

# Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

## FRIENDLY LINE

### November 2022



#### What Can You Do?

by Billie Wade

The business meeting of August 14 of Des Moines Valley Friends set up an ad hoc committee on committees to evaluate the effectiveness of our committee structure.

Some committees would like more members. Some seem to have overlapping duties, and some have responsibilities that might be better handled by a different committee. All committees would welcome additional participation from Meeting members and attenders.

Where do you fit?

We all have gifts of passion and expertise that could greatly benefit the meeting. Proper meeting functioning depends on all of us. Because our meeting is relatively small, many people have served on committees or in other roles for several years, if not decades. So, you may be taking a well-earned break. Perhaps you do not want to commit to being on a committee, but a specific activity may call to you. That might be taking a turn hosting, helping the First Day school teachers, participating in a clean-up day, helping the hospitality committee with a special event, or something else.

As we learn to coexist with COVID-19, there are many opportunities to work together. Some issues and initiatives have gone unaddressed during the past almost three years. What would

you like to be involved in, either as an individual or as a community?

The bottom line is that our committees need help to keep the meeting going and growing. The ad hoc committee on committees is seeking ways to spread the responsibilities among more people. The more, the better.

One easy way to help is to attend Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business the second First Day of every month at 11:30 a.m. The heart of the Meeting beats here, and we need the voice, the ideas and the discernment of everyone. With Zoom as a choice, everyone can participate virtually or in person.

So, think about how the meeting fits into your life and ways you can fit your life into the meeting.



THANK YOU...to the Hospitality Committee for their wonderful hosting of our very successful Fifth Sunday Social/Soup Lunch! And thanks to all who brought delicious sides and desserts and who helped in various ways! It was so good to be physically together again.

--- from Clerk Carol Spaulding-Kruse 😊

#### **A Quaker Minute: Quaker Manners – Be patient. Allow as much time as necessary for consideration and the changing of heart & mind**

Our meetings for Worship with Attention to Business are conducted in the expectation that God's guidance can be discerned if we are truly listening together and to each other and are not blinkered by preconceived opinions.

Our Business Meetings are held in an Active, Listening silence where the Inner Light, the inner Knowing, begins to glow – a tiny spark. For the flame to grow, subtle argument and the clamour of our emotions must be stilled. It is by an attention full of love that we enable the Inner Light to blaze and illuminate our gathering, it becomes a source from which this Light may shine out.

It takes a great deal of time and energy to listen well. It's a kind of weaving: reflecting back, asking for clarification, asking for time in turn to be listened to, being truly open to what we're hearing (even if it hurts), being open to the possibility that we might ourselves be changed by what we hear.

-- One in a series on Quaker history and practice, contributed by Pam Blackburn

**DMVF Meeting for  
Worship with Attention to  
Business  
October 9, 2022**

**Clerk:** Carol Spaulding-Kruse

**Recording Clerk:** Claire  
Cumbie-Drake

**Attending:** Carol Spaulding-  
Kruse, Bob Henderson; Ann  
Robinson; Elaine Wedeking;  
Claire Cumbie-Drake; Dorothy  
Lifka; Deborah Fisch; Brock  
Wommack; Billie Wade; DJ  
Newlin; Peter Clay; Dick  
Douglas

The Meeting opened with a  
moment of silence.

The Clerk shared several  
announcements:

- Scattergood Pen Pal Program  
– for more about this  
program contact the  
Development Director at:  
development@scattergood.or  
g
- Reminder: Sailing for a  
Nuclear Free World 10/12 @  
7 PM
- Reports from IYMC Annual  
Sessions 2022 are available at  
the following link:  
<https://www.iymc.org/>
- Cheryl Sutton will be giving  
several presentations on  
Healing, at Bear Creek  
Meeting House, 10 AM Oct  
9, 23 and 30.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Minute:** The Minutes from the  
September 11, 2022, Meeting for  
Worship with Attention to  
Business were received and  
approved.

**Committee Reports**

**Ministry & Council - The  
Committee met Sunday, Oct. 2,  
2022. In attendance via Zoom:  
Jim Dietz-Kilen (convener),  
Gordon Bivens, Andrea Holveck,  
Peter Clay, Deborah Fisch**

We gathered at our appointed  
time, settling in through silence.

Our first item was to revisit the  
Meeting's "policy" regarding use  
of the Meeting email list. There  
was clear consensus in  
recommending to Business  
Meeting that we reconfirm, and  
officially minute as a policy, the  
guidance that was affirmed by  
Business Meeting two-or three-  
years ago. That is:

1. Any individual wishing to  
disseminate information or  
opinion using the Meeting's  
email list is asked to submit  
their message to the Clerk.
2. If the Clerk feels that the  
message is clearly  
appropriate for distribution,  
the Clerk will forward the  
message to the list on the  
individual's behalf.
3. If the Clerk has a question  
about the appropriateness of  
the submitted question, the  
Clerk is asked to refer the  
question to Ministry &  
Counsel Committee for  
consideration.

We were also asked by the  
Clerk to consider what should be  
done if an individual does not  
follow this policy. While it is  
hoped that individuals will  
respect and voluntarily follow  
this policy, the Committee is  
prepared to have a conversation  
with any individual who  
bypasses this policy.

As is our usual practice, we  
considered concerns for regular

members and attenders and  
discussed ways in which we can  
offer support.

We then returned to question of  
having "inserts" in the Friendly  
Line on topics of particular  
interest to individual members or  
attenders. This question was  
referred back to us by business  
Meeting, with the suggestion that  
perhaps a series of longer articles  
might be launched in the  
Friendly Line. Our understanding  
is that these would be lengthy  
interviews with individuals,  
perhaps focused on issues or  
aspect of their lives.

M&C did not feel it was our  
place to make a recommendation  
regarding this idea, deferring  
instead to the folks who do such  
a good job of putting together the  
Friendly Line.

Instead, M&C reconfirmed our  
earlier recommendation that  
individuals who have longer-  
form pieces on particular topics  
(as is the case that prompted this  
consideration), be encouraged to  
make those pieces available to  
anyone who expresses interest  
through a link provided under  
"News from Our Friends."

The M&C members who are  
participating in the Ad-Hoc  
Committee on possible  
restructuring of committees  
(Peter Clay and Deborah Fisch)  
reported that the Ad-Hoc  
Committee has met twice and  
that this seems to be a healthy  
and fruitful process.

We continue to be aware of  
Deborah Fisch's wish to have the  
assistance of one or two people  
from DMVF Meeting to serve on  
an "Anchor Committee" in  
support of her traveling ministry.  
We ask that Friends consider the  
possibility of serving in this

capacity and to let any member of M&C know of your interest.

Finally, the Committee wants to encourage Friends to attend Business Meeting.

We then closed with silence.

**Minute:** The Report was received and approved with appreciation for the work of the committee.

The Business Meeting approved the policy related to the Meeting email list, as set forth in the report, with the additional provisions that individuals on the Meeting listserv should respect the privacy of those whose email addresses are included. This means avoiding capture of email for personal or commercial purposes. While individuals within the Meeting may create personal email lists for their own use, email addresses from the listserv should not be used without the permission of the individual.

**Building & Grounds** – no written report.

Fred Nelson had a question about the cost of using the Meeting House by outside groups. This discussion was deferred for the Finance Committee report.

The Business Meeting discussed recent problems with internet connectivity. Bob Henderson contacted Mediacom and the matter seems to be resolved for now. Because the internet is provided through Friends House, Friends noted that there needs to be better communication between Friends House and the Meeting about such matters. Dorothy will raise the issue at the next meeting of

Friends House Board later in October.

**Religious Education** - The committee met Sept. 29, 2022. Present: Dorothy Lifka, Ann Robinson, Kelsea Gillespie, Deborah Fisch, Andrea Holveck  
We started by talking about the joys of being able to offer first day school by Zoom and in person. Three Friends take turns meeting with one family for "young first day school" on Zoom. and two Friends have been meeting weekly with several middle and high school students on Zoom and in person. Keeping the connection between the children and adolescents and the teachers was identified as a primary goal and accomplishment.

We discussed how having a set curriculum might make planning simpler but also take away flexibility to respond to individual needs and interests. The older students have identified Quaker history, learning about other religions, and focusing on the Quaker testimony of equality by looking at the history of inequality in the United States as topics of interest to them. They are also interested in their own version of "Journey to Friends" with guest speakers; we have done this in the past with members of DMVF generously sharing their stories.

We were in unity about using our budget to buy a laptop and appropriate accessories for the use of first day school. This would be used both to allow long distance participation and to utilize Internet resources such as Quaker Speak videos.

Our primary challenge is recruiting additional teachers and

seconds (to support the teacher and to have a second adult present) to help with first day school.

We agreed that our committee does need to meet regularly but not monthly, perhaps every other month.

**Minute:** The Meeting received and approved the report with gratitude and appreciation for the work of the committee.

A discussion followed about the lack of participation among individuals in the Meeting in First Day School. Two individuals are needed at all times when meeting with Young Friends. Deb and Dorothy reminded Friends that the second person need only be present and would not have responsibilities for planning or teaching.

Several Meeting members/attenders stepped forward to participate once per quarter, including Billie Wade, Brock Wommack, Claire Cumbie-Drake and Peter Clay. The Religious Education committee will coordinate with these individuals and anyone else who will volunteer.

**Budget & Finance - DMVF Finance Committee Minutes, Sept. 27, 2022**

Attendees: Catherine Dietz-Kilen, Kelsea Gillespie, Cindy Winchell, Dick Douglass and Dorothy Lifka

Monthly Financials. The Committee reviewed the financial reports for Aug. 31, 2022, and found all to be in order. Of note is the regular receipts. We have received 10% of the regular receipts we have budgeted for the year, but we are 17% into the year.

Use of the Meeting House. The funds that have come into our budget for use in the Meeting House are 24% of what was budgeted, which is an increase of what was expected. Members of the Finance Committee noticed that the Meeting does not have a policy regarding the cost for using the Meeting House. We would like the Meeting as a whole to consider creating such a policy. The fee would be considered a free-will donation. The Finance Committee does not want the Treasurer to be responsible to send invoices or bills to groups using the Meeting House.

Meeting House Phone. The Finance Committee notes that we are continuing to pay \$2 a day for our phone number assigned to the Meeting's landline phone. The physical phone is no longer attached in the Meeting House and the Finance Committee requests that an ad hoc committee be formed for the purpose of bringing a recommendation back to Business Meeting after considering the issue of telephone communications for the Meeting House and the Meeting as a whole.

**Minute:** The Business Meeting received and approved the report with much appreciation for the on-going work of the Committee.

Catherine has reported that since the report was prepared, Pam Blackburn provided her with a copy of the Meeting's policy on use of the Meeting House. The finance committee reviewed the policy, which specifies that the suggested cost of a donation to use the Meeting

House is \$25 for ½ day and \$50 for a full day.

Catherine reviewed the financial report and addressed several questions, including a question about the budgeted funds available for Peace and Social Concerns.

**Hospitality** - no written report. Friends were in agreement with having a social event on the 5th Sunday, 10/30/2022.

**Library** - no report.

**Peace & Social Concerns** - The Committee met Oct. 4, 2022, by Zoom. Present: Peter Clay, Jack Holveck, and Billie Wade. Absent: Patty Wengert, Convener

We opened with a few moments of silence.

We discussed and quickly reached unity for supporting Iowa Peace Network with a donation of \$50.00. The Meeting may have supported IPN with \$50 but we are happy to do so in addition.

Most of the discussion focused on our new \$2,000 budget. Several questions and considerations arose:

1. A desire to know the thoughts and recommendations for the best ways to use our funds.
2. A desire to invite more people to contribute ideas about organizations, people and initiatives to fund.
3. Recognition that the committee is responsible, to a large degree, for identifying and lifting issues.
4. Does the Meeting want us to use the entire budget by the end of fiscal year, or is some carry-over expected or encouraged?

5. The P&SC committee could poll the Meeting about the issues individual members deem important for our discernment. The committee could then compile, review and prioritize the responses and submit a plan for approval at a meeting for business.
6. Host Second Hour presentations throughout the year to update the Meeting on our activities, lift issues for discussion, and to garner input from the Meeting for new actions. Of course, anyone can contact a committee member at any time to make suggestions or ask questions.

**Minute:** The report was received with appreciation for the work of the committee.

Discussion followed about how to best discern what the focus and work of the P&SC Committee should be. There was also discussion about use of the P&SC budget and whether it should be used primarily to support other organizations and their events or for programming hosted by the Meeting, such as a film or speaker series. Ann Robinson offered to help create a survey to get input on ideas for P&SC-related programming from members and attenders.

**Outreach** – no written report. Outreach committee members reported that they met in September and discussed the idea of the Outreach and Hospitality committees joining together. Both committees plan to meet together in October to discuss this. They plan to offer their recommendation(s) soon.

## Other Business:

### **First Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Committees -**

The committee met on 9/14/22 and 9/25/22. The purpose of the committee was identified as: In the spirit of loving care of our community of DMVF and of individual Friends, we will examine the current committee structure to identify how the committees can best serve our community and whether our expectations of committees are realistic given the size and capabilities of our community. We also plan to make suggestions to Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

We briefly reviewed the current committees and the approximate number of members on each committee. To widen our perspective, we also briefly discussed meetings that have laid down all committees for a year or longer and what that looked like for those meetings. One Friend shared about a meeting that attempted to reduce the number of committees and found that each committee did in fact have an important function for the meeting.

The committee began to discuss how individual committees could most effectively accomplish the work of the meeting. Suggestions have been sent to the relevant committees for feedback.

The committee is in unity on the following items:

1. Members of committees are not expected to do all the work of the meeting themselves but, as

- appropriate, to organize and recruit other Friends to help.
2. There is considerable interest in a Quakerism 101 adult religious education series. Two Friends have volunteered to teach this. More information will be available for the November meeting for business.

The committee's next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 10/23/22. Please contact Dorothy for the Zoom invitation if you would like to join us.

**Minute:** The Business Meeting received the report with thanks to the members of the Ad Hoc Committee.

### **Another pre-meeting with Ukranian guests?**

Michael Luick-Thrams has asked whether we would like to arrange for another discussion. Friends request P&SC to take up the matter with Michael to discuss how to incorporate his work into their programming.

### **Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day thoughts**

Friends had a brief discussion about the Meeting continuing to have conversations around the topic of right relations with Indigenous People.

### **Rescheduling of Query #4**

Because the Query discussion was cut short due to technology problems, the Business Meeting decided to reschedule the Query discussion for Oct. 23, "pre-meeting" from 9:00-9:55.

Meeting ended with a moment of silence.



## **Query # 4 Discussion: Harmony within the Meeting Oct. 2, 2022**

Convenor, Billie Wade;  
Recorder, Brock Wommack;  
Others present: (Meeting House) DJ Newlin, David Drake, Ann Robinson, Claire Cumbie-Drake; (Zoom) Pam Blackburn, Andrea and Jack Holveck, Jan Falb, Kari Noble.

It seems easy to get to know members within the Meeting because of Friends' virtues of witnessing honesty, kindness and lack of judgement. Conflicts tend to be handled with silence.

It often seems more difficult to find forgiveness within oneself than to find forgiveness within the Meeting.

(The meeting terminated due to technical fractures in reception. The meeting for the query reconvened several weeks later; present were Billy Wade and Brock Wommack).

