

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

FRIENDLY LINE

January 2023



DMV Friends invite you to explore our website

By Katie Jacobv. DMVF webmaster

The Des Moines Valley Friends website, desmoinesvalleyfriends.org has been up for a number of years now and is purposely designed to not need frequent updating. For instance, it doesn't have a blog page because that involves creating constant content and monitoring.

The Welcome page (home/landing page) is a general introduction and invitation to DMVF and includes a link to the Meeting for Worship page. The About Friends tab includes three pages - Worship, Faith and Practice and Advices and Queries. Information on these pages comes from Faith and Practice -The Book of Discipline of Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative) Religious Society of Friends and contains links to downloadable PDFs.

The Annual Sessions page has a brief description of the Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) gathering that takes place each summer and will include a registration link when available. Other pages include the State of the Meeting, DMVF calendar, Quaker resources and a "contact us" form that routes email inquiries (and occasional spam) to the Outreach and Communications Committee.

There is also a Members tab, which is password protected.

Under this tab you will find items like committee lists and reports and our newsletters. Outreach and Communications will periodically remind people of the password during announcements at the rise of meeting for worship, and we also plan to include it on the DMVF Directory, which is updated regularly. That said, feel free to ask for the password at any time.

Be sure and watch for a new feature we are developing: the Spiritual Journeys page (also under the password-protected Members tab). Here we will invite Friends to share reflections on their spiritual journeys through essays, poetry and art, and we plan to include past such contributions to the Friendly Line. We are proposing very general policy guidelines – the essay/poetry/art would convey personal experiences that inform one's spiritual journey and are not political in nature. As with the Friendly Line, articles will be submitted to the committee prior to posting. The content is strictly the author's own, and any edits would be minor, such as for typos, and checked with the author in advance. This new page has advantages over publishing in the Friendly Line, including that articles will not need to be

(continued on page 7)

A Quaker Minute: Historic Friends – Activist Bayard Rustin, Part 1

Part of a series on Quaker Minutes on past and present influential Friends.

Bayard Rustin was a black Civil Rights activist, a close associate of Martin Luther King, a gay man and an advocate of gay and lesbian rights.

Rustin was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and was brought up by his Quaker grandmother. He identified as a Quaker and was a member of the 15th St. Quaker Meeting in New York City where he lived most of his adult life.

Rustin was jailed in 1944 for his conscientious objection to cooperating with the WWII draft. While in jail, he organized protests against segregated seating in the dining hall. In a much-quoted letter to the prison warden, Rustin wrote: There are three ways in which one can deal with an injustice. (a) One can accept it without protest. (b) One can seek to avoid it. (c) One can resist the injustice non-violently. To accept it is to perpetuate it.

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

DMVF Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

December 11, 2022

Attending: Bob Henderson; Patty Reynolds; Andrea Holveck; Jack Holveck; Katie Jacoby; David Drake; Jim Dietz-Kilen; Catherine Dietz-Kilen; Patty Wengert; Billie Wade; Deb Fisch; Virginia Smith; Claire Cumbie-Drake; Peter Clay; DJ Newlin; Dorothy Lifka

The Meeting began with a moment of silence. Quote shared by the Clerk: "True silence is the rest of the mind, and is to the spirit what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment." (William Penn)

Minutes from November Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Minute: The Minutes were accepted and approved.

The Clerk shared announcements, including the following events:

- o [Midwestern Black History Project](#) – PBS special.
- o Feast of the Holy Innocents, 12/28/22 @ First United Methodist Church
- o Job Opening with Friends Peace Teams
- o Day of Remembrance during Meeting on 1/15/23 @ 10:30 AM (Dorothy Lifka will facilitate)

Committee Reports:

The Clerk inquired regarding timeliness of delivery of reports. Friends agreed that Convener reports will now be due between first Sunday and first Thursday, monthly, depending on when

committees meet. Agenda for Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business goes out on the first Thursday. A friend further suggested that if there is no report, time should not be spent at the Meeting for Business on verbal updates.

Ad Hoc Committee (Dorothy Lifka) NO REPORT

Religious Ed Committee (Dorothy Lifka) NO REPORT

Building & Grounds (Dick Douglas) NO REPORT

Peace & Social Concerns (Patty Wengert) Peace and Social Concerns committee met December 6th. In attendance: Patty Wengert, convener; Billie Wade, Jack Holveck and Peter Clay.

