

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

FRIENDLY LINE

February 2021



Update on Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice & AFSC

Peter Clay, of Des Moines Valley Friends, spoke with Erica Johnson on Jan. 27, 2021, to learn the status of the transition from the American Friends Service Committee's Des Moines-based Immigrant Voice Program to the new Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice (IMMJ). Here is the report.

AFSC's Iowa program is moving to a new organization that is forming by combining the AFSC local team with the team at Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON).

AFSC is closing their offices and ending their program in Iowa. AFSC is providing funding to assist with this transition. All programmatic elements to address the needs of immigrants and refugees in our state will continue with the new organization. These include policy advocacy, legal services (including trainings for immigrants, new applications for DACA, TPS and much more) and sanctuary support, and accompaniment through the Iowa Sanctuary Movement.

Erica Johnson will lead the new organization as executive director. Jody Mashek, currently

legal services director for AFSC, Berenice Nava Romero, administrative assistant for AFSC and Alejandro Murguia-Oetiz, community organizer, will be joining the JFON team, which includes three attorneys and three department of justice-accredited representatives such as Jody. IMMJ will then have seven dedicated staff to provide legal services. IMMJ will also have three full-time administrative staff and a dedicated development professional. Alejandro will continue his community organizing work with IMMJ. The new organization will be a team of fourteen people. IMMJ expects to be fully separated from AFSC by April 1st.

Jon Krieg will continue to work from home as regional communications specialist for the Midwest and West Regions of the AFSC. Midwest programs in the Twin Cities, Michigan, St. Louis and Chicago focus on anti-racism work with youth, de-carceration and Palestinian human rights. Des Moines Valley Friends are encouraged to stay engaged and informed about these diverse and important AFSC programs through the monthly Midwest Digest. Subscribe at <https://tinyurl.com/MidwestDigest>.

IMMJ now has a Des Moines Metro Credit Union account, has established bylaws and also has their 501c3 status in place. The team is now working to establish protocols and procedures. Donations may be sent to IMMJ, P.O. Box 41006 Des Moines, IA 50311. The IMMJ website is being built and the IMMJ Facebook page will be a good venue for connecting with IMMJ. All of us who currently receive communications from AFSC Des Moines or from JFON should continue to receive these.

Mid-Year Meeting 2021, March 27-28

SAVE THE DATE! Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) Mid-Year Meeting 2021 will gather virtually the 27th and 28th day of the third month of 2021.

This year's primary resource person and presenter will be Vanessa Juley of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, addressing the theme "How Is White Supremacy Keeping Us from Hearing God's Voice?"

More information will be coming in the March Friendly Line. In the meantime, you can find more information about Vanessa, her writing and her work with Friends General Conference at <https://www.fgcquaker.org/interview-author-vanessa-juley>.

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Jan. 10, 2021

Attendees included: Dorothy Lifka, clerk; Deborah Fisch, recording clerk; Pam Blackburn, treasurer; Claire Cumbie-Drake; David Drake; Andrea Holveck; Ann Robinson; Dick Douglass; Jan Falb; Fred Nelson; Virginia Smith; Cindy Winchell

Meeting for worship with attention to business met on 1/10/2021 via Zoom. The clerk opened the meeting for business with the following quote from Martin Luther King, Jr.

We may have come from different ships, but we're in the same boat now.

The clerk invited Friends to return to a brief time of waiting worship before beginning the business of the Meeting.

Review of minutes of December business meeting

The clerk reminded Friends that the minutes of the most current month's business meeting are published each month in the *Friendly Line* and asked if there were any corrections or additions to the December minutes. There were no corrections brought forward and the minutes were approved.

Minute 01.10.1 – Friends approved the December minutes as published in the 01/21 *Friendly Line* with the understanding that if Friends see a need for correction, they will contact the clerk and recording clerk within the next week.

Treasurer's report (Pam Blackburn) We are 50% of the way through the fiscal year with income at ~85% of the budget

and expenses at 42% of budget. The Meeting enjoyed its usual end-of-year boost in contributions. Thanks to Friends for their generous year-end contributions.

All bills have been paid with the exception of some charges from our housekeeping service and a portion of an insurance refund due to Friends House. The cleaning service bills budgeted under Hospitality are being reviewed.

Summary of Designated Fund Activity: The General Fund made its monthly \$10 contribution to the Sharing Fund.

Note: This was a verbal report. A formal report will be sent out the reports for February meeting for business.

