

# Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

## FRIENDLY LINE

### May 2021



#### **Tapestry of Transformation: Sharing Our Light Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative, July 22-25**

Plans are coming together for the Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) 2021 annual gathering scheduled for 22-25 seventh month (July 22-25).

Our theme this year will be “Tapestry of Transformation: Sharing Our Light.” Again this year, we will meet virtually to protect the health of F(f)riends and Scattergood staff and students. Sessions will include worship, business, and time for catching up with friends new and old.

Evening collections this year will include:

- Thursday - stories about sharing the light and building community in Africa;
- Friday – a concert and conversation with Quaker folksinger John McCutcheon;
- Saturday - a facilitated discussion on what monthly meetings are doing to share the light in our communities.

A pre-meeting session on Sunday will be led by Jana Schroeder, recent clerk of Friends Relations Committee of the American Friends Service Committee.

Friday and Saturday mornings, we will once again be inspired by Bible studies led by Elizabeth O’Sullivan, Laughing Waters

Preparatory Meeting.

Learn about the Quaker “Experiment with Light,” during one of the workshops planned for the weekend. A query discussion to support reflection on the challenges we face in fighting racism is being planned, along with a session on living more sustainably, and updates from AFSC and FCNL. Breakout rooms over lunch and at other times will allow friends to create their own discussion groups.

The advance program and schedule are now posted on the <https://www.iymc.org/category/announcements/>, where additional details and registration information will be coming soon.

Thanks to the DMVF Friends who have been helping with the Entertainment Committee responsible for this year’s programming. They include Peter Clay, David Drake, Deborah Fisch, Andrea Holveck and Ann Robinson.

**We are seeking additional assistance to help with the Technology Committee this year.** If you are willing to help, please let Ann know, and we will be sure to include you in a Zoom training session.

All are warmly invited to participate in all – or part – of the sessions. This is our second year of holding the gathering virtually. Though we will miss the simple joys of being together

at Scattergood, it is easy to check in and out of sessions, and no travel is required.

-- submitted by Ann Robinson, co-convenor for IYMC EC 2021

#### **A Note from the DMVF Finance Committee**

A confidential analysis by Interim Treasurer Kelsea Gillespie reported recently that, in the last full fiscal year (2019-2020), our meeting received donations (not including memorials) from 25 individuals or households, with about 70% coming from six of them! That is not ideal from a sustainability standpoint.

The Finance Committee wants to sincerely thank all who give to support the Des Moines Valley Friends community – and who contribute to the life of our meeting in a variety of ways. As we start planning for the next fiscal year, the Committee encourages all the households who participate in the life of the meeting to consider what level of financial support they are able to provide.

Financial contributions should be sent to Treasurer, Des Moines Valley Friends, 4211 Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa, 50312.

**Minutes for Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business 04/11/21**

(Held by Zoom)

**Attending** Dorothy Lifka, clerk; Deborah Fisch, recording clerk; Kelsea Gillespie; DJ Newlin; Andrea Holveck; Fred Nelson; Claire Cumbie-Drake; Cindy Winchell; Virginia Smith; Catherine Dietz-Kilen; Peter Clay; Ann Robinson; Dick Douglass; Michael Luick-Thrams; Bob Henderson.

After a time of waiting, the clerk opened meeting with the first verse of the hymn, “For the Beauty of the Earth,” (lyrics by Folliott Sandford Pierpoint, 1864) in celebration of the beautiful spring day and having sunshine following several much-needed rainy days.

*For the beauty of the earth  
For the beauty of the skies,  
For the love which from our birth  
Over and around us lies,  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
This our hymn of grateful praise.*

**Approval of March 2021**

**Minutes** Minutes for the March 2021 meeting for worship with attention to business were printed in the April 2021 *Friendly Line*. No additions or corrections were brought forward at this meeting. The clerk asks that if while reviewing the minutes in the next week someone notices an error to please contact the recording clerk, Deborah Fisch. If an informational correction is spotted, the correction will be noted in the May 2021 *Friendly Line* and will be made prior to placing the minutes in the 2021 Minute Book.

**Treasurer’s Report** (Kelsea Gillespie, treasurer) – At the end of February, we found ourselves 67% of the way through the fiscal year with 89% of our anticipated income received and having accrued 63% of our anticipated expenses. Thanks to everyone who has donated so generously this year, despite the challenges we have faced. The “Summary of Funds Available” shows Undeposited Funds, which are checks written in previous months that either hadn’t arrived at the Meetinghouse before the end of January or hadn’t been collected for deposit at that point. This is a normal event and will appear more frequently on reports going forward. You can also see our liabilities, which include IYMC, Friends House, and Response-Able Accounting, all of which were paid in March. On the “General Fund-Budgeted Receipts Expenses,” you’ll see that the income from voided checks decreased. This was due to funds being “pulled out” of this income line and put back into the dedicated fund from which it originated. Utilities were a bit high for February, (likely due to the extreme cold) but returned to normal levels in March.

