

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

FRIENDLY LINE

July 2025



Independent or Emancipated?

By Billie Wade

Fifteen days separate June 19th from July 4th on the calendar. The significant events of these two dates, July 4, 1776, and June 19, 1865, took place 88 years, 11 months, and 15 days apart. July 4th was hailed as Independence Day. June 19th was dubbed Emancipation Day, also known as Juneteenth. The two terms are separate, and they are not equal.

On Independence Day, the United States of America extricated itself from the rule of Great Britain and became a sovereignty in its own right. All thirteen colonies signed the Declaration of Independence. Conversely, the Emancipation Proclamation was an Executive Order signed by President Abraham Lincoln. The document freed only those slaves held in Union states, making those men eligible to fight in the Civil War. The Proclamation, delivered to Galveston, Texas, over two and a half years after its signing on January 1, 1863, was as much a war and political strategy rather than a strategy for slave freedom. While the two documents functioned differently, there were similarities in form: The signers of both were wealthy white men who owned land, livestock, crops, and people whom they regarded as chattel property, livestock, and currency. The

Emancipation Proclamation did not consider any input from the enslaved people the document stated it freed. According to Public Broadcasting System (PBS): The Emancipation Proclamation did not free all slaves in the United States. Rather, it declared free only those slaves living in states not under Union control. William Seward, Lincoln's secretary of state, commented, "We show our sympathy with slavery by emancipating slaves where we cannot reach them and holding them in bondage where we can set them free." Lincoln was fully aware of the irony, but he did not want to antagonize the slave states loyal to the Union by setting their slaves free. The proclamation allowed black soldiers to fight for the Union — soldiers that were desperately needed. It also tied the issue of slavery directly to the war. The Declaration of Independence does not seem to be a declaration of absolute freedom, just freedom from chattel slavery.

Enslaved men were released by their holders without financial resources, property, formal education, or vocational training.

Then, they were trained in the violence of warfare, Abraham Lincoln's warfare. We have no immediate information about the

(continued on page 6)

Iowa Yearly Meeting Gathering: Silent Worship in a Noisy World

Join Quakers from around the region at this year's Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative sessions, July 24-27 at Scattergood Friends School near West Branch, Iowa.

Silent worship is the theme for the gathering, with presentations by IYMC Friends and guests Gretchen Castle, dean of the Earlham School of Religion, and Rex Nyquist, a history teacher from the Chicago area presenting "A visit with John Woolman from his series, "Men of Faith, History and Letters."

Activities and programs will also include Bible studies, IYM(C) business, workshops, great food and great company. Find a schedule with more details at: <https://www.iymc.org/>. Please register soon <https://www.iymc.org/4188-2/> to help with planning for housing, meals and youth programming.

Read the Des Moines Valley Friends State of the Meeting - June 2025 on page 7

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

June 22, 2025

Attendees: Charlie Brown
(Clerk), Forrest Determann
(Recording Clerk)
Petra Lange, Cheryl Sutton
Dorothy Lifka, Katie Jacoby
Deborah Fisch, Peter Clay,
Bridget (from Live Oak Friends
Meeting)

Meeting started with a moment
of silence

Meeting accepted minutes from
the May Meeting for Worship
with Attention to Business.

A friend commented on notes
from the last meeting regarding
the SAGE committee report on
proposed restructuring of
Scattergood and provided
clarification on several points:

- The committee is not explicitly
proposing the school be split,
but is exploring this as an
option.
- Liability concerns are a minor
factor, not a major reason for
the proposed changes.
- The school is currently owned
by IYMC (Iowa Yearly
Meeting of Friends
Conservative)
- The committee is seeking legal
input on the matter and is
considering counsel from the
University of Iowa law school
and other lawyers on the
matter
- The committees involved are
very mindful of this being a
spirit-led decision.
- Initial work is being done by a
subcommittee of the school
committee and eventually the
school committee will be more
involved.

Meeting accepted the notes and
minutes from May 2025, with the
above clarifications.

Announcements

Penn Valley Friends Meeting is
inviting Friends to join us for our
Fall Retreat September 25 -27,
2025, "Love your Neighbor-No
Exceptions". A flyer for the
retreat has been posted in the
DMV Meeting house entry way.

Ministry and Counsel

The committee completed the
State of the Meeting Report for
IYM(C) 2025 Annual Sessions
(included on page 9). The report
was read aloud. The sense of the
meeting is to accept the report as-
is and pass it on to the IYM(C)
Ministry and Council Committee.

