

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

FRIENDLY LINE

August 2025



‘Closing Minute’ from IYMC 2025 Gathering

Quakers gathered at this year’s Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) sessions, July 24-27 at Scattergood Friends School near West Branch, Iowa.

Here is the “closing minute” from the event that gathered Quakers from around the region and the country, prepared by IYMC Clerk Carol Gilbert

We gathered again at Scattergood Friends School and online this year.

Our sessions were rich in Holy lessons. In considering how to be still in the Spirit, as the world storms wildly around us, we were reminded that stillness brings us close to the Seed and the Source. Stillness does not take us away from the world but helps us bring God into the world. We learned, or re-learned that we do not worship alone, but in community, in communities, and as a body. We worship and discern together.

In one session we learned from several West Branch Friends how they were brought into the body, how they worship in meeting and how they bring their Quakerism to their daily lives. We learned and re-learned that love is so powerful that it can’t be coming only from ourselves, it must be Divine; it is powerful enough to bind us to one another

in all our differences, imperfections and woundedness. We were reminded that Love must be our guide.

Being people, we are sometimes slow to bring these lessons to our real life decision-making even during our business sessions, but we do find ways forward.

We labored long about statements to the world in opposition to war and genocide, though we clearly oppose war and genocide. Our choice was about how to express our love.

Because Scattergood School is getting new bathrooms and air conditioning it is not available to us for next year’s annual sessions, and we labored long about what to do. Though a big cost difference is involved, our choice was about our love of one another and how to best include everyone.

Scattergood is always a bright spot in our agenda and it did not fail us this year. We are so blessed to play a part in the lives of the young people who attend school here. We are also excited that we have a movement among young adult Friends who are organizing to support one another as Friends and fellow worshipers in the Yearly meeting.

We adjourn to meet again as Love allows, Seventh month 22-26, at Grinnell college in Grinnell, Iowa and online.

Be the Mountain

Excerpted from a presentation by Geery Howe at the IYMC gathering, the evening of Wednesday, July 23, 2025. (used with permission)

Recently, a friend of mine who was struggling, came to visit me. She was seeking safe harbor and asked me to join her as she shared her challenges at work, at home and with life in general. When she was done sharing, she said: “What should I do about all of this?”

I paused, reflected and remembered a Japanese proverb: “The wind howls, but the mountain remains still.” So I replied, “Stay centered in your clarity. Remain grounded in what you know is the right path. Be the mountain; remain still.” She smiled and replied, “That’s just what I needed to hear at this time period.”

In a world filled with howling winds, it is hard to be the mountain and choose to remain still. We are an action-oriented society. We want to move at the speed of software. We want to solve all our problems instantly with digital solutions. Or have AI (artificial intelligence) tell us what to do. We want to be proactive and successful.

But let’s step back. Let’s pause and take stock of the reality in which we live.

(continued on page 5)

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

There was no meeting for worship with attention to business in July.