Thanks to everyone who has dedicated time to educating Kelsea on the financial policies of DMVF and helping resolve issues to make things as straightforward as possible. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to Kelsea with any questions or concerns, at [kelseagillespie@gmail.com](mailto:kelseagillespie@gmail.com).

**04.21.01** – We approve the financial report given by the treasurer, Kelsea Gillespie, and

thank her for the care with which she prepares the summary reports.

**Committee Reports**

**Finance Committee Report**

(Catherine Dietz-Kilen, convener) – 03/24/2021 –

**Attending:** Catherine Dietz-Kilen, convener; Kelsea Gillespie, treasurer; Dick Douglass, Ann Robinson

**February Financials** – Kelsea presented February financial report and several items for consideration:

- Compensating Peace and Social Concerns for other affiliated donations, since they have not been able to raise money with soup lunches this last year. We agreed that in the future, affiliated donations should be an item for discussion.
- Sending \$150 to the Foodbank as per the donor’s intentions.

Kelsea checked on whether we need to retain a copy of several checks related to building improvements. Dick suggested that we might keep a copy of one from 2018 for Louie’s Floor Covering for the basement. He and Ann believe the others have been squared away (for Hedberg and Sons, Oscar Porras painting and Elite Glass and Metal).

Kelsea suggested that it makes sense for the treasurer to present the Financial Report at meeting for worship for business, in case there are questions or clarifications needed. The committee agreed.

The DMVF recording clerk has asked if we could put the Treasurer’s Report in *Friendly Line*. For now, we prefer to only share a financial summary in

*Friendly Line*, similar to past practice. The more complete financial report can be put on the *Members Only* section of the website. (We need to check in with Katie Jacoby on how to do that.)

**Planning for 2021-22 budget** – Catherine is preparing a message to Meeting committees, requesting input on their spending requests to plan for FY2021/2022 budget. The Finance Committee will start working on next year's budget in April. Ann will share last year's budget spreadsheets with Catherine and Kelsea.

**Discussion item - Meeting policy on confidentiality of donations** – Catherine asked if there is an official, minuted policy on confidentiality of donations. No one is aware of one. (When Ann asked Pam Blackburn about this, she said it was probably more of an informal policy, based on practice since at least George Welch's tenure as treasurer.)

**04.21.02** – Friends listened carefully to the report of the Finance Committee and approve its suggestions with appreciation for the committee's thorough work.

**Ministry & Counsel Committee Report** (Gordon Bivens, clerk)

The M&C committee held its regular meeting the first First Day of fourth month (April 4). Among our considerations were:  
- Providing feedback to the Monthly Meeting Clerk about issues related to a potential designated gift for purposes of increasing the electronic participation of meeting members/attenders necessitated

by the distance meeting during the pandemic.

- Considering the need for the Meeting to provide updates to the membership of the Meeting to Iowa Yearly Meeting. Such updates reflect new members, births, losses due to death, etc.

- Giving attention to the need to develop means of continuing remote access to the Meeting even after resumption of in-person meetings for worship.

The committee felt it needs to be done carefully in such a way as to maximize the satisfaction of both groups (those in attendance in-person and those who, for whatever reason, feel they must continue to participate remotely).

We suggested formation of a committee to consider these matters and develop procedures to recommend to the Meeting. We identified five individuals for such a committee who will be contacted by the M&C convener to determine their willingness to serve.

- We heard from the Clerk of Meeting of the possibility of presentations of individual faith journeys and found ourselves in support of such sharing sessions.

- We discussed the need for increased participation by members/attenders in sessions of Iowa Yearly Meeting. Also, the need for members of DVFM to serve on standing committees of IYMC. Suggestions for such committee participation may be directed to Andrea Holveck and/or Dorothy Lifka.

**04.21.03** – We heard the report of Ministry & Counsel and approve its recommendations. Using Second Hour to hear about the spiritual journeys of Meeting members and attenders could

help us continue to build a richer and stronger Spirit-led community.

**Ad Hoc Re-Opening**

**Committee Report** (Dorothy Lifka) 03/2021 – We will continue to ask anyone coming into the meeting house to wear a mask.