A friend expressed gratitude
for the opportunities we've been
given in the last year to be able to
do all that was discussed in the
State of the Meeting Report.
Appreciation was also expressed
for the work of the committee for
producing the report

Finance Committee

(report presented by Katie
Jacoby)

The committee approved the
March and April financial
statements

They also have a transition
document that the prior treasurer
had provided. They've been
working on reviewing and
revising this document to ensure
it's up to date and properly
documents their practices and
will be posting this in to
members section of the website
once they're done with their
review.

They've closed the safe deposit
box at Earlham Bank. The only
document stored there was an

abstract for the Friends House
which has been handed over to
the Friends House.

The bookkeeper had stopped
auto pay in October, so the
\$5,000 in report accounts for
additional payments that puts
expenses higher than usual, this
is for several months more than
usual.

There was also \$5,700 for
expenses for property
management.

One reason we have
maintained reserve funds is the
likelihood that the geothermal
system will need replacement.
Cheryl had suggested
considering adding ceiling fans
to supplement the air
conditioning. Thermal curtains
for the eastern windows have
also been considered.

An additional 4000 came from
Charlie Day's memorial
donations

Some budgeted expenses were
exceeded due this month due to
autopay for Zoom and
Quickbooks but no unexpected
expenses.

The meeting considered
dropping one of the two paid
Zoom accounts. Cheryl
suggested breakrooms could be
used instead of separate account.
Deborah indicated she approves
of switching to one account.
Each account is paid annually
for about 120 per year.

The meeting accepted the
report with appreciation to the
treasurer.

Building and Grounds

(No Report, but Charlie Brown
will call for meeting to discuss
the HVAC system, fans and
curtains. Charlie has a quote for
the new HVAC system.

Minute: We are asking Building and Grounds to look into expenses for ceiling fans and curtains for the east windows to cut down on the cost of heating and air-conditions and to review the quote for the replacement HVAC system.

Religious Education

(Presented by Dorothy Lifka)

The Religious Education committee met on June 13, 2025 on Zoom to discuss a proposal by Petra Lang to use the meetinghouse for a high school course to be offered in conjunction with Scattergood School and Farm. Religious Education members present: Andrea Holveck, Deborah Fisch and Dorothy Lifka. Katie Jacoby and Ann Robinson were present for an earlier informal discussion of this issue and Cindy Winchell was provided information by Dorothy. Also present: Petra Lange, Stephanie Jones, Katy Swalwell, Zipporah Smith and Greg Wickencamp, all of whom will be co-teaching different sections of the class.

We the City is a pilot English class planned as three semesters designed to "uplift the histories and literature being banned in our state and to supplement public education for central Iowa's students." Students would be in grades 8-12 and would receive credit through Scattergood. Scattergood tuition would be \$1000 per student and the intention is to fundraise so that students can attend for free. Classes would be scheduled on Saturday mornings. 10-30 students would be enrolled for each session.

Petra is asking that

- classroom space be provided at the meeting house for no charge
- library space be provided at the meeting house for no charge (The religious education committee believes that sufficient library space can be provided in the area currently used for first day school.)
- members of the meeting help raise money for scholarships (through our personal and professional contacts)
- Meeting appoint a meeting member/attender to act as liaison between Meeting and this project.

The religious education committee is in unity in recommending that Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting support this project.

Dorothy mentioned if there is scheduling conflict with Friends needing his space when classes are in session, that the Friends House may also be available.

Petra plans outreach via various student groups and parents, not openly published.

Minute: The sense of the meeting is to approve the use of the meeting for these classes.

Petra noted she has ~10 boxes of literature (Youth/young adult) for donation that she should like to donate in memory of recent Friends who have passed.

Minute: The meeting asks House and Grounds and religious education and library committees to consult with Petra on adding additional bookshelves on the lower floor to accommodate the book donation and other materials.

Friends House Board

There is a proposal to replace the two sump pumps in the basement and remove the asbestos tiles in the basement.

Renee will no longer be cleaning. A possible replacement has been identified.

The downstairs AC unit is not functioning properly and the board has approve replacement.

The board is looking for volunteers to form an informal building and grounds committee to consult the friends house board.

Mark Martin and Katie Jacoby have already volunteered to support the property manager on building issues. They also recommend other tenants of Friends House be invited to be part of this group.

Charlie has already been in contact with Renee for collaborations on issues with the Friends House, and it's from discussion with her that this suggestion has come about.