It seems that when two are present, the spirit manifests so we continued the discussion concerning Harmony within the Meeting.

First, to keep harmony within the Meeting, one needs to show up (not a comment on present company!) for a harmony is likely to manifest itself more often with consistent attendance.

There will be personality clashes—confront the source of your concern, and try not to engage others, for they need not become entangled with your differences. This is true anywhere, within the Meeting or elsewhere.

By the nature of a routine, breaking it may mean that a harmony is no harmony at all.

Acceptance of disruption is like shifting gears while driving. We don't have to solve everything right away.

As a Meeting there is no necessity to take on the gauntlet of an individual's concern. The ills of the world are mirrored in the ills of the Meeting, and visa versa. There are 8 billion points of view, and they can change (a dizzying prospect!)

It's a good prospect to listen to God once in a while.

Listen to another's message and try not to react just because you don't want to hear it.

Concerning Friends and poverty, it is the attachment, the possession of the idea that is crippling and separates one from another. Own nothing -- everything is a loan -- it is how you use it that makes it valuable. It seems we are often simply acting as a conduit for dollars. We have to make \$ because we have to spend \$ to shelter ourselves. It's as if we make it just to give it away to Amazon or Hy-Vee.

Poverty occurs when the cycle is broken for many reasons. Friends seem to bear witness to poverty with an open concern rather than accepting it.

There is a metaphysical construct of glamour which is a world problem. Each of us creates a type of glamour within ourselves that pleases us individually and helps us to feel good about ourselves.

In the Friends collective, peace, tolerance and non-violence are its glamour. It purposefully separates us as a society from the rest of society. Yet, it seems we desire this separation, this being unique. Harmony is found in

silent acceptance of this, in not proselytizing but in our actions both as a congregation and as individuals within these truths.

To have harmony there must be conflict.

Recognizing a Friend's struggle without owning it helps both concerned.

Recognizing that everyone struggles opens you to be able to disagree with less judgement. That is a key to harmony. Sometimes though, the collective spirit is easier to see than the individual spirit. Things aren't always meant to be easy.

The Meeting closed after brief silence.

### **Upcoming Events of Interest**

**Global Joy Summit** Online, November 13-16, includes a documentary about the special, inspiring friendship between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The event is free, but registration is required. Details at: <https://www.globaljoysummit.org/>

**Grace Hope & Resilience - Des Moines Diversity Chorus Fall Concert**, Nov. 21, 7 p.m., at Grace United Methodist Church, 3700 Cottage Grove Ave., Des Moines.

#### **Hosting List for Upcoming First Days**

Nov. 6 – Dorothy Lifka

Nov. 13 -Dorothy Lifka

Nov. 20 – Claire & David

Nov. 27 – Charlie Brown

Dec. 4 – Ann Robinson

Dec. 11 – Deborah & Katie

Dec. 18 – Dorothy Lifka

**Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting for Worship:** Sundays at 10 a.m., at the Meeting House and by Zoom via email invitation from clerk, Carol Spaulding-Kruse, at

[carol.spaulding@drake.edu](mailto:carol.spaulding@drake.edu)

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

**Coming Second Hours:** None planned for November Thanksgiving potluck – Nov. 20? TBD.

**Query Discussions:** First Sundays, 11:30 a.m. - 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](mailto:dmlifka@yahoo.com).

**Building & Grounds:** Questions about the building or grounds of the Meetinghouse to Building & Grounds Committee Convenor, Dick Douglass, 515-864-1119.

**Hospitality Committee:** If you see a housekeeping problem that needs attention, please contact the Hospitality Committee convenor Charlie Brown, 515-689-6470.

**Friendly Line:** Send info for next Friendly Line to Ann at [anny@mediacombb.net](mailto:anny@mediacombb.net) by Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2022.

**Find us online at:** [www.desmoinesvalleyfriends.org](http://www.desmoinesvalleyfriends.org)  
*Be sure and check out the website's new calendar!*

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