In light of the CDC's most recent recommendation that in non-medical settings extra sanitizing measures are not necessary to limit the spread of covid-19, we will no longer ask people coming into the meeting house to sanitize chairs, door knobs, light switches, etc.

We will contact the groups that used the meeting house before the pandemic to find out whether they are still interested in using the space. At this time we are just gathering information; we don't recommend inviting groups back yet.

We recommend that Michael Luick-Thrams' proposal to have the Buseum at the meeting house from July 1st to July 5th be approved by the meeting. We suggest that he be asked to have someone monitor the front door of the meeting house when the Buseum is open. He has been told that he will need approval from Friends House Board as well as from DMVFs.

**04.21.04** – We received the report of the Ad Hoc Re-Opening Committee and carefully considered its recommendations. Friends approves all recommendations in the report. Deborah Fisch is asked to let Edna Griffin Mutual Aid know about the new CDC guideline changes that have been adopted.



**04.21.05** – We ask Meeting representatives to Friends House Board to send an email to the convenor of the board letting them know Meeting has approved Meeting member, Michael Luick-Thram's use of the parking lot as the location for his *Buseum* tour's Des Moines stop from 07/01 -07/05/2021 contingent upon their approval. Reps are asked to include excerpts from Michael's letter to M&C to help explain the purpose of the *Buseum*.

We further ask that the Friends House Board be asked to discern this request via email since their next scheduled meeting would not be in time for Michael to be able to finalize his schedule and make timely press releases in the areas of the tour.

### **Peace and Social Concern**

**Committee Report** (Patty Wengert, convener) In attendance were Patty Wengert and Peter Clay, and further communication then followed. Peter and Patty met on 04/06/2021 and then followed up by reaching out to others on the committee. A week before the meeting Patty provided the committee for review and consideration a listing of the many good causes for peace activism that our meeting has supported in the past.

We reviewed the news of some local peace groups and the lists provided, as well as updated contributions recently made.

Patty shared that she planned to and then did attend the recent Black Lives Matter legislative protest on 04/08/2021. She will write up an account for *Friendly Line*.

After talking with others on the committee we decided to give \$50.00 to each of the following four groups: Right Sharing of World Resources; FCNL; Friends Peace Teams African Great Lakes Initiative; and Iowa Peace Network.

Our next meeting will be on the first Tuesday in May (05/04) at noon via Zoom.

Chuck Day provided a letter from *Peace Development Fund of MA*, a 40-year-old peace group. If F/friends are curious to learn more, their web address is [www.peacedevelopmentfund.org](http://www.peacedevelopmentfund.org)

We extend a cheery hello to Patti McKee and wish her well with her health!

**04.21.06** – Friends received the report from Patty Wengert, convener of the Peace & Social Concerns Committee. We join with the committee to send our prayers and best wishes to Patti McKee who is scheduled to have surgery.

**Edna Griffin Mutual Aid (EGMA) Report** (Peter Clay and Deborah Fisch, Meeting liaisons) Arianna Calleja, one of our two contacts with Edna Griffin Mutual Aid, reports that EGMA is getting a lot done to support the people living in the houseless/homeless camps in Des Moines. With the return of milder temperatures there are a lot more campers, so EGMA has been navigating an increase in the needs within this community during the past few weeks. They have also been continuing their free store with about four pop-ups per month. Ari writes: "*These have been very successful in providing our community with*

*clothing, food, and misc. life supplies.*"

EGMA continues to appreciate our permission to use the meetinghouse kitchen to prepare meals for the campers. They understand that we are moving back towards more presence in the meetinghouse, particularly during worship time on Sundays.

We have asked about additional ways that Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting could support this Mutual Aid work. Ari shared that doing laundry for the campers would be a big help. She will be providing more information on how we can do this. There may be additional opportunities for Quakers to become more engaged, and we will share these possibilities as we receive them.

Deborah will step into the role of lead liaison and reporting to meeting beginning in May as Peter will be spending significant time at his family's land, where there is not access to internet and cell phone reception is spotty.

**04.21.07** – Meeting appreciates hearing updates on the work of EGMA and we are particularly happy to learn of ways we can be of service to them. There are members interested in volunteering to help with the laundry of the campers. Peter will give their names and contact information to EGMA.

### **New Business**

**IYMC Annual Sessions** (Ann Robinson and Andrea Holveck, 2021 IYMC Entertainment Committee members) – For the second year, IYMC will hold its Annual Sessions virtually via Zoom. Annual Sessions are scheduled from 07/22 To 07/25.