Minute: It's proposed that a few volunteers from Des Moines Valley Friends join an informal building and grounds committee to consult and support the Friends House Board and the building manager.

Peace and Social Concerns

(Presented by Peter from Billie's notes)

"Nourishing justice" is being kept as heading on soup lunch signups. Groups in the community will be invited to speak at the soup lunches.

We plan to expand use of the DMVF website calendar to share peace and social justice events.

Friends should email Peter with events to be added to the calendar with adequate lead time. They encourage items in the friendly line and other forms.

Peter noted that also some of these soup lunches will be scheduled just for Friends, just for social time. they would not all be dedicated to outside groups and speakers to present and then informally visit.

For July soup lunch there will be speaker from 11:30-12:15 and then to have lunch afterwards.

Petra asked about soup lunches being suspended during the summer. Traditionally we have but there is one scheduled for July. For the July event this is a workshop for people to register for. The sense of the meeting was to support this workshop.

Friends express our appreciation for the committee's work.

Outreach and Communications

(Report presented by Katie Jacoby)

We will discuss signage/sandwich board to put outside while meeting is in session.

The Clerk thanked the committee for their work.

Cheryl expressed appreciation for friends showing up on time for worship.

Library

No report

Nominating Committee

No report

Migrant and Refugee Concerns

(Report presented by Dorothy Lifka)

No action items. The committee believes it is spending its funds wisely.

The Clerk thanked the committee for keeping us involved in what's needed to help people.

IYMC Business / New Other Business

Item: What did we decide about inviting a guest speaker such as Randy Evans to speak with us about the 50th anniversary of the bombing at Friends Meetinghouse?

Charlie suggested a second hour to discuss this. Friends discussed concerns with recognizing the bombing publicly. Peter suggested a hosting a talk focusing on non-violence/peace building, instead of focusing bombing perhaps focusing on peace making.

Cheryl discussed concerns with fear holding us back out actions, or from recognizing what we're called to do.

Petra voiced interest in focusing on sustaining and practicing resilience.

Katie indicated support of acknowledging the event Dorothy also suggested a second hour to discuss this.

Katie has indicated Renee would like to be involved and should be invited to discussion. Cheryl mentioned ideas for focusing on how people can be resilient when facing the threat of violence.

Deborah expressed concerns about being careful about this is presented, to be sure does not in any way encourage or celebrate violence.

Minute: We will plan to schedule a second hour as soon as possible to discuss this matter and to consider an ad-hoc committee to discuss, which will include Renee from

Friends House. We will discuss an invitation to Randy Evans to speak during that second hour.

New Item: A letter to Dear Friends of Scattergood" from John Zimmerman (Head of School) on international student program, regarding host families. Scattergood is also opening their boarding space for international students during breaks.

Minute: The Meeting asks for the letter from John Zimmerman to be shared with Friends in a separate communication from clerk's and notes and in other communications in order to ensure it's seen by the community.

Debrah shared her positive experience with hosting an international student in the past.

Cheryl encouraged others since students may not want to leave the country in our current environment. She discussed how much outreach to international students enrich the school and what their experience brings.

Petra asked about getting specific times and details. She volunteered to reach out to admissions@scattergood.org to request these details prior to sending the communication. She also stressed the importance of international programs to keep the school going.

New Item: Letter from Cecelia Filuaro, executive administrator of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

Minute: The Meeting asked to send the letter to the Immigrant and Refugee Concerns Committee to take up a response.

New Item: Letter regarding Cheryl Sutton transfer of membership to DMVF.

Minute: Ministry and Counsel is aware of the letter regarding Cheryl Sutton's request to transfer her membership to Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting. We are happy to receive her letter and to welcome her transfer of membership to Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting. The Assistant Clerk will respond to Bear Creek to formalize transfer.

New Item: The meeting also has been informed of an expected, pending transfer of Katie Jacoby's membership to DMVF from Bear Creek Meeting.

Follow up actions for next month:

The recording clerk will update and write the statistical report to be send to the IYMC statistical recorder at the end of this month to be sent the first week of July.

Andrea and Claire may be able to help with creation of this report. Forrest will reach out to them and Deborah for assistance creating the report.

This will include new and leaving members, deaths and other records. (Michael announced plans to leave DMVF but has not formally done so. We need to determine if Virginia was a member or an attender.)

The meeting ended with a moment of silence.