Discussion of Query #2: Outreach

Convenor: Billie Wade,

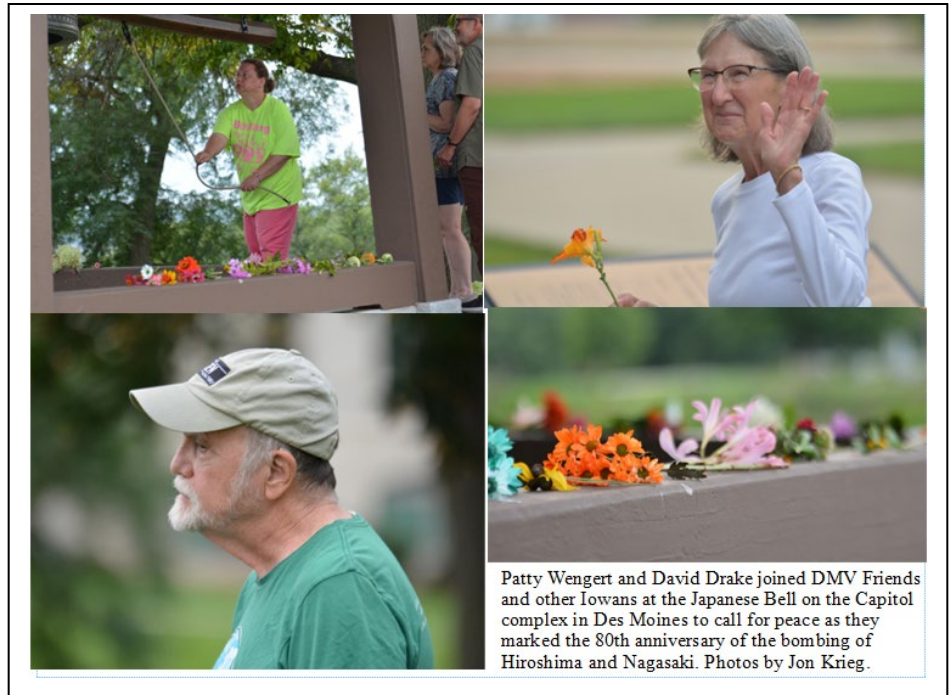
Recorder: Peter Clay

Others present: Jackson Brock
Wommack, Andrea Holveck,
Claire Cumbie-Drake, Deborah
Fisch, David Drake, Petra Lange,
Jack Holveck, Fatma Bachelani

We can be challenged to discern how to be visible to and welcoming of the larger world without proselytizing. Having a brief yet effective way to explain who we are is also a challenge for many of us.

Our creation of the Outreach committee has helped us keep our intention to send out welcoming energy to other seekers stronger and more meaningful. It is an ongoing reminder to ourselves that we need to remain continually mindful in reaching out to the world and sharing that we have much to offer. The outreach at Drake University, at the Pride events and other ways has resulted in new people discovering our Quaker meeting.

We have heard a calling that led each of us to identify as Friends (Quaker). Outreach is the fruit of our individual understanding of how we have been called to become members of our own Quaker community and part of the wider world of Friends.



Visiting Quaker meetings when we travel strengthens our understanding of the variety of Friends and of Friends practices all around the world.

Our churches and meetings may be challenged to see and acknowledge differences in economic resources both within our churches and meetings and as we greet seekers who arrive to understand who we are. Most Friends in the United States identify as white and most identify as some version of middle class. Could we enhance our attention to economic differences so that those of more limited means or who have different origins and heritage still feel fully embraced and welcome among us?

Could Friends co-create an ongoing prayer wheel of connection that would allow all Quakers to join in at any time, to be able to visit Friends meetings all around the world?

If we come to unity to have an inviting sign or banner out in

front of the meetinghouse each First Day/Sunday, it would help more people to know that we are here and welcome all to join us. Outreach committee is currently working on updating and improving our signage.

Our social justice work and work as peacemakers in the world is a powerful form of Quaker outreach and one of the ways new people discover that we (Quakers) are still here and that we still have a vibrant faith that there is that of God or of the Divine present in each person. It is this conviction that Spirit inhabits all of us that animates our presence and work in the world. We all need one another to be fully ourselves, and that is also true of our Quaker identity.

After nearly 400 years Friends are still encouraging one another to live more fully into our testimonies and to share our Spirit-led leadings with the whole world.

FEEDBACK ON QUERY #2 –
Maybe too many queries? The final query seems very important to keep, even if we reduce the total number of individual queries under Outreach.

Query #3 for September: Meeting for Worship

ADVICE: In our meeting for business, Friends seek Divine guidance in handling the affairs of the meeting. By opening the meeting with a period of worship, Friends can more easily wait patiently upon the will of the Divine Spirit while conducting business. This assists our meetings for business in finding the loving unity that might never be achieved through discussion alone. The right conduct of meetings for business, even in routine matters, is important to the life of the meeting. Friends are encouraged to prepare for and attend meetings for business just as they would other meetings for worship.

Participating in meetings for business and acceptance of responsibilities within the meeting should not be taken lightly. When filling positions within our meetings, it is important to consider the suitability of individuals for specific tasks. Although the clerk is particularly charged with gathering the sense of the meeting, all Friends can assist the process by committing themselves to be faithful in opening their hearts and minds to wait upon the Divine Spirit.

QUERIES

- How can we hold our meetings for business in the spirit of love, understanding

and patient search for unity without becoming frustrated by differences of opinion or the pressures of time?

- How do we respond when no one else in the meeting seems to hold the views that we do on an issue?
- How do we respond to a dissenting minority?
- How do we share responsibilities among Friends in our meeting?
- How do we serve our meetings?

News of Our Friends

Jon Krieg reported having a had a good visit with **Pam Blackburn** recently at the care facility where she has been staying to recover from health problems. “It was so good to see her again. Her spirits seem quite good. She says she’s still doing PT and OT with the hope of going home Aug. 11 or so. She said how much she appreciates the great support of Friends. Sounds like she has been receiving lots of texts and messages from folks. I told her how people miss her and look forward to the return of her Quaker minutes after worship and in the Friendly Line. We chatted about her own history and finding Quakerism back in 1992 after taking a survey that pointed her our way. She remembers that during her very first meeting for worship, **Owen Newlin** spoke (a rarity) and talked about how numbers and money can represent our values. She said that spoke to her.”

