

# Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

## FRIENDLY LINE

### June 2025



#### DMVF Picnic Potluck, June 15

The Hospitality Committee warmly invites all to DMVF annual picnic potluck! It will be held outdoors at the Meeting House – or inside in case of bad weather! Did you get the signup sheet from Charlie Brown? If not, contact him at 515-689-6470. However, all are welcome (even without a dish)!

#### Silent Worship in a Noisy World

All F(f)riends are invited to 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/>.

Registration will open soon.

**Please register in advance** to help with planning for housing, meals and programming for children.



*David Drake recently attended this Friends Meeting in Dublin that goes back to the 1700s.*

#### A Trip to Ireland to Learn from Peacemakers

by David Drake

I know very little about the topic I'm going to write about. But that has never stopped me!

Over the years I've had a peripheral interest in the Troubles - that period between 1970 and 1998 in Northern Ireland. Not having traveled out of North America for some time, I toyed with the idea of going on a peace tour of the Emerald Isle. I googled 'peace tours in Ireland' and came up with Mejd Tours. (<https://mejdittours.com/about/>). The name is Arabic and translates as 'honor' and 'respect.' The group was started by a Palestinian man who wanted

to find a better way - (see this brief Ted Talk:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/aziz\\_abu\\_sarah\\_for\\_more\\_tolerance\\_we\\_need\\_more\\_tourism](https://www.ted.com/talks/aziz_abu_sarah_for_more_tolerance_we_need_more_tourism)).

Our group of 12 from across the US and one member from Colombia, started in Dublin, the capitol of the Republic of Ireland. On entering Dublin a very young customs agent man asks the purpose of my visit. I naively tell him to learn about the Troubles. He said his grandfather had to leave Northern Ireland because he was Catholic. Now the Republic is 80% Catholic although I'm told many are secular/cultural and not religious.

Ireland is said to be smaller than the State of Iowa. For several days we toured the city and learned about Irish history from early battles between Loyalist (to the UK) and Nationalist forces. We saw some of the beauty of this very green island, and we were fortunate to have several days without rain - folks compare it to Seattle!

A highlight and the center of this trip was to hear from folks who had been enemies during the Troubles in the North. Anne was a former member of the IRA where she served as a quartermaster, providing weapons to its supporters.

*(continued on page 5)*

## **Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business**

May 11, 2025

Attendees: Carol Spaulding-Kruse, Clerk; Forrest Determann, Recording Clerk; Billy Wade Dorothy Lifka, Ben Lehman Claire Cumbie-Drake, David Drake, Jim Dietz-Kilen Catherine Dietz-Kilen Cheryl Sutton, Ann Robinson Charlie Brown

Meeting started with a moment of silence

Meeting accepted minutes from April Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

Meeting observed a moment of silence in memory of Virginia Smith

Meeting Reviewed announcements and discussed the flyer for 2025 annual sessions.

Change to calendar June picnic: Instead of traditional soup lunch, we will do picnic instead on 6/15 On 6/22, DMVF will have guest from Global Neighbors instead if the speaker is available. Dorothy is working on this. If he's not available, we might consider moving business meeting to 6/22 to avoid conflict with PrideFest parade. Capital City Pride is June 6-8. Katie Jacoby is organizing and the parade is on Sunday.

Billy announced soup lunch next Sunday from 11:45-1:00 p.m.

## Ministry and Council Committee Report

(presented by Jim Dietz-Kilen)

Jim discussed a recommendation by M&C to

make the meeting house available, free of charge, to organizations that previously met at public schools but are no longer allowed to meet at the public schools due to anti-DEI actions. M&C will coordinate having someone available to open the space when needed. Would need to work with Claire to ensure the calendar is available.

M&C spent much of their time working on drafting a report to bring to June Business meeting.

Per Cheryl, the State M&C committee meets year-round and hopes to get reports from the other M&C committees as soon as possible prior to annual meeting.

## Finance Committee

(presented by Catherine Dietz-Kilen)

No unexpected expenditures. They've received some donations earmarked for specific committees, but no funds have been sent out. Still lower in receipts than expected but also few expenses.

Cheryl Sutton is being added to the Finance Committee.

## Building and Grounds

(presented by Charlie Brown)

Friends House (Renee) contacted them about water issues in Kathleen's office. An inspector determined there appeared to be something like an antifreeze leak that could be from the geothermal system. Holt Heating and Plumbing came out and determined it was not from a leak of the geothermal system or anything else, it was coming from a bag to absorb moisture from the air that had been there

for a long time and become full and started releasing moisture, so this was not a concern other than to clean it up.

They also found a sump pump with minor leak, but there are no major issues.

Dorothy, as a board member of Friends' House expressed gratitude to the Building and Grounds Committee for their work and for helping Renee with concerns at the friends house.

## Religious Education Committee

No report

## Friends House Board

No report

Dorothy noted they had found asbestos tile in the Friends House basement and are working to have this properly and safely removed. This should resolved soon.