Discussion of Query 1: Meeting for Worship July 6, 2025

Convenor: Billie Wade,
Recorder: Susan Myers
Present: Carol, Jack, Andrea, Brock, Fatima, Ann, Patti, Deborah, Kathleen, Jim, Cheryl

From p.1: The Quaker faith is not written in the form of a creed, but is experienced in our lives as a vibrant, living truth. Advices and queries serve to engage our minds and hearts in processes which may provide openings to the leadings of the Spirit within us.

Query: Are our meetings for worship held in a spirit of expectant waiting and communion with the Holy Spirit? How do we prepare our hearts and minds for worship?

Discussion: Are we bringing the idea of the presence of the Spirit to our discourse about much of the rest of life? We seem progressive about our politics, yet it is seldom that we stop to say what is the opening here, how are we led? What is the correspondence between what we do in meeting for worship and the rest of our lives? We are called as a gathering of seekers – this is the simplicity of our practice.

Friends seek to conduct economic activity in accord with the leading of Spirit, outside reference to cash value and competition.

Early friends talked about their faith with everyone – that was the reason for the traveling ministry, to let others know they could experience the Spirit of Christ in everyone's heart. This period, after the persecution, was followed by quietism – in which today, it can be hard to get

people to tell you what they believe, and how they interact with the Spirit – a deep and spiritual love. As “friends of Jesus,” there's an inner devotion once you've met that Spirit, through prayer, fellowship and acts of service. The disciples likely believed different things too yet they agreed on Jesus' message of Love. How do we get that message out, that there's a “better way,” and we've known that way for years. It would be exciting to speak more among ourselves and with others, about our faith and practices.

One Friend shared that when she discovered Friends' Meeting, she realized she wasn't alone and that divine leading can be recognized, shared and nurtured. Early friends didn't have knowledge of the goings-on of all the world. They may have had regional understanding. We may be overwhelmed by focusing on things over which we have little control. We can respond to what the Spirit calls us to do in worship and in our community. We need the intimacy that recognizes we are called to be in community together, to rub up against one another, to hear one another, to find what we each have to offer to new attenders. Healing of the world happens one person at a time. Many of us have little trouble having a political discussions with others yet find it very difficult to have a spiritual discussion.

Preparation for Meeting for Worship often includes regular meditation on Quaker writings and the Bible to help identify where one is lead to contribute to meeting and in decision-making.

The Lord's Prayer provides guidance. One wonders whether reluctance to share the Lord's Prayer in meeting for worship reflects spiritual cowardice. Yet it is through Spiritual sharing we speak to new attenders, as they come to meeting seeking an experience of Spirit.

Query: How do we refer to that which is divine? How does ascribing gender... How do we integrate our daily lives with meeting for worship? Do we seek opportunities for worship outside of meeting?

We acknowledge there is no gender to God or Spirit and appreciate people's use of they, them pronouns, when appropriate, to look beyond gender and gender roles. We also experience God through nature, such as through the power of wind – at times gentle and caressing, and other times destructive and powerful.

Iowa Yearly Meeting has asked each monthly meeting to consider what, if anything, could be changed in the queries. Suggestions for Query 1:

One suggestion for this Query was less emphasis on the Christ within and more reference to the divine in all of creation. A benefit of the query is speaking of God the Spirit. We are so careful to refrain from offending others that we are often reluctant to speak of how the Spirit moves in us. This limitation prevents us from talking honestly about our experience of Spirit and God in our lives.

The advice doesn't touch on gender, while the queries do.

Bring mention of gender into the advice.

One suggestion is to separate the questions, which seem like separate topics, i.e., How do we refer to that which is divine? How does ascribing gender to the holy Spirit affect our worship. How do we integrate our daily lives with meeting for worship? Do we seek opportunities for worship outside of meeting?

Independent or Emancipated?
(continued from page 1)

freed women and children, some of whom had formed family units with the men. Once again, Black families were torn asunder in the name of the whims of wealthy white men. Also, while disentangling Black people from the horrors of slavery, the Emancipation Proclamation fanned the flames of anger, hatred and fear of white people, especially those who were forced to release their slaves.

Two-hundred-forty-nine-years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the United States of America remains a sovereign country. One-hundred-sixty-years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, African American Descendents of Slaves still are not free. You see, emancipation does not follow a natural trajectory to independence, then to freedom. America is free to decide in the country's best interests.

Black people do not have, and have never had, that freedom. Everything about our lives is dictated to us—where we live, where we worship, what jobs we hold, what our income should be, the education we receive, etc.

