacted by mail or by personal visit. We need also to minister with sensitivity to those in transition and to support caregivers and those requiring care within the meeting community. It is important to be responsive to the needs and gifts of newcomers and seekers who may attend our meetings for a short time.

We endeavor to be conscious of how differing gender role expectations may affect the quality of our relationships and influence how we empower ourselves in the home, meeting, community, school, workplace and government. We envision a society that provides opportunities for all people to reach their potentials, share similar expectations, reap comparable rewards and contribute equally to society.

QUERY

How do we respond to each other's personal needs and difficulties in sensitive and useful ways? Do we encourage both men and women to share in caregiving?

What are we doing to welcome and draw members and attenders of all ages into the fellowship of the meeting?

How do we help our children feel the loving care of the meeting? What do the children contribute to the meeting?

How do we keep in touch with inactive and distant members and attenders?

News of our Friends

There is a report of arrival of a new great grandson on Sept. 30 for DJ. His name is John Louis Oransky - they plan to call him Jack. He was welcomed by dad and mom David (Jan's son) and Mary Oransky, his sisters Ellie and Jane, 1 big dog and 2 cats all of whom are loving him to pieces! They live in St. Louis, MO. Congratulations!

Update re: Jan Falb's grandchild info. Parent's address is Chris and Sara Meadows 30 Church St - Apt 501 Toronto Ontario, Canada M5E 1S7

Fred and Sandie Nelson returned from a multifaceted trip: First - three nights camping at the Arches National Park with Fred's sister and her husband (and her husband's brother for one night). Second - on the Arizona for a stay in the cabins on the north rim of the Grand Canyon. Then they met up with Sandie's mother, sister and husband in Flagstaff and then on to a quick visit with their son, his wife and their three foster children, all siblings and under 2 - still in diapers - trial by fire for Nicole! Then a quick drive home for Fred to return to his work on October 19th.

Meeting Hosts:

SUSPENDED MEETING AT MEETING HOUSE DUE TO CORONA VIRUS

Child Care:

SUSPENDED AT MEETING HOUSE 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

Building & Grounds:

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

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 clerk, or outside the meeting house (weather permitting) - in-person meetings in meeting house temporarily suspended due to corona virus

Meeting for Worship with

attention to Business, 1:00 to 2:00 pm. second First Day each month - currently on zoom due to corona virus.

Friendly Line:

Please send info for next Friendly Line to Ann Robinson and Sandie Nelson no later than November 27, 2020, the last Friday of month, at anny@mediacombb.net & sandiebnelson4416@gmail.com