Each meeting has responsibility to appoint members to serve on Yearly Meeting committees. Some committees only meet during Annual Sessions and others meet up to several times a year depending on their work. Committees and their reports to the 2020 Annual Sessions can be found in the 2020 IYMC Minute Book (Recording clerk note: This year's have recently arrived and can be found at the meetinghouse.) If you are interested in serving on a Yearly Meeting committee, please contact Cindy Winchell, the DMVFM member of IYMC Nominating Committee. If you interested in the possibility of serving on a Yearly Meeting committee whose members are appointed by monthly meetings (See Nominating Committee Report in the YM Minutebook) contact Dorothy Lifka, Claire Cumbie-Drake, or Carol Spaulding Kruse, members of the DMVF Nominating Committee. They will be bringing forward names for consideration of approval no later than our June meeting for business.

Andrea also shared that the Scattergood Friends School & Farm Committee is looking for someone from DMVF to serve



Dutchmen's breeches  
blooming in Dallas County.  
Photo by Ann Robinson

on the committee for a three-year, renewable term. The School Committee meets several times a year. Since the pandemic began, the Committee has been meeting via Zoom, and they are considering continuing to meet via Zoom as well as in person (usually at Scattergood) when it becomes safe to gather in person once more. Ann Robinson has recently served on the committee and would be happy to answer questions from anyone considering volunteering.

Ann reviewed plans for programming for the 2021 Annual Session, themed *Tapestry of Transformation, Sharing our Light*. (See more details about the program plans on page 1.)

There is a need to recruit more people for a newly formed Technology Committee of YM. This committee was approved at the Interim Meeting following Midyear Meeting. It will be in charge of planning for and "staffing" any Zoom meetings, whether for Annual Sessions, Midyear Meeting or a YM committee meeting. Friends with good computer tech skills interested in serving on this committee are asked to contact Ann or Cindy Winchell, Meeting's member of YM Nominating Committee.

**04.21.08** – Meeting received the report of Ann Robinson and Andrea Holveck, two of the DMV Friends serving on the FY 2021 IYMC Entertainment Committee. We appreciate the work of this committee and are glad to have this preview of this year's theme and those who are scheduled to be Collection speakers and other presenters.

We hear the concern from Entertainment Committee members, as well as our own Friends on Ministry & Counsel Committee that monthly meetings, including DMVF, need to become more active in IYMC activities. We encourage members and attenders to consider attending all or some of the upcoming Annual Sessions, especially since they will be held via Zoom again this year so there is no need to travel to Scattergood and F/friends can easily "dip their toes" into the waters of IYMC in session.

We encourage one another to consider how we can be of service to YM. Perhaps more of us can serve attend Annual Sessions or even serve on a Yearly Meeting committee. Talk to a member of the DSM Valley Nominating Committee or Cindy Winchell, our meeting's representative on Nominating Committee for more information.

(Recording clerk's note: If you want to learn more about the work of these committees ask for a 2020 IYMC Minutebook. It contains all the reports received from YM committees and representatives to wider Quaker organizations during last summer's annual sessions and will have a record of what they did during the FY 2019/2020.)

There being no other business on the agenda the clerk asked Friends to close meeting with a period of waiting worship.

The next meeting for worship with attention to business is scheduled via Zoom on 05/09/2021. A reminder of the meeting with Zoom link will be sent out by the clerk in advance.

## **Report on AFSC Corporation Meeting**

Peter Clay, Member-at-Large of the AFSC Corporation shared the following reflections about the 2021 annual Corporation meeting.

‘I was both challenged and inspired by the week of workshops and the keynote address by Nyle Fort during the week leading up to this year’s annual Corporation meeting. Called “Making New Worlds – Pursuing Peace With Justice,” the focus was on Quakers, through AFSC, working today for the abolition of the carceral state, imagining new ways to create true community safety, invigorate and expand restorative justice, advocate for the rights of all people to migrate and creating just economies in our country and around the world.

These sessions were unsettling and challenging while filling me with hope and with gratitude for the ongoing Spirit-led work of the American Friends Service Committee. The 2020-2030 Strategic Plan was a major focus of the Corporation meeting this year. There was tension around the ongoing structural changes that have been and continue to unsettle many staff, volunteers and partners engaged in AFSC’s programs. Change is always difficult, both for individuals and for organizations.

I left convinced that further consultation and dialogue must accompany the process of implementing the new Strategic Plan. This must be inclusive of program staff and also governance volunteers such as Corporation members. I am also convinced that more Quakers

need to lean into engagement with the AFSC as the organization re-imagines how Quakers can work effectively to build Beloved Community in this new century.