## Peace & Social Concerns Committee

(presented by Billie Wade)

The committee met April 8 but do not yet have the notes to present. Four disbursements are approved, and they are waiting on additional information before approving a fifth.

Soup lunch will no longer be putting out basket for donations as a manner of routine, but may continue to do so to collect goodwill offerings related to special events and speakers.

Request for "Quakers demand No ICE in houses of worship" signs on front lawn is being considered but there are a number of concerns to be considered.

David suggested putting it in the window by the entrance and not on the front lawn.

Ann mentioned the committee on migrant concerns is considering training on rights and how best to respond to ICE.

Intent is to demand ICE not be permitted where they had not been previously (schools, places of worship, et cetera). We recognize this is a statement of belief and is not something that would stop ICE from entering these spaces under the new policy. Friends expressed concerns with us not knowing yet enough about what we can do to protect against ICE at this time.

Dorothy mentioned that we are tenants on this property and any signage should also be considered by Friends House, in consideration of the other tenants and those using the Friends House.

Cheryl suggested language such as “Quakers support migrants and immigrants”

Charlie suggested waiting until next month to proceed to post the “No Ice” window sign after communicating intent to allow for feedback. Several friends expressed interest in posting the sign now

Peter Clay had sent the Apartheid-free Communities Pledge to be considered by the meeting. (<https://apartheid-free.org/pledge/>). The Meeting discussed options for how to take action, including having speakers for second hour and/or supporting other groups currently leading action. It was suggested reaching out to the local synagogue for representation as well. David also recommended reaching out to Rabbi Rosen who is the rabbi of an anti-Zionist synagogue in Chicago that could

be considered to speak on the topic. Claire suggested if we invite in Jewish voices we consider not just bringing in those we agree with for dialogue on their perspectives.

After further discussion, clerk called for another moment of silence.

#### Outreach Committee

Ann reported that the committee met, but does not have a report ready at this time.

#### Library Committee

In addition to the report provided, Carol read a statement from Deborah regarding a statement of appreciation for Virginia’s long service to the Library, Carol will send a letter to Virginia’s family regarding this. Dorothy suggested a drive to donate books to the library in Virginia’s name.

#### Nominating Committee (presented by David Drake)

David spoke regarding suggested change to move to two year terms instead of affirming committee members every year.

A Friend suggested deferring further discussion of this change to a later date.

#### Migrant & Refugee Concerns Committee

Dorothy recently received a draft of a report and will send it later.

An additional donation to the committee was received in May, and the committee is working with other agencies while they consider how these funds should be used. There is another meeting May 31st at 10:00 am on Zoom.

All are welcome to provide their input and suggestions.

#### Other business:

The meeting discussed security concerns related to ICE.

We discussed if and how we going to recognize the 50 year anniversary of DMVF Meeting bombing. Dorothy mentioned discussion of commemorating this, focusing on the positives, with less focus on “publicizing” the bombing. Discussion of having a special meeting for worship to recognize this or inviting others to speak or doing a recognition during a second hour on the proceeding Sunday. The 50th anniversary date is December 16, 2025.

The meeting discussed Scattergood School Committee’s SAGE (Structure and Governance Exploratory) subcommittee report. The report is regarding changes on how the Scattergood organization is structured.

SAGE is recommending the school become a separate entity from IYMC. Ann suggested people talk with Katie Jacoby on the SAGE Committee and the School Committee if they have questions or concerns. One of the concerns that informed the recommendation is about potential liability issues. Cheryl offered additional clarification and said that Iowa Yearly Meeting corporation owns the school and IYMC would still own the land but the school would be a separate entity.

There has been a recommendation that legal advice be brought in to clarify the pros and cons of making this



change. Friends are encouraged to review and consider this report.

Meeting discussed a meeting on homelessness policy the City is holding at the City Council chambers at 5:00pm May 19.

An announcement was submitted from Carol Gilbert on a trip to this year's Friends General Conference youth gathering that IYMC members are invited to attend, along with Scattergood students. and seeking donations. (Signup and FGC registration deadlines have now passed.)

#### Iowa Yearly Meeting Nominating Report

Dorothy encouraged friends to consider volunteering for a position on the committee. We have the option of having two representatives on the committee. Contact Dorothy with questions or if interested in serving.

Charlie will send signup link for June 15th picnic

Carol will send a letter regarding Virginia's service and invited people to make donations to the library fund.

Meeting ended with a moment of silence.

#### **Happy Pride Month Message!**

A message of freedom for June -- and all year long from Natalie Holbrook-Combs, Director of AFSC's Michigan Criminal Justice Program, and her wife, Tashiena. Natalie reminds us of Toni Morrison's words: "The function of freedom is to free someone else."



*A number of DMVF(f)riends participated in Des Moines Pride events, June 6-8. Thanks to the Outreach Committee and All who were able to take part and help, especially to organizers Katie Jacoby, Forrest Determann and Audrey Dell.*

Natalie writes: "There is joy and peace and care that emerges from within the bowels of this unjust system—when we continue to love and build, we can vision a tomorrow where more liberation

is the course. We are tired of always fighting. We are peacing...."