We confirmed that we will continue to meet via Zoom at noon on the first Tuesday of each month through May 2023. All Friends are always warmly encouraged to join us for our committee meetings!

We decided to begin the discussion for creating a Land Acknowledgement statement to be used when we gather and/or language for a plaque for our meetinghouse. We especially hope others in the meeting who are interested will join us in this work.

We will co-sponsor the Feast of the Holy Innocents service of Dec. 28th at 6:30 pm at the Methodist church at 1001 Pleasant Street with other local peace groups. DMVF will send a \$50 dollar donation.

Continuing our warm gear donation drive to benefit Creative Visions and the Catholic Worker community.

We made a donation to the Center for Development in Central America.

The committee had a vigorous discussion of how to determine priorities that are well aligned with the concerns and interests of our meeting community. While our committee is charged with leading the meeting for our peace and justice work, our desire is to be better grounded by knowing more about what Friends are especially concerned with at this time.

We decided in November that a brief questionnaire with one or two open-ended questions could be a helpful approach to answer our concern. We seek feedback, guidance and support to create and distribute a questionnaire.

Recognizing that some 2nd Hours could be scheduled by the committee to educate our meeting about concerns that many of us have, we identified some ideas for such programs. Some examples: learning more about the proposed Truth and Healing Commission to examine the impacts of the Indian Boarding Schools; learning about the work of the Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement Racial Justice Team in Iowa to address racism in policing; additional programming on the impact of drones on modern warfare; and learning more about prison reform efforts through inviting a speaker from CURE (Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants)

(<https://www.curenational.org>).

The committee would also like to keep open the possibility of future soup lunches while recognizing that our expanded budget may make soup lunches

as a funding mechanism for the meeting's peace and justice work unnecessary. We decided that 5th Sundays should be left to the whole meeting to determine how to use for social time, educational opportunities or for some other purpose. For now, we do not seek to resume regular 3rd Sunday soup lunches on behalf of the committee, preferring to see what requests for support we receive and seeing how our budget is holding up.

We began and ended our time together with brief periods of silent worship.

-- Submitted by Patty Wengert, Convener

Minute: The report was received by the Meeting. Discussion followed regarding the 5th Sunday. Friends decided to continue some type of social gathering on each 5th Sunday, and that a basket would be put out for F(f)riends to donate to the work of the Peace or Social Concerns Committee. The 3rd Sunday will continue to be utilized for regular 2nd hour planning.

Ministry & Council (Jim Dietz-Kilen, convener) M&C met Dec. 4. Attending: Jack Holveck, Peter Clay, Deborah Fisch and Jim Dietz-Kilen.

Following opening silence, our discussion produced the following items to report:

1) A Day of Remembrance is scheduled for 15 January. Dorothy has graciously offered to coordinate this observance, which has deep resonance for many of us. Dorothy plans to be in-person at the Meeting House that day. Around 10:30, she will

share a reading to move us into our time of remembrance. Susan is working with our children on an art project for the day.

2) We discussed the gentle tension between Friends' desire to resume gathering together socially and our public health and safety concerns. We will likely be tentatively trying out resumption of some gatherings and ask for everyone's patience and understanding as we do.

3) During the course of continued discussion of the idea of having a designated time for a hybrid gathering for healing, we became aware that Ames Meeting already has a regular time for this. We plan to contact them to see whether interested DMVFM folks might be able to join them. We expect to have more to report about this.

4) Deborah requested consideration of use of the Meeting House by Broken Vessels Ministry for hybrid Bible study. Their plan is to focus on the Book of John, especially on verses that had special resonance for early Friends. Deborah indicated that they would likely charge a modest fee and offered that they could probably share a percentage of those funds with the Meeting, in lieu of our customary fee. We did not feel this request fell under our committee's purview, and suggested that Deborah contact Claire, as scheduler, to gauge her thoughts. It may be that this should go to Business Meeting under "New Business," as was done with the recent request from DM Meditation group.

-- Submitted by Jim Dietz-Kilen, Convener.

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

Treasurer's Report (Kelsea Gillespie)

Minutes: The report was received and approved.

Finance Committee (Katherine Dietz-Kilen, convener) DMVF Finance Committee Minutes, November 22, 2022. Attendees: Catherine Dietz-Kilen, Kelsea Gillespie, Cindy Winchell, Dick Douglass, Dorothy Lifka, Billie Wade and Katie Jacoby

1. Monthly Financials. The Committee reviewed the financial reports for October, 2022 and found all to be in order. We are grateful to Kelsea for all her hard work.
2. Recommendation for Phone for Meeting House and Messages – ACTION ITEM. Des Moines Valley Friends has paid to maintain a landline to the Meeting House so that messages could be left on the answering service. A member or regular attender of the Meeting has taken on the responsibility to check the messages. The cost to maintain the landline and our current phone number is budgeted at \$800 annually.

Getting a pay-as-you-go phone will require the Meeting to give up its current phone number. The new phone number will need to be placed on the Meeting's website.

There would no longer be a physical phone at the Meeting House. It is noted that most individuals carry a

cell phone, which would be available for emergency purposes at the Meeting House.

The Finance Committee is grateful for the research and report prepared by Katie Jacoby.

3. House Scheduling and Fees – ACTION ITEM. At the request of Business Meeting, the Finance Committee discussed the scheduling of the Meeting House for events and fees that would be expected for use of the Meeting House. Attached please find the proposal considered by Business Meeting in 2016 and the updated version/ recommendation from the Finance Committee.
4. The next Finance Committee meeting will be held on January 31, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.

Minute: Discussion followed regarding the recommendation related to the Meetinghouse phone. Deb Fisch volunteered to take the phone messages, provided that the Nominating Committee find someone to take the phone messages beginning in the next fiscal year. Katie Jacoby will update the phone number across all platforms where the phone number appears. Finance Committee will work with Katie Jacoby on obtaining the new phone.

Des Moines Valley Friends Meetinghouse Use

CURRENT POLICIES (last reviewed in 2016):

The Meetinghouse is a place of worship and not a general-use community center. Therefore, DMVF reserves the right to decline its use for any activities not appropriate to a place of worship or that do not enhance the sacred energy of our space.

DMVF and AFSC activities take precedence over other uses of the Meetinghouse, and when necessary, other activities (even regularly scheduled activities) may be cancelled to give DMVF or AFSC use of the Meetinghouse.

Commercial Activities and promotional events intended to sell products or services will not be approved.

Once these core concepts are met, we believe the Meetinghouse should not be sitting empty when appropriate groups could be using it. Currently, the Meetinghouse is heavily used on weekday evenings. It is difficult to schedule weekly recurring events.

Des Moines Valley Friends Meetinghouse Use
PROPOSED POLICY –
December 2022:

The Meetinghouse is a place of worship and not a general-use community center. Therefore, DMVF reserves the right to decline its use for any activities not appropriate to a place of worship or that do not enhance the sacred energy of our space.

DMVF activities take precedence over other uses of the Meetinghouse, and when necessary, other activities (even regularly scheduled activities)

may be cancelled to give DMVF use of the Meetinghouse.

Commercial activities such as promotional events intended to sell products or services will not be approved.

Once these core concepts are met, we believe the Meetinghouse should not be sitting empty when appropriate groups could be using it.

A contribution of \$25 for a half-day or an evening's use and of \$50 for a full day's use is proposed for activities with minimal or no fees (with provision to waive any fee in specific instances). For events with significant admission charges or sales, a higher hourly-rate-based fee may be negotiated. (For example: a concert to raise money for a cause consistent with the values of DMVF, at which the performer may wish to sell their recordings.) These levels cover the basic costs DMVF would incur. Tying contribution rates to the cost of renting comparable commercial space could lead users to expect a comparable level of professional support. It could also lead them to expect compensation if access is cancelled, so a commercial rate is not recommended.

The house scheduler has the authority to reduce, waive or negotiate the contribution or fee, taking into consideration the type of event, the relationship between the organizer of the event and members or regular attendees of DMVF and any other information deemed to be relevant by the house scheduler. The house scheduler may seek guidance from DMVF business meeting regarding the scheduling

or contribution for any proposed event.

Minute: A Friend suggested using the term “preferred contribution.” The Meeting Representatives to Friends House Board will share the updated policy with the Board, with care given to the relationship between the Meeting and Friends House.

The policy will be amended to state that the scheduler will consult with the Hospitality Committee if questions or concerns arise regarding use of the Meeting House and the recommended contribution.

Other/New Business

- **12/18 Holiday Gathering** – The gathering will be held, with a request that Friends observe COVID-19 precautions.
- Possible donation to Ruth Harbor - Clerk requested permission to approach Peace and Social Concerns about making a donation to Ruth Harbor. A discussion followed as to how the Meeting might approach Ruth Harbor as neighbors, even though many Friends likely have views that differ from the organization’s underlying philosophy.

The Meeting concluded with a moment of silence.



Query 5 Discussion: Family. November 6, 2022

Present: Carol Spaulding-Kruse, Gordon Bivens, Pam Blackburn, Susan Meyers, Claire Cumbie-Drake, Ann Robinson, DJ Newlin, Steve Shivers, Kari Nobel: convener, Billie Wade, recorder, Brock Wommack.

We are family. Relationships are deeper w/in the Meeting than elsewhere it often seems. As a Meeting, we need to share our needs with each other in order to know how help each other, which creates a depth of mutual care.

It is not the quantity of caring but the quality of our care and concerns for one another. As family, it is important to remind ourselves of the initial premise that George Fox brought to the forefront of Quaker practice; that we are the ministers of our Meeting—each of us share this responsibility to ourselves and the Meeting. It would be nice to take it easy, but as Ministry and Council take their mission seriously, it behooves us to individually do the same.

We are grateful to be able to turn to the Meeting for our individual needs, motivated as a constant witness to the pier of love w/in the Mtg. In the spirit of love and caring, be a witness to it by the way we treat each other.

What about the children in our Meeting? We have sustained our children’s attendance and more may be stepping up their attendance. The play was an exciting adventure to mix the generations w/in the Mtg. in a fun way while telling a profound history of our faith when it was the children of the Meeting who continued to worship while their parents were imprisoned for doing the same thing.

It was witnessed that when the children would come upstairs to join us in worship, George Welch could be counted on to say, “Behold our jewels.”

We are an aging Meeting. Will we survive? The Meeting takes

time, staffing, etc. What is their experience (those that volunteer) with our mutual caring for them? We are grateful for what we do have — a profound intimacy among us. Some of us have come to DMV Friends from other congregations where there is little care and concern, but simply ritualized attendance. Praying circles are fine and not to be judged in their attempt; but, we go further by actively supporting each other.

We remember Elizabeth Lamb, for her personal notes of encouragement, and questions she would ask people individually, such as, “What is evil?”

A pastor has a flock, and it is his/her mission to watch over it. We Friends are charged with being equal to each other, and thus responsible to each other in a way that negates the need of a pastor.

People (men and women) really try to share the roles.

Have you tried the One on One exercise? Several voiced how the experience was fun and deeply gratifying as well. It’s a way to become more intimate, even with those you may have known for decades.

The comment was seconded, —a great example of mutual care w/in the Meeting.

Zoom and attending at the Meeting House (now known as a hybrid meeting) has not always been a very successful venture for other meetings or for IYMC. It seems to work for DMV Friends because we are open to making it work.

Zoom seems more comfortable at times and was founded by necessity during the pandemic.

Yet as we continue using the hybrid meeting format, we have rejoined with members around the country and around the world, giving the arms of the Meeting a fuller embrace.

There is a resilience within the DMVF hybrid model that other meetings may wish to explore. So let's ask ourselves, what are our blind spots in this model? How is it strengthening our Meeting?

Am I called? How? The Queries engage us w/in Meeting and engage us within the spirit of our daily lives outside of worship. Zoom brings this outside of the physical Meeting House with those called to attend yet are not able to be in the Meeting's physical presence. Let us remind ourselves that is the calling that has created this Meeting, for no one is forcing us to attend. Such is the nature of the spiritual family we find ourselves supporting. Ponder the mystery of the calling.

Query Discussion # 6:

Education

December 10, 2022

Present: Mtg. House; Ann Robinson, Logan Jimenez., DJ Newlin, (Zoom) Peter Clay, Jack & Andrea Holveck, Dorothy Lifka, Pam Blackburn; Billie Wade convener, Brock Wommack recorder.

As an adult, many believe formal education to be end of it. Friends will often continue their education throughout life as a personal faith responsibility. (Reaching out for the three-foot chopsticks)

Some may see education as a threat to faith—Friends have regularly sponsored education

opportunities throughout their history.

Scattergood School is an important example of Iowa Friends in regards to this query. Though not very involved, said one, the school is open to different means of participation, even in small part.

Quakers emphasis on being exposed to other forms of education include the idea that a proper response is not to censure differences, but to trust in others' ability to decide for themselves what response is given to new information.

Be open-hearted, open minded, respond openly to our community outside of Mtg., while be less censoring to the differences between us.

It behooves us to become better acquainted with the scriptures of Judeo/Christian traditions. There is both a literal and selective organization behind these studies, therefore be conscious of these differences.

In the past, the Meeting has created study groups. Should we do it again? Pam's Quaker Minutes both reminds us of our history, yet also can teach us something for the first time! The One-on-One exercise is a terrific way to educate ourselves simply about each other, more intimately.

The book *The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship* describes centuries of Friends commitment to education. Google Quakerspeak on YouTube or from the Friends General Conference website.

Let us not forget gender expectations -- and the way we learn guides most of us. Not so long ago, women weren't

expected to be engineers or scientists. Many now retiring are from careers then acceptable to women who graduated in the 60's and 70's (social workers, etc).

There is a new pursuit of women classical composers, a unique study that is exploding the myths of men surpassing women composers. That's a great idea for 1st Day school

Push back against cultural bias. Stand, stick out, make yourself known so that others may be introduced to your reality. Be unique and not afraid to be other than a cultural norm to others.

Some who study such things have found that in the USA, men are being left behind by not pursuing higher education. There is a complete mirror reversal from the previous generation where women were the minority in higher education achievements. This is being seen in local politics where less educated men are much more open to conspiracy theories than their educated counterparts.

Gender-based bias effects goals and the way that we learn. The gay members paid witness to this unspoken but always present undercurrent in their lives. Such as, judging folks by appearance, bias simmering all around us unacknowledged. Profound wisdom comes from everyone! You know, children are really good at re-educating themselves since no one has told them they can't! Perhaps we should emulate such innocence ourselves!

One Friend said that Yearly Meeting has sometimes been a good reminder not to judge others -- because some Friends have seemed a little kooky at

first, but over time, thoughtful people with unique talents and perspectives. Getting to know them at Yearly Meeting has provided opportunities to respond to differences in a safe, divergent community.

One Friend said campaigning from door to door is an amazing exercise in overcoming judging others within seconds of meeting them. (If that's possible!) The judgements one makes from limited public contact as an elected representative can carry over into legislation.

And remember, when there are differences within the Meeting or within your personal family, you don't have to win the argument!

"That Friend speaks my mind, said several in agreement."

Silence

Website (*continued from page 1*) edited for length; they can remain available indefinitely without having to search past issues of the newsletter; content can be "edgier" or more personal than what might be considered appropriate for the newsletter audience, which sometimes includes children; and art submissions won't need to meet a size threshold that might affect folks' ability to receive the FL digitally. Submissions will be noted in the Friendly Line, so we'll have regular reminders to visit the page.

Another page we hope to develop is a First Day School page. This could include monthly reports from our First Day School kids that could be read at business meeting, suggested activities to do with youth to reinforce Quaker values and

other religious education resources.

If you have ideas for the website or would like an event added to the calendar, let us know.

NEWS OF OUR FRIENDS

In November, **Dorothy Lifka** traveled to Massachusetts (where she used to live) and New Jersey to visit long-time friends. "I got to walk along the beach in Massachusetts and visited Caven Point, a bird and wildlife refuge in Jersey City that was reclaimed from a dump," she says. "In December, I met my parents, who are in their 90s and still in good health - or as my father says, still have all their original body parts - for several days in Fort Lauderdale, Florida." There, Dorothy enjoyed more beach walking and a visit to an animal refuge/botanical center.

After 10 months, work to repair his home is about finished and **Peter Clay** plans to move back into his house Jan. 12-14, after cleaning on the 11th. He hopes some Friends may be able to assist with this process. Please call or text 515-599-1980 or email peterclay1@me.com to volunteer. The 11th, 13th and 14th are the days when is needed most.) Peter says thank you, Friends, for considering!

Hosting List for Upcoming First Days

Jan. 1 – Jim & Catherine
Jan. 8 – Charlie Brown
Jan. 15 – Ann Robinson
Jan. 22 – Deborah & Katie
Jan. 29 – 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

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

Coming Second Hours:

1/15 - Day of Remembrance
10:30 AM during meeting

1/29 - 5th Sunday Social + program: Conversation with Billie Wade.

Query Discussions: First Sundays, 11:30 a.m. - Online & in person. Billie Wade, facilitator.

Child Care: 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 Convenor, Dick Douglass, 515-864-1119.

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

Friendly Line: Send info for next Friendly Line by Friday, Jan. 27, to Ann at anny@mediacombb.net.

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.