The State of Drinking Water in Iowa and Something We Can Do

by Charlie Brown

After reading several articles about the amount of nitrates in our drinking water and the mention that boiling the water just concentrates the nitrates. I decided to look into what I could do to protect us from this threat.

My conclusion was to install a reverse osmosis filtration system as it is the best way to remove nitrates from the water. I decided on an under-the-sink unit because the whole house units seemed like overkill and are expensive. I decided to not only use a dedicated faucet at the kitchen sink but to run a line to the refrigerator for the indoor water and the ice-maker.

It took me about 6 hours to assemble, install and flush the system myself. The overall cost was less than \$250 to assure safe drinking water for our home. It is what I would call a passive system: no power needed except water pressure. I feel we are safe for now from the nitrates at least at home. One of the really scary thing I found in my research was the fact that most peoples home solution was bottled water. Beyond the destructive nature of one-time use bottles added to the waste stream is the ingestion of micro plastics into your system from the use of plastic beverage bottles. Plus there is little or no regulation of what they put in the bottles that are sold. (Recent studies reveal there can be around significant pollutants per liter bottle.)

Upcoming Events

Penn Valley Friends Meeting Retreat: Love Your Neighbors

Penn Valley Meeting in Kansas City invites Friends to join its Fall Retreat, September 25 -27, 2025, at the The Sisters of St. Francis Retreat Center, 2100 Noland Rd., Independence Missouri.

The theme will be: Love Your Neighbors: No Exceptions. (Mark 12:30-31). Windy Cooler, an embraced public minister from Sandy Springs Monthly Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, will be the retreat speaker/facilitator.

Get more details, including the cost, and link to register at:
<https://kcquakers.org/about-us/news/>

Be the Mountain

(Continued from page 1)

Currently, I am seeing three major patterns surface at the same time. First, stress and anxiety levels are going through the roof. People are struggling with how to cope with what feels like endless waves of disruptive change. We are struggling, and we are overwhelmed. In the midst of this struggle, we feel like we are doing too much. We also feel like it is not enough, and we will never get caught up. For many, their traditional stress management methods are not working given the magnitude of these unpredictable changes. Therefore, many people are seeking new solutions...

As Quakers we know about being quiet. We know about being still. When we gather for worship, we quiet our minds and

open our hearts to new insights and guidance. We wait in silence with the hope and expectation of coming into the presence of God. We wait in expectation to receive, or discover, the message. We wait in the now and are fully present to what Thomas Merton calls, "the loving gaze of God" and to be "present to that gaze." As Father James Martin writes: To find God is to be found by God, who has been looking for us all along."

Yet in a world filled with noise and distraction, stewardship of stillness and quiet is not the norm. Therefore, as Quakers, we need to do four things, namely prepare for, create, grow, and steward this stillness and quiet...

Holding the quiet is a powerful choice and an important discipline to consistently pursue over time. It requires us as Friends to center ourselves and to quiet the inner dialogue. It also requires us to be present to the moment and to the people around us. It is based on an understanding that Quakerism is more than just a belonging system; it is a transformational system that has the potential to change ourselves and to change the world.

-- Geery Howe is a member of West Branch Friends Meeting. To read his complete presentation, contact anny.robinson1@gmail.com for a printed transcript.

Upcoming Hosting List

Aug. 10 – Ann and Audrey
Aug. 17 – Steve & Kari
Aug. 24 – Jim and Catherine
Aug. 31 – Peter & Andrea
Sept. 7 – Charlie & Dorothy
Sept. 14 – Deborah & Katie

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,

carol.spaulding@drake.edu

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

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

Upcoming Second Hours:

Aug. 17: Potluck First Day

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

Building & Grounds: For questions about the building or grounds of the Meeting House, contact Building & Grounds Committee Convenor, Charlie Brown, 515-689-6470.

Hospitality Committee: For questions about housekeeping at Hospitality Committee convenor Charlie Brown, 515-689-6470.

Friendly Line: Send info for the Aug. FL to Ann Robinson, anny.robinson1@gmail.com by Aug. 29.

Find us online at:

<https://www.desmoinesvalleyfriends.org/>.

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