July 4th is rightfully celebrated as a day of joy. People hold parades, wave flags, host neighborhood picnics and shoot off firework displays. June 19th, also known as Juneteenth, is an equally rightful day of celebration. The holiday is a day of remembrance of the experiences and sacrifices of our forebears, and our resilience, and our tenacity as a people to never let go of dreams of possibility in our hearts, despite daunting obstacles that remain in our paths and new ones that pop up daily.

Freedom is not a one-day, one-time proposition. You cannot make a bowl of potato salad and be done until next year. What are you doing every day to nurture your freedom and the freedom of others? Do you fear the freedom of others will harm your freedom or the freedom of people you love? What are your fears about what will happen if someone different from you moves into your neighborhood or joins your family or religious community? Think about other fears you may have about people different from you. How can you bridge the chasm between you and "othered" people and begin to communicate?

Perhaps you could start by inviting them over to share a bowl of your award-winning potato salad.

News of Our Friends

Forrest Determann shared that he has been spending time in Iowa City with family at the hospital bedside of his brother Jeffrey, who has been in critical condition and is not expected to pull through. Jeffrey is his only sibling. He asks Friends to hold him and his family in the light.

Ann Robinson vacationed in Wisconsin recently, first with Jon, hiking sections of the Ice Age Trail near Milwaukee, and a week later, with **Julia**, enjoying Door County's many beautiful natural areas, beaches and trails.



In June, **Carol Spaulding-Kruse** and husband **Tim Kruse** traveled to Paris and then Corsica to visit Carol's old friend from her Paris days. They enjoyed daily swimming and snorkeling in the Mediterranean on the beaches of Corsica and beautiful hikes along the seashore. One highlight of the trip was visiting the grave of Gertrude Stein, the author featured in Carol's novel, *Helen Button*.

Thanks to **Dorothy Lifka** for her prescient article "Axing FEMA would be dangerous" in the Des Moines Register, Sunday, June 15.

Upcoming Events

Iowa Yearly Meeting
Conservative Annual Sessions,
July 23-27.

Earthquake, Wind, and Fire – Seeking the Calm Center

Pendle Hill Stephen G. Cary
Memorial Lecture 2025
September 8, 6:30 - 8:00 pm
(CDT) Hybrid lecture free,
registration required.

We are living in a time of "earthquake, wind, and fire." Many of us are searching for "still, small voice of calm," a Living Center, where we can hear the voice of the Divine and find the strength to carry on.

What lessons can we learn from the work of those living through war and catastrophe in today's world? How might they inform us as we seek a calm Center in the eye of the storm?

Thanks for donations!

Thank you to everyone who has donated food for the food pantry at Monroe Elementary School. The food pantries at Monroe and at Samuelson Elementary will be open through the summer. The donation bin is in the foyer.

-- Dorothy Lifka

Upcoming Hosting List

July 13 – Peter & Andrea
July 20, Charlie & Dorothy
July 27 – Deborah & Katie
August 3 – David & Claire
Aug. 10 – Ann & Audrey
Aug. 17 – Steve & Kari

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:

7-20: Soup Lunch Sunday and Mak Susecka, guest speaker, Global Neighbors

08/31 Discernment discussion around apartheid-free communities (Claire)

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 at anny.robinson1@gmail.com by Friday, 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.

A letter from Fred Nelson

I just wanted to share with you about my involvement in an Above and Beyond Cancer (A+BC) event. Why would I jump out of an airplane? It's not something I aspire to do. On August 2, Jump with Above and Beyond Cancer has a skydiving fund raising/consciousness raising event. When asked about participating, I said, yes. Why:

My first memory of cancer was in high school when Steve, a friend had cancer. I remember the shock of seeing him in the hospital shortly before his death. In 1987, my dad died of Melanoma cancer. I left law school in Arizona mid 2nd term of my first year to spend time with Dad and my mother who was his caretaker through the illness until his death at home. The Dean of the Law School had recently dealt with loss from cancer in his family and made it possible for me to study while in Iowa and take exams late. In 2013, Judy, a friend in treatment for cancer climbed in the Himalaya Mountains with Above and Beyond Cancer. Late in 2014 I was diagnosed with cancer. In April 2015 the cancer was removed with a prostatectomy surgery. It has been 10 years with no further treatment to date.