-- from AFSC's Midwest Digest

*(Ireland trip by David Drake,  
continued from page 1)*

Her friend on the other 'side' (we were told there were many sides) was a former British military officer and later police officer all during the troubles.

Anne was part of the Theater of Witness and I recommend this brief introduction

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJNWzN5mdTE>). They

now tour there and in other countries to bring a message of reconciliation in moving forward. It turns out that the man was Robin Young. I got used to - in a dizzy way - of hearing folks either identify as Protestant or Catholic. Early one morning I asked Robin his own tradition, and he said "Quaker." We connected quickly and I am hoping to have him join us for a second hour via Zoom on his transition to the Society. He said he began to wonder if he was helping or hurting things in the North and decided to leave the police force, even forgoing taking his pistol with him.

I attended Meeting in Dublin in a prominent area known as Quaker Square and home to a Meeting that began in the 1700's. (I would later learn that during the potato famine from 1845-1852 Quakers as well as members of the Cherokee Tribe volunteered to help.)

One of our last speakers was the Rev Gary Mason, a Methodist pastor. He spoke how the conflict comes down to three areas: toxic religion, identity, and geography. He defined toxic religion as "This land is my land. We are superior to you. We

interpret the religious texts better than you."

During the Trouble years there were some 16,000 bombings and 3,000 killed - on all sides.

I was impressed that in the Republic we saw many signs defending Gaza against continued Israeli forces attack. In the North - connected with the UK - the IDF was praised on a mural.

Moving from the South to the North you move from metric to standard, from Euros to Pounds, from signs everywhere in both Gaelic and English to only English, from the 'tricolor' flag to the Union Jack and St. George's Cross.

In the Republic we learned there is no nuclear power, they have reproductive rights, same sex marriage, civil rights for trans, free health care plus private plan option, only single shot hunting guns are allowed, and immigrants are welcome and needed to fill jobs

In the North police all carry weapons. In the South there is a special unit that is armed but not every officer.

In Belfast a separation wall remains between Catholic and Protestant communities. The gates along this 2 1/2 mile wall are closed at night.

The work to build trust in a united or still separated Ireland remains.

### **Discussion of Query 12: Peace and Nonviolence June 1, 2025**

Recorded by Susan Myers  
*[We] seek to live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars. George Fox*

### **ADVICE**

We seek peace within our own lives. Sometimes there are barriers to peace within families and meetings, and among individuals. Anger and frustration may result in hurtfulness which leaves physical, sexual or emotional wounds. Healing and forgiveness are possible when our hearts are opened to the transforming love that comes from the Spirit Within.

The violence we oppose is not only war, but all unloving acts. Friends seek peaceful resolution to conflicts among nations and peoples. Wars can easily erupt when nations depend upon armed forces as an option for defense and order. To oppose war is not enough if we fail to deal with the injustices and inequalities that often lead to violence. We need to address the causes of war, such as aggression, revenge, overpopulation, greed, and religious and ethnic differences.

### **QUERIES**

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

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

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

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

differences locally, nationally, and internationally?

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

## DISCUSSION

We began asking how does the DSM Vally Monthly meeting deal with conflict? First step – when a person is in conflict with another member or set of members it is our responsibility to take our concern to the other(s). Conflict is part of the human experience – often is the place where we experience the greatest growth. We want to become aware of communicating without the use of contentious words. Do we use violent words rather than peaceful words?

We tend to think of war between countries. Becoming aware of the violence in one's own speech points back to the violence in one's attitude. What is it to live in the virtue of the light and power that takes away the occasion for all wars? In modern times, some Friends withhold the proportion of their taxes that would go to the Department of Defense. Others deliberately live below the taxable income level. Friends practice resistance by not registering for the draft or registering as a conscientious objectors and protesting at sites of war preparation and training such as the School of the Americas.

By our history, culture and practices, we are confronted with difficult questions about how our lives contribute to violence at all levels without judging others.

As citizens of a global empire that actively supports violence in many places and ways, to paraphrase John Wollman, do the seeds of war find their beginning in our possessions? We continue to wrestle with questions of how our daily actions, beliefs and choices either promote or degrade peace.

George Fox told William Penn to carry his weapon as long as he could. Likewise, in response to a bibliophile's question of Ghandi, "do I have to get rid all my books," Ghandi responded, "Keep them as long as you can." We will know when we can no longer carry the burden of our excesses. Carrying guilt about what we're not doing is unhelpful; it is not unlike parents admonishing children to clean their plates because of children starving in India.

A Friend who recently returned from a trip to Ireland reflected that pacifism and non-violence mean different things to different people. About 15 years ago, this member thought about laying down his membership because of a conflict related to pacifism. This Friend reserves the right to defend another person confronted with a dangerous situation when needed.

Cultural and historical context also matters. Police in Northern Ireland all carry guns, while police in Southern Ireland do not. Non-violent civil disobedience in the US may appear congruent with pacifism, