

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

FRIENDLY LINE

July 2022



IYMC Hybrid Gathering, June 27-31: Are You Registered?

The 145th annual session of the Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) will meet seventh month, July 27-31, at Scattergood Friends School near West Branch, Iowa, and online, for its first-ever hybrid gathering.

Due to the extra planning required for a hybrid meeting, details were finalized recently, and F(f)riends are encouraged to register as soon as possible to assist planners in coordinating logistics. That includes organizing meals and scheduling lodging for those who desire to stay at Scattergood.

The complete agenda for programming and meeting for worship for business, along with other important details are posted online at:

<https://www.iymc.org/2022-annual-session//>

Highlights of the collections (special programs) you can look forward to this year include:

- Mutual Aid – a paradigm shift, with Jeff Kisling;
- Providing Welcome: Being a Spiritually Hospitable Meeting Community with Lorene Ludy, Katie Jacoby, Billie Wade, Cheryl Sutton and Bob Winkleblack;

- Becoming a Quaker: My FCNL Story, with Bobby Trice;
- The Middle School Experience at Scattergood;
- First Day Pre-Meeting with Deborah Dakin, former IYMC Clerk.
- Bible studies with A.M. and Deborah Fink.

In addition to the Collections, the heart of IYM(C) is spirit-led meeting for worship for business that nourish the life of our larger regional Quaker community and connect to the larger world of Quakerism and the expression of our unique, collective faith and practice.

IYM(C) also offers special opportunities for rest and retreat, building community through getting to know each other better, wrestling with challenging issues, and learning, working, singing and laughing together.

It is also a time to connect with the unique work and service of Scattergood Friends School, one of the primary ways that Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) and its monthly meetings strive to provide leadership for Quaker values in the world.

IYM(C) can be a spiritually grounded respite in a space that honors Quaker testimonies of simplicity, stewardship, community and more. Hope to see you there!

A Quaker Minute: Integrity Revisited - Part 2

Friends believe the outward signs of integrity, which include honesty and fairness, flow freely in a life centered on a voluntary and nurtured connection to Spirit. Quakers are practical mystics. Quakerspeak offers Friendly guidance from a variety of sources for strengthening spirit-led integrity.

- making sure that one's words and actions flow from one's beliefs
 - speaking the truth, even when it is difficult
 - avoiding statements that are technically true but misleading
 - saying difficult things with grace and tact
 - receiving difficult sayings gracefully
 - taking responsibility for one's actions and their results
 - fulfilling one's commitments
 - taking care of items entrusted to one
 - being open to the ideas of others but not being too easily swayed by them
 - confronting lapses in integrity in oneself and in others
 - giving credit to others for their contributions
 - assessing people and situations fairly and accurately.
- *One in a series on Quaker history and practice, contributed by Pam Blackburn and Jan Falb.*

DMVF Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business – June 12, 2022

Quote from Andrew Huff shared by Dorothy Lifka: “For we walk by faith not by sight.”

Present: Ann Robinson, Dorothy Lifka, Catherine Dietz-Kilen, Billie Wade, Susan Myers, Katie Jacoby, Carol Spaulding-Kruse, DJ Newlin, Jack Holveck, Andrea Holveck, Claire Cumbie-Drake and Peter Clay

Minute: The minutes for the May business meeting were approved.

Finance Committee: The committee met May 31, 2022. Attendees: Catherine Dietz-Kilen, Kelsea Gillespie, Cindy Winchell and Dick Douglass.

The Committee reviewed the financial report for April 2022 and found all to be in order.

The Committee will ask the Meeting during the upcoming business meeting to increase the current budgeted amounts for utilities and telephone. It appears that we did not budget enough to make it through the end of the fiscal year. We will request an increase for utilities to \$3,000.00, which is an increase of \$400, and an increase for the telephone to \$800.00, an increase of \$80.

The Committee reviewed the proposed budget for fiscal year 2022/2023 and made a few minor changes based on comments of members of the Meeting and our own realization that we had not budgeted enough for utilities and telephone. The proposed budget will be presented to Business Meeting for final review and approval on June 12, 2022.

We will ask the Peace and Social Concerns Committee if they would be willing to appoint a liaison to be the person to work directly with the Treasurer to ensure that Treasurer has all the information that person would need to make donations authorized by the Peace and Social Concerns Committee in a timely manner, and for any other information that needs to flow between the Committee and the Treasurer.

Minute: The Meeting approved an increase in the current budget of \$400 for utilities, and \$80 for telephone.

Financial Report: At the end of April, we were 83% of the way through our fiscal year, with 91% of anticipated revenues received and 63% of budgeted expenses accrued.

Budget for 2022-2023

Minute: The sense of the Meeting was to approve the budget proposed by the Finance Committee. Budget line items were increased for Peace and Social Concerns and Children’s programs, telephone and utilities.

The Meeting expressed its appreciation for the work of the Finance Committee.

Ministry and Counsel: The following State of the Meeting report was prepared by Ministry and Counsel:

During the past year Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting has continued to experience that community and spiritual connections are not place-specific. A recent visitor commented that our hybrid meeting for worship was the best hybrid meeting he had attended. While we continue to work on

the challenges of being both in-person and virtual, being hybrid has allowed geographically distant Friends to participate in Meeting for Worship, on committees and in other leadership positions.

IYM-C offering a virtual option allowed a number of DMV Friends to participate in spiritual sharing groups, yearly meeting and mid-year meeting. This increased spiritual development overall and also fostered a greater spiritual connection with other meetings and with IYM(C) as a whole. Some Friends were also able to participate in inter-meeting visitations that were held with virtually options. The clerk of DMVF benefited from participation in two virtual meetings of IYM(C) clerks and hopes this resource will be available to future DMVF clerks.

Our meeting continues to reach out to Friends in need due to physical or mental health challenges and natural disasters, providing practical as well as spiritual support. Our meeting has also collaborated with meetings in other states and internationally to support a family affected by world conflict.

An ongoing second hour series, Journey to Friends, has provided an opportunity for individual Friends to share their spiritual journeys with us. We continue to enjoy fun and friendship through our weekly joys and concerns, our yearly Christmas caroling – hybrid this year – and a talent show. We hope to resume other opportunities to gather together including our monthly soup lunches and yearly picnic. As many of us heard at mid-year

meeting, joy can be an important part of our spiritual journeys.

We are concerned about Friends who no longer participate in our meeting due to discomfort with the virtual option, scheduling conflicts or reasons unknown to us. We hold them in the Light and will continue to reach out to them.

We remain concerned about the aging of our membership. This concern is mixed with hope as several youth, preschool to middle school age, have been participating in first day school virtually and in person.

We are also concerned about our relationship with Friends House as DMVF and other tenants of the building continue to adjust to the departure of the American Friends Service Committee. Several members of DMVF are active on the Friends House board and we are optimistic that we will be able to continue a mutually beneficial relationship.

Addressing concerns about the shrinking of our membership, the outreach committee has come up with many ideas for how we can be more welcoming as a meeting. Some of these are resuming pre-Covid traditions such as having hosts to greet attendees at Meeting for Worship, especially people who are new to our meeting. Others are adaptations of our hybrid approach including a welcome screen with information about Friends and about our meeting. Members of the committee has taken on the task of following up with newcomers by email. Updates and improvements have been made to the DMVF website and a Google calendar that is linked to

our website is in process. We look forward to sharing the message of Friends with the wider world.

Nominating Committee: The committee made a preliminary report to the Business Meeting. The committee will complete the report and submit a final version at the next Meeting for Worship with attention to business.

Outreach Committee:
Hosting – We have made progress to reintroduce our tradition of having Friends at the door welcoming people as they arrive. This is especially important for welcoming newcomers/guests. Several individuals and families are taking turns hosting at the beginning of meeting for worship. This includes arriving 15 minutes before worship, to make sure the door is unlocked and the computer is turned on, and then staying at the door at the beginning of meeting to greet people. For now, hosting would not include providing any food. We would like to have a second hour on welcoming newcomers at some point in the near future, using materials from FGC.

Resources/Children's coloring pages – Thanks to Katie for the nice welcoming resources she has modified from FGC resources and put on the counter near the door. That includes half-page, short pamphlets/placards giving information about Friends and meeting for worship; coloring pages/crayons for children; and a 4-page booklet about Quakers and Friends' worship in unprogrammed meetings.

Email follow up to newcomers – Ann has started doing this and encourages others to host to do so. We have a brief message that the host who met the newcomer can use and tailor appropriately.
Banner – Ann contacted the city Public Works Department and learned that, unfortunately, banners are no longer allowed. Signs (if approved) now have to be made by licensed and bonded sign makers and affixed to a building or put on posts. The Meeting cannot have a larger sign unless we pursue a different zoning designation. Changes in zoning were made in 2019, and our spot may have been wrongly designated as residential, when it should have been P1 or P2 for churches/places of worship. Our current signs are probably “grandfathered in.” There would be a cost to apply for rezoning and several steps. If approved, at that time, we could apply for a sign permit, which would depend on the sign size.

Worship arrangement – We discussed continuing to fine-tune the arrangement for worship that would allow people on screen to see people in the Meeting House and also see the front windows. After considerable discussion, it seems that we have found an arrangement that seems to be acceptable to the Meeting. We also put up signs to ask people to put chairs back if they are moved when others use the meeting house.

Worship – Zoom entry screen - Billie crafted several nice drafts of entry screens to use prior to worship, especially to be welcoming to newcomers and give them an idea of what to expect. After some editing, we

are prepared to use these now that the Meeting has a separate Zoom account at a level that allows for welcome screens. Website Updates and DMVF Google calendar – We have made a number of updates and subtle improvements to the DMVF website and are working on a Google calendar that is linked to our website. We also now have a working, more “professional” generic Friendly Line and Outreach emails to use, created through the web host, which allows us to better manage email lists and emailing.

The Meeting wishes to express its thanks to the committee -- Billie Wade, Katie Jacoby and Ann Robinson -- for their outreach work on behalf of the Meeting.

Peace and Social Concern

Committee: The committee met by Zoom on June 7, 2022. In attendance were Billie Wade, Patty Wengert, Peter Clay and Jack Holveck.

Thank you to Peter Clay for his actions to keep our committee informed as to the following to address Native American Indian Boarding schools and past abuse.

Our committee recommends that Des Moines Valley Friends meeting forward to the Peace and Social Concerns committee of Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) a model minute that was drafted by Decolonizing Quakers and Towards Right Relationship with Native Peoples. This model minute was distributed to the clerks of all Quaker yearly meetings by the clerk of Friends Peace Teams. The minute asks each Quaker yearly meeting to learn about and reflect upon possible past support

of the Indigenous (Indian) Boarding Schools. It asks yearly meetings to learn about that history through conducting their own research. Not all yearly meetings were directly involved in supporting the boarding schools. However, at least 30 of them were. There is now a bill in Congress that would establish a Truth and Healing Commission to examine the true history and the ongoing impacts of these boarding schools. Even those Quaker yearly meetings that had no direct role in running or otherwise supporting the boarding schools are being asked to support the bipartisan legislation that has been introduced in Congress (H.R. 5444 and S. 2907, the “Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the U.S. Act”). That request is included in the model minute. Quaker yearly meetings are also being asked to consider supporting programs to preserve or revitalize Native languages which were targeted for extinction by the boarding schools as part of the Federal program of forced assimilation. That request is included in an accompanying message that the clerk of Friends Peace Teams sent with the model minute.

Since the business of the yearly meeting normally comes from the constituent monthly meetings (bottom up, not top down), if we (DMVF) ask the yearly meeting’s Peace and Social Concerns committee to consider the model minute it could be brought to Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) during this year’s annual sessions at the end of July.

Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland released the first Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report on May 11th. It found that between 1819 and 1969 there were at least 408 boarding schools operated or supported by the United States across 37 states (or then territories), including 21 in Alaska and 7 in Hawaii.

In light of this report and the legislation introduced in Congress, our committee urges Iowa Yearly Meeting to include this issue as an item of business for discussion and possible action during at Iowa Yearly Meeting this year.

We also urge our meeting as a whole to support H.R. 5444, and S. 2907. This legislation is a long overdue beginning step to take to address the abuse and harms from this past Federal policy.

We further urge our meeting members to personally reach out to our elected officials in Congress in support of H.R. 5444 and S. 2907 to address the results of this past abuse and past policies.

Our committee considers this a matter of importance. We believe that a meeting response to this report during June business meeting, if we can come to unity, is very important. Time is of the essence for our yearly meeting to take up this matter.

We will meet again on Tues. July 5th at noon via zoom.
Patricia Wengert

Minute: The Meeting is in agreement with requesting that the Yearly Meeting’s Peace and Social Concerns committee consider the model minute regarding Quaker’s past support

of Indigenous (Indian) Boarding Schools.

The Meeting adjourned. The next meeting for worship with attention to business is scheduled as a hybrid meeting for 07/10/2022 at 1:00 PM.

Passing

Why we are surprised by a
passing
Has never made any sense
We come
We live
We pass
It is the nature of the beast.
Is it not?

And yet there we are
Grieving

I think I know why too—this
world is so joyous why ever
leave?

Why surprise our loves by
passing?

Because we must.
It is never intentional even if it
seems to be so.

We simply leave ourselves to
rejoin the infinite, for such is the
nature of the plan.



-- Poem & Photo by Brock
Wommack, June 2022



Charlie Brown tending to flowers at the Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting House, July 2022.

NEWS of OUR FRIENDS

Have you read **Carol Spaulding-Kruse's** essay, "Racial Acoustics," published recently in her blog, Between: Non-binary thinking for the rest of us? If you haven't, you'll want to. The essay is charming, fun and thought-provoking.

Over the 4th of July, **Ann Robinson, Julia Robinson-Frantsvog** and **Jon Tesdell** were in Missouri for a family gathering and celebration of life for Ann's dear older brother Joe, who passed away unexpectedly in June. Ann says thank you for many condolences and cards from F(f)riends: "It has been a comfort to hear from you."

Congrats to **David Drake** on recent editorials published in The Des Moines Register on the controversial topics of transgender rights and abortion. He says they have inspired a good deal of discussion.

AFSC Webinar On Community Safety

You're invited to view a new AFSC webinar on Community Safety Beyond Policing, that highlights the peace work of AFSC's Midwest Region.

With recent mass shootings around the country, many are grappling with what we can do to keep all of our community members safe. In this AFSC Community Safety Beyond Policing webinar, Jonathan Pulphus of St. Louis joins Mary Zerkel of Chicago and others in exploring successful ways to prevent violence—without increasing reliance on police.

Read more in AFSC's Midwest Digest or to subscribe and get regular updates, contact Jon Krieg, Midwest Region Communication Specialist, at AFSCMidwest@afsc.org.

Query Discussion #10: The Environment

June 5th, 2022, Attending: Ann, Dorothy, Jack, Andrea, Steve, Carrie, Fred, and Debra, Convener Billie Wade; Recorder Brock Wommack.

The meeting began with silence.

There is a concern that real estate developers coupled with corporate development have the high hand over what is good for the environment for money seems to be the driving factor rather than a holistic plan that includes the natural world.

Yes, it is important to protect the living organism we call dirt. Unfortunately, dirt is the least priority when it comes to financial growth. Dollars rule the equation.

One member described how in their neighborhood, developers used clay to fill over former coal strip mines. As trees in the neighborhood matured, they would simply fall over because they were unable to root firmly in the clay beneath. There was no oversight of the developer's land preparation on the site.

The rise of CO₂, the increase of methane in the atmosphere is very much a concern for all of humanity, yet this too is rarely calculated within the development of urban (or rural) landscapes.

There are answers and a growing recognition in the value of Iowa "dirt." One Friend shares news of a land stewardship method researched and developed at Arizona State University by a Dr. Johnson. By developing a highly diverse compost, while also using a no-till technique of planting, the soil

repairs itself, based on a type of regenerative agriculture that is less expensive and more productive than current corporate farming practices. Imagine what would happen if these techniques were to be applied across the US and the world!

The Friend spoke about work on farms sponsored by the Land Stewardship Project in Minnesota. They are using bioreactors that return biological organisms to the soils. There is life within soil—soil is life! Examples in this project have been borrowed from Native American methods in use over the millennia. There is an excitement in returning to farming methods from this realm, for communities are the reflections of change within the movement to restore and balance with our natural world in which we are a part.

Another Friend voiced the opinion that there is so much to despair about, but by focusing on good work happening, a sense of hope lightens despair.

Then another spoke about being the means of environmental damage. Let us not forget for instance, that the use of plastic in our daily lives may be easy and convenient, but taking additional steps in our daily lives to reduce its use is likely to be better for the environment within our individual families' lives. One can blame corporate food packaging, but our individual actions can influence how foods will be packaged in the future.

Another Friend spoke about how we can separate oneself and ones' actions from the broken and injured methods we assume

to be normal. For example, going back to pre-plastic lifestyles that existed in the past. Use antique glass refrigerator boxes that were the standard before plastic. They actually keep foods fresh for longer periods of refrigeration than plastic does. We seem to forget this. Yes, glass boxes are hard to handle, especially for children; but by experience in using them, one becomes used to using glass again. Buy milk bottled in glass bottles, for they are expected to be returned to the dairy for reuse. Also, stop paper and plastic use at meals. This Friend regularly uses plastic dishes (Bakelite) from the 1940's and 1950's that he has collected over the years. Use porcelain plates for meals and snacks. Forgo paper napkins by returning to cloth napkins that are thrown into the laundry with your clothing. A large part of our carbon footprint is water usage, but that too can be developed into an habitual water-saving routine. And use cloth bags while shopping, whether for food or anything else.

One Friend lamented how difficult it is to buy or pick strawberries without getting them in little plastic boxes. They even hand them out at pick-your-own gardens!

Another spoke of facing hard realities, of just taking a deep breath and entering in. We must take the step towards changing our bad modern habits individually and collectively.

We also considered how we use our Meeting House. We have made changes in the Meeting House, especially concerning its infrastructure. Maybe we can do more?!

We can get ideas from family and friends. No one individual has all the answers. For instance, try to use your car more thoughtfully for its use costs both the environment and affects our personal health and the others, as well as using personal resources that might be better spent.

One Friend reminded us that as we're looking at environmental ability to change, poverty is a key factor for many individuals. There is so much hype in the media about being/going green, yet behind this trend a lot of profit is being made by large companies for there is often a surcharge on green products that the impoverished simply cannot afford.

"Free blueberries and blackberries from plastic boxes," exclaimed one! "Go back to using grandma's frig," exclaimed another!

The Meeting for Query discussion then ended in silence.

Query # 12 for August: Peace & Nonviolence

ADVICE

We seek peace within our own lives. Sometimes there are barriers to peace within families and meetings, and among individuals. Anger and frustration may result in hurtfulness which leaves physical, sexual or emotional wounds. Healing and forgiveness are possible when our hearts are opened to the transforming love that comes from the Spirit Within. The violence we oppose is not only war, but all unloving acts. Friends seek peaceful resolution to conflicts among nations and peoples. Wars can easily erupt when nations depend

upon armed forces as an option for defense and order. To oppose war is not enough if we fail to deal with the injustices and inequalities that often lead to violence. We need to address the causes of war, such as aggression, revenge, overpopulation, greed, and religious and ethnic differences.

QUERIES

What are we doing to educate ourselves and others about the causes of conflict in our own lives, our families and our meetings?

Do we provide refuge and assistance, including advocacy, for spouses, children, or elderly persons who are victims of violence or neglect?

Do we recognize that we can be perpetrators as well as victims of violence? How do we deal with this?

How can we support one another so that healing may take place? What are we doing to understand the causes of war and violence and to work toward peaceful settlement of differences locally, nationally, and internationally?

How do we support institutions and organizations that promote peace? Do we faithfully maintain our testimony against preparation for and participation in war?

Hosting List for Upcoming First Days

July 10 – David & Claire
July 17 – Jim & Catherine
July 24 – Charlie Brown
July 31 – Ann Robinson
Aug. 7 – Deborah & Katie
Aug. 14 – David & Claire

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting for Worship: Sundays at 10 a.m., at the Meeting House and by Zoom via email invitation from clerk, Dorothy Lifka, at dmlifka@yahoo.com

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

Coming Events:

Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative – in-person and online, July 27-31.

Query Discussions: First Sundays - Online & in person. Billie Wade, facilitator

Child Care: Temporarily suspended at the Meeting House. 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: Questions about the building or grounds of the Meetinghouse 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 Charlie Brown, 515-689-6470.

Friendly Line: Send info for next Friendly Line to Ann at anny@mediacombb.net by Thursday, June 30, 2022.

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