In 2015, I became involved with A+BC as a volunteer helping with their new meditation program. In 2018, I journeyed with A+BC to Nepal/Tibet hiking around Mt Kailash with others affected by cancer (see documentary video link below). Shortly thereafter Sandie was diagnosed with Non Hodgkin's Lymphoma cancer. Sandie's chemo treatment brought out dramatic neurological symptoms later diagnosed as an atypical Parkinson's Disease. In 2023 with Sandie's encouragement, I climbed Mt Kilimanjaro in Africa with A+BC carrying prayer flags for Sandie, and others touched by cancer. I continue to volunteer with A+BC helping with training for hikes, as substitute leader for hike & stretch and as needed. Currently I am Sandie's caregiver.

The list of people touched by cancer, that I know and have known, is long. It seems unlikely that any family has escaped cancer. There is a Buddha story where someone unable to overcome grief asks for help. The Buddha says, you must first bring me a mustard seed from a household that has not experienced grief. It couldn't be done. My realization of others faced with cancer reminds me that I'm not alone. Seeing and knowing other individuals and their families facing cancer with courage and resilience inspires me!

Above and Beyond Cancer and people met through their programs continue to provide support and inspiration for me. The challenging hiking journeys, the encouragement to keep physically active and engaged in life each day including through difficult times. The realization is that life is this moment and the challenge is facing it in the most positive way possible. This also means facing my fears!

So for me, skydiving with A+BC is to honor of Sandie and all those dealing with cancer — it is about recognizing reality and overcoming fear — it is a reminder that every day requires courage to embrace life, whatever the situation or challenge. It is to support Above and Beyond Cancer's programs for others.

This is a fundraising event for Above and Beyond Cancer with local celebrity jumpers. Expectations for my fundraising are limited. I am one of the jumpers on a cancer journey — an active participant in A+BC programs. Should you feel inclined to donate and support Above and Beyond Cancer's programs, you can do so directly by clicking on my fundraising page for Above + Beyond Cancer, Inc. below:

<https://www.classy.org/fundraiser/6486285>, or Or donations can be sent to: Above + Beyond Cancer, 1305 50th St., West Des Moines, Iowa 50266 (Add note to connect donation to my account)

*You might also enjoy viewing documentary of A+BC 2018 Mt Kailash Nepal-Tibet journey which I took.
<https://aboveandbeyondcancer.org/nepal-tibet>*

*With compassion and love,
Fred*

Des Moines Valley Friends State of the Meeting June 2025

As we look back over the past 12 months, we are struck by intertwining themes of loss and community. We lost the presence of several significant members of our meeting community, and many individuals in Meeting experienced losses of family and close friends. Some have struggled with their own health or with caring for that of others. In addition, we have been dismayed by loss of rights of whole groups of people, disenfranchised through governmental actions, both here in Iowa and across our country.

Through it all, we have found solace, support and common cause, both within our Meeting community and through the wider fellowship of Friends. We have grieved together while celebrating wonderful lives. We have also provided transportation to Meeting, appointments, shopping and myriad other destinations. We have provided casseroles and hugs, sent cards and emails, held each other in the Light and found many other ways to be present for those going through hard times.

We have been especially active over the past year in publicly witnessing our faith, through: calls, emails, letters and personal visits with our elected state and federal representatives; writing letters to-the-editor; speaking at gatherings of advocates; participating in protests and celebrating the work of effective

advocates for peace, justice and kindness.

In the winter we held a well-attended workshop, “Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change,” facilitated by Paula Palmer, of Boulder Friends Meeting and Friends Peace Teams. Proceeds from a goodwill offering at the workshop have been given to the Meskwaki Nation. We also had a recent presentation about the AFSC Apartheid Initiative and our meeting continues discernment regarding the possibility of joining the initiative.

The remarkable generosity of one of our members inspired the creation of a “Committee for Migrant & Refugee Concerns,” which has: researched community efforts to help, sustain and advocate for the strangers who have come to us (Iowans) seeking assistance; allocated funds accordingly; and advised our meeting on opportunities to also provide individual support through donations and volunteering.

During our May Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, we decided to reach out to schools in proximity to our meetinghouse to offer free use of our space for groups that are no longer able to use school facilities because of recent prohibitions against DEI activities and certain issue-centered groups. We hope that this will prove beneficial to beleaguered educators, school administrators and students.

Our relationship with Friends House (the building that housed the AFSC regional office) is the strongest it has been in recent years. We gratefully acknowledge the work of our three representatives to Friends House Board for this.

We are encouraged that new and younger people continue to find us and to join us in worship.

We have been steadily resuming group activities that were on hiatus during COVID, including our Thanksgiving meal and soup lunches. These gatherings are important ways to build community and to nurture our collective spiritual growth.