Finance Committee report – (Ann Robinson) Ann thanked the treasurer for her work and the report. The Finance committee (FC) has received Randy Adams' review of the meeting's finances and will meet on 1/13. A tentative date is set for a called FC where Randy will present his report, on Sunday 1/17 at 1 p.m., which will be open to the whole meeting.

Minute 01.10.02 – We thank the Finance Committee for all the work they continue to do, and we strongly urge all members and attenders to plan to attend the called FC meeting on 1/17 at 1:00 p.m. to hear Randy Adams share the findings from his financial review.

Ministry and Counsel report (Gordon Bivens): At its Jan. 3 meeting, the committee briefly considered its potential role in processing the financial review

of the Meeting's finances. After discussion, it seemed best if M&C stood in reserve, ready to be involved, if called upon and needed.

The draft by-laws were reviewed and discussed. The committee had a few relatively minor suggestions for change that were left to convey to Claire Cumbie-Drake.

The clerk requested discussion of handling of Queries in the future. After discussion, it was left for the clerk to carry the matter forward for further processing and/or action.

The meeting ended as it began, with a period of silence and contemplation.

P&SC Committee report (by Patty Wengert, shared by David Drake) Convened via Zoom Jan. 5, 2021, with Patty Wengert, David Drake, Jack Holveck and Peter Clay. We agreed to set regular monthly meetings on the first Tuesday of the Month. The next meeting on Feb. 2, 2021 at noon.

Thanks in a large part to Peter having stayed connected to the changes noted last month, we reviewed and discussed the changes occurring with AFSC and Friends House.

We revisited the concept of "Mutual Aid" for local peace and social justice organizations to achieve group goals, as for example please see the series of queries by fellow meeting member, Jeff Kisling, in the January *Friendly Line*.

We want to pose the question to the meeting as a whole, whether we will want to continue being supportive of the new immigration group, Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice, after the

April AFSC transition and what that support may look like. The work continues, the organizational framework is transitioning. Jon Krieg still works for AFSC, but reports to the Twin Cities AFSC.

There was further discussion of ideas related to our right relationship with indigenous people of Iowa. Suggestions were discussed, such as land acknowledgement plaques and signage, and including our reaching out to become familiar with indigenous people in Iowa.

All members had a chance to speak regarding how our committee might support and show Quaker values in the various causes our committee has offered financial support to in the past. We noted it is difficult times as we are continuing under COVID restrictions, with no monthly soup lunches and/or no fundraising taking place. David mentioned that individuals may be led to give directly to various peace groups and Quaker causes. David also suggested we could do a zoom soup gathering of some kind. The suggestions are appreciated.

We reviewed the various causes our committee has contributed to: Iowa Sanctuary Movement, Iowa Peace Network, Iowans against the Death Penalty, Catholic Worker House, Iowa Interfaith Power and Light, Shelters in Des Moines for youth, adults and single women and parents, the Food Bank, DMARC, Hope Ministries, United Palestinian Appeal, Catholic Charities, Young Women's Research Center, environmental causes, Des Moines Pastoral Counseling,

Possem Trot Ministries, Center for Development in Central America, New Hope House Georgia, Quaker House, North Carolina, CO studies and presentations for youth, African Great Lakes Initiative, Right Sharing of World Resources of Indiana, Jubilee Partners of Georgia, Friends Peace Teams of St Louis, and the Charles Lamont Lovelady Scholarship. Gordon Bivens annually in late summer distributes back packs to returning students and we have participated in that. Our affiliated contributions have grown. We asked the question whether Iowa Interfaith Power and Light is continuing, or changing. Ed Fallon and Peter Clay and Patti McKee, and others have participated in a number of activities regarding additional pipelines and the further infringement of indigenous lands. Please clarify if the Sanctuary \$200.00 was sent, Andrea will be attending a Jan. board meeting. If I forgot another cause, please let us know!

Past history of affiliated contributions and past monthly contributions were discussed. Thank You to everyone in our meeting, be well.

Patty Wengert, Convener

Minute 01.10.03 – Friends are interested in the possibility of donating to the newly forming Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice (IMMJ), but they don't feel they know enough about the organization yet to make an appropriate decision. Andrea Holveck will try to find out about what will happen to the Sanctuary and DADA programs. Deborah Fisch will contact the current AFSC staff to ascertain

more about the new program and how the AFSC Immigration staff will be a part of it. They will share what they learn with the clerk of the Peace & Social Concerns committee.

We also ask P&SC to look into the possibility of inviting staff from IMMJ to present a Second Hour sometime in the future, possibly next spring.