Here are links to watch the recordings of the wonderful workshops that were part of “Making New Worlds - Pursuing Peace With Justice.

<https://www.afsc.org/corpprogram>

-- Submitted by Peter Clay

## **NEWS OF OUR FRIENDS**

**Dorothy Lifka** reports that her granddaughter **Thea Steinbach** is one of eight DMPS seniors designated 2021 National Merit Scholarship Finalists. Congrats on this achievement, Thea!

**Patti McKee** is home and **Jon** says she is recovering well from her recent heart surgery. Get-well wishes can be sent to Patti at 1522 29<sup>th</sup> St., DM, IA, 50311.

## **Query Discussion April 7 Environmental Responsibility What are we doing about our disproportionate use of the world’s resources?**

One friend said that she felt that she was not doing enough and sometimes felt self-righteous about the things she did do. Several friends spoke about the conflict between the admonition to not buy more things yet wanting things.

Several friends spoke about the impact of the pandemic on the environment both positively and negatively: less driving and more consumption of single-use items.

Friends reflected on the economic impact of our choices and the environment, especially trying to buy locally. While one friend commented that our consumerism may have been shaped by how we were brought up, another feels called to teach our children about the connection between our actions and their effects: how products are made and by whom and how those products are disposed of.

There was a concern that the onus is placed too often on the individual consumer; we need to use our collective voices to call out industries that are environmentally irresponsible. We need to be vigilant about systemic causes of environmental degradation. For example, it was pointed out that an anti-litter campaign was sponsored by plastic manufacturers. Many solutions are complex and may require action on the legislative level. A friend said that, as Quakers, we may find it easier to focus on simplicity. How can we share this with others?

## **Do we see unreasonable exploitation in our relationship with the rest of creation?**

One friend expressed concern about the treatment of farm animals and the desire to buy organic products that have a better track record for sustainability and animal welfare.

It was suggested that we seek a balance between ourselves and the rest of creation, being more thoughtful about what we need. What would that look like in every area of our lives? A holistic approach includes looking at the bigger picture, rather than just each person’s

individual perspective, and finding collaborative solutions.

**What can we do in our own lives and communities to address environmental concerns?**

Changes need to be addressed at the level of policy. We can speak out about environmental concerns. As a meeting, we made the decision to invest in a geothermal system. As a community we can share ideas and support each other's efforts.

Book suggestions included: "This One Wild and Precious Life" by Sarah Wilson and "Braiding Sweet Grass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

-- Submitted by Dorothy Lifka

**QUERY #11 for May:  
Social and Economic Justice**

*For when I was hungry you gave me food, when thirsty you gave me drink, when I was a stranger you took me into your home, when naked you clothed me, when in prison you visited me. --- Matthew 25:35-36*

**ADVICE:**

We are part of an economic system characterized by inequality and exploitation. Such a society is defended and perpetuated by entrenched power. Friends can help relieve social and economic oppression and injustice by first seeking spiritual guidance in our own lives. We envision a system of social and economic justice that ensures the right of every individual to be loved and cared for; to receive a sound education; to find useful employment; to receive appropriate health care; to secure adequate housing; to obtain redress through the legal system; and to live and die

in dignity. Friends maintain historic concern for the fair and humane treatment of persons in penal and mental institutions. Wide disparities in economic and social conditions exist among groups in our society and among nations of the world. While most of us are able to be responsible for our own economic circumstances, we must not overlook the effects of unequal opportunities among people. Friends' belief in the Divine within everyone leads us to support institutions which meet human needs and to seek to change institutions which fail to meet human needs. We strengthen community when we work with others to help promote justice for all.

**QUERIES:**

How are we beneficiaries of inequity and exploitation?

How are we victims of inequity and exploitation?

In what ways can we address these problems?

What can we do to improve the conditions in our correctional institutions and to address the mental and social problems of those confined there?

How can we improve our understanding of those who are driven to violence by subjection to racial, economic or political injustice?

In what ways do we oppose prejudice and injustice based on gender, sexual orientation, class, race, age, and physical, mental and emotional conditions?

How would individuals benefit from a society that values everyone?

How would society benefit?

**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](mailto: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 May 28, 2021, the last Friday of the month. Send to:

[ann@mediacombb.net](mailto:ann@mediacombb.net) and [sandiebnelson4416@gmail.com](mailto:sandiebnelson4416@gmail.com)

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)