We support P&SC considering the idea of a virtual soup meal to raise money that P&SC has lost since we are not able to meet for our monthly soup lunch due to the ongoing pandemic.

We appreciate David Drake calling our attention to Peter Clay's signature on emails. Peter credited Jim Dietz-Kilen, who uses a similar signature on his work emails at Living History farms, with the idea. Lance Foster of the Ioway Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska had helped Jim write his signature. Friends were urged to consider creating similar signatures for their own emails, and should the Meeting clerk begin using a similar signature on Meeting emails and correspondence? We ask P&SC to take this idea under advisement and make a recommendation to a future business meeting.

We accepted the report with thanks.

Nominating Committee

report (Dorothy Lifka, convener) Claire Cumbie-Drake, Virginia Smith and Dorothy Lifka met on 01/08. Discussed were:

- 1) Nominating Committee recommends that we ask for volunteers to facilitate each month's meeting to answer IYMC Queries until the end

of Fiscal Year 2021, or until we can return to the meetinghouse. Several Friends have already volunteered if approved, though other volunteers would be welcome.

- 2) The committee needed to find a replacement for Virginia Smith who notified Nominating she is resigning from the committee.
- 3) The committee, wanting to keep the rotation of appointment of members to Nominating in place so that not all members rotate off at the same time, recommends that Dorothy Lifka stay on the committee for one more year, filling out Virginia's appointment.
- 4) The committee continued to discern who to invite to join the Property Management Committee. They bring forward the names of Fred Nelson and Bob Henderson with appreciation for their willingness to serve.

Minute 01.10.04 – Meeting approves changing facilitation of the monthly Query discussion to a volunteer basis, with each month facilitated by a different member/attender. Meetings will be held the First Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. of each month. We will be doing Query Eight in February and follow with the next set each month until June, when we take up Query Six (since we mistakenly did the 12th Advice & Query this past December).

Meeting accepts the resignation of Virginia Smith from the Nominating Committee at the with appreciation for her faithful work and the appointment of

Dorothy Lifka for one extra year to fill out that term. The Meeting accepts the nominations of Fred Nelson and Bob Henderson to serve on the Property Management committee with appreciation to each of them.

Transition Committee report (Claire-Cumbie Drake, convener) The committee hasn't met since the last business meeting. They meet again this afternoon 01/10/21. There will be a joint called meeting of the committee and the Friends House Board on 01/15/21.

It was pointed out that there are two different sets of by-laws being considered at this time – one set for Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting and the other for Friends House. The latter is necessitated by the major changes occurring at Friends House due to the departure of AFSC. Both are being edited by Claire Cumbie Drake.

Minute 01.10.05 – Friends continue to appreciate all that is being done by the Transition Committee to prepare everyone for the departure of AFSC from Friends House and to help make it possible that the Meeting can continue to have use of the meetinghouse and the renters use of their space as close as possible to the same conditions as in the past. We especially thank Claire Cumbie-Drake for her work as convener of the committee.

Building and Grounds Committee report (Fred Nelson) Fred Nelson, member of B&G, gave a verbal report that the meetinghouse is in good shape and he will be pruning the large tree in the meeting room. Friends couldn't remember for sure how long ago and by whom

that tree and other plants call the meetinghouse home. They did have fun comparing memories for a brief time.

Religious Education

Committee report – Though no formal report, Ann Robinson, member of the committee, suggest Friends thank Dorothy Lifka and Deborah Fisch for their continuing to take turns teaching both the young F/friends and Preschool young F/friends classes. (The clerk added thanks to Ann, who has also been teaching both groups.)

Ann reported that the older children are working on a play about the early years of the Religious Society of Friends, when it was made illegal for people to be Quakers. The play is specifically about the time that the children of a meeting, whose parents and other adults had been arrested and jailed, took care of their families and continued to plan and hold meetings for worship. Ann shared with them about how a similar thing occurred in Salem Meeting of Iowa Yearly Meeting long ago.

Minute 01.10.06 – Friends appreciate the work of Dorothy Lifka, Ann Robinson, and Deborah Fisch who continue to teach First Day School for the children of the Meeting.

Library Committee report (Virginia Smith) – Virginia reports there are three Quaker motto calendars left. Let her know if you would like one.

There being no other business the clerk invited Friends to return to waiting worship before concluding the meeting. Friends plan to meet again 02/14/2021.

Report from Called Meeting of the Finance Committee (open to all members of DMVF meeting) for Presentation of the Financial Review by Randy Adams – January 17, 2021

Present: Peter Clay, Dorothy Lifka, David Drake, Claire Cumbie-Drake, Bob Henderson, Randy Adams, Andrea Holveck, Jack Holveck, Ann Robinson, Dick Douglass, Fred Nelson, Kelsea Gillespie, Matthew Gillespie, DJ Newlin, Jim Dietz-Kilen, Cindy Winchell, Virginia Smith, Catherine Dietz-Kilen, Pam Blackburn, Deborah Fisch

The meeting began with silence. Ann Robinson, convener of the finance committee, explained that a financial review was done so that we, as a meeting, can be good stewards of our financial resources. Best financial principles recommend financial reviews on a regular basis and our meeting hasn't done one for a number of years. The finance committee met last week to review the report and will move forward with its recommendations. Comments from today's meeting will help the committee establish priorities.

Randy Adams, who prepared and presented the report is the owner of Rotation Management Corp., a tax preparation and accounting business in Des Moines. He is an enrolled agent certified by the IRS,

and has worked with a number of church groups and about non-profits. Randy commented that non-profit businesses are different from for-profits because they rely primarily or solely on volunteer workers.

Randy summarized the purpose of his review of the DMVF meeting's finances as:

- To determine how the security of meeting assets are handled,
- To look at how meeting finances are reported, and
- To determine the amount of supervision and guidance provided by the meeting to those involved with its financial operations.

In his recommendations to the meeting, Randy evaluated the level of risk to our financial integrity in each of these areas if we don't make changes.

For this financial review, he spoke to the meeting treasurer, the assistant treasurer and the convener of the finance committee and examined meeting financial records. He noted that his review has a narrow scope: it is a snapshot of the finances of the meeting for the years 2019 and 2020, noting that 2020 may be an atypical year because of the pandemic. He stated that he is confident that the review provides a reasonably accurate view of the meeting's current financial practices.

He said that he "found no evidence of missing deposits, unauthorized entries, or fraudulent practices."

He then addressed the issue of deposits. While the ideal practice is a three-part system with three people overseeing deposits, Randy noted that this can be a challenge for non-profits because many do not have enough structure and/or enough volunteers. DMVF meeting has a two-part system. Randy said that he was not too worried about our current two-part system with the treasurer and assistant treasurer overseeing the deposits because there is little cash involved; many contributions are electronic.

He strongly suggested clearer, written definitions of the responsibilities of the treasurer, the assistant treasurer and the finance committee and written descriptions of the meeting's financial procedures. These job descriptions and procedures should be reviewed on an annual basis.

In discussing how the meeting's finances are reported, Randy explained the difference between cash accounting and accrual accounting. Cash accounting is how most of us keep track of our personal finances with income and expenses recorded when they occur. Accrual accounting keeps "place holders" for bills that are coming due. There are advantages and disadvantages to each. Randy said that the current financial reporting is fairly accurate, but it is a problem if members don't understand the financial reports: more education might be helpful. Switching

to cash accounting might make understanding the reports easier, but it would take work to “unwind” the accrual account. Randy did not view this as a high priority item.

He did suggest looking at the designated accounts to determine if there is a better way to handle these items.

Randy commented that having a fiscal year rather than a calendar year is unusual but did not see it as a high priority issue.

Randy identified the following areas of confusion and/or concern regarding reporting finances: the “fake bank account,” multiple bank accounts, the reconciling of financial entries, timely payment of bills, lack of check writing limits and working relationships.

The “fake bank account” was created to deal with the situation of members paying for expenses and wanting those expenses to be a donation to the meeting. Randy noted that this is a low use account and that it wasn’t clear why we needed it. He said that the name of the account is a concern because it might be misunderstood by members and others reading the meeting’s financial reports. He suggested that it would be better to use general journal entries rather than a separate “bank account” to record these transactions.

Randy commented that having bank accounts at two banks makes our financial situation more complicated

than it needs to be and harder to manage. He suggested that we reconcile and close the old accounts.

He found several incidents of financial entries not being reconciled in a timely fashion. He recommended that reconciliation occur monthly and at the end of the year; for accuracy, reconciliation should occur before reports are issued.

Timely payment of bills has been raised as a concern. Randy found that one vendor had not been paid on time but did not find evidence of it being a systemic problem. He suggested the need to set expectations about what “timely” means.

Currently, only the treasurer writes checks and there is no check-writing limit. Randy suggested a check-writing limit and a second signer requirement for checks above a certain amount. This safeguards both the organization and the treasurer.

In his report Randy wrote “the management and accounting in any organization requires trust, transparency, and open communication.” He said that it is apparent that this is not currently the case among those managing the finances at DMVF meeting and identified addressing this as a high priority item. He suggested that clarification of the roles of those involved with the meeting finances and written guidance for those roles and financial procedures are first steps.

Randy also recommended the meeting’s attention to helping those involved find harmony in working together.

During Q&A, Randy addressed a number of questions, including:

- If we switch to cash accounting, is there a way to keep track of obligations? Randy answered that there really wasn’t a clear-cut way, but that it’s not really a problem if we pay our bills on time. He also said that a spreadsheet could be used to help track obligations that had not been paid yet. He said that accrual accounting works well when everyone is paying attention to what it means; otherwise, people may be confused by the numbers. He reiterated that accrual accounting is the most transparent on what is owed. However, cash accounting is simpler and easier for others to understand. If we continue with accrual account, meeting members may need more education.

The treasurer noted that we don’t always have enough money to pay our bills immediately. Randy commented that it looks like we have enough money in our accounts

- How can we make sure that liabilities in accrued accounting are actually paid? Randy answered that QuickBooks has reports that could track this.
- Reflecting concerns that some meeting bills have not been paid in a timely fashion: Are there generally accepted

principles for handling invoices? Randy suggested that the finance committee could put together structure/guidance on invoices, for example, pay them within 10-15 days; have a back-up plan if the treasurer is not available to arrange for payment; have a plan for what to do if there isn't enough money.

- Can we go to a calendar accounting year and continue with accrual accounting? Randy said yes. It was noted that the non-calendar year can be confusing and would be easy to change. Finance committee members commented that this was recently discussed by the committee and the Meeting for business, and we decided not to change this for now, primarily because of the current pattern of giving.

- It was noted that the treasurer is the only one who, at this time, is able to use or review the Meeting's QuickBooks and accrual accounting system. The treasurer emphasized the importance of an educated finance committee and membership so that we can understand the reports. She is asking the finance committee to take more responsibility to review the treasurer's reports, especially because of limited time to review these reports during business meeting.

- Is there a simple way to track liabilities using a cash accounting? Randy answered that a cash accounting report could be supplemented by a spreadsheet.

NEWS OF OUR FRIENDS

Recent events have inspired excellent editorials by DMVF members that have run as Iowa View columns in "The Des Moines Register." If you haven't read them, the links are provided, below.

Carol Spaulding-Kruse's Iowa View column on Jan. 26, entitled "Is it even possible to talk about our stark differences? It is, and it can do a lot of good."

David Drake's column on Jan. 16, was "How to move forward while agreeing on almost nothing."

Patty Wengert is pleased to share the news that her son, **Nick Cunningham**, recently graduated from Iowa state with a degree in History.

QUERY #8 FOR FEBRUARY: 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.

-- Thomas Kelly

Advice

Historic testimonies of the Religious 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 implied 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.

Queries

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?



DES MOINES VALLEY FRIENDS

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

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

Second Hours:
None scheduled at this time.

Child Care:
Suspended at Meeting House due to Corona Virus. If you have a child who would like to be included in Zoom childcare or first day school for older youth, please contact Dorothy at dmlifka@yahoo.com.

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 Convener Cindy Winchell, 515-720-5516

Friendly Line: Please send info for next Friendly Line to Ann Robinson and Sandie Nelson by February 26, 2021, the last Friday of the month. Send to: ann@mediacombb.net and sandiebnelson4416@gmail.com

Find us online at:
www.desmoinesvalleyfriends.org

Check out our Facebook group for members/attenders. To be added, email Jan Falb, at jfalb0326@yahoo.com

Hopeful report (and image) from Jan Mitchell:

Today the Ground-Hog has officially forecast six more weeks of winter, but we may have evidence to the contrary. Don and I were walking and near the Walnut and 11th Street intersection, and we saw a flock of robins in the trees. That's usually a sign of spring, but January 31st has to be the earliest I have ever seen robins in Iowa!

Scattergood Open House

Scattergood School and Farm are having a virtual open house this Saturday, February 6th to recruit potential families. Information is at this

link:<https://mailchi.mp/70c4a5b3d83e/scattergood-virtual-open-house-next-sat-feb-6?e=2d20d84e32>

Please share with any families who might have an interest. Or just tune in to learn more about Scattergood and what is happening there in a year filled with challenges and new beginnings!

Keep in mind that our community is not composed of those who are already saints, but of those who are trying to become saints. Therefore, let us be extremely patient with each others faults and failures -- Mother Teresa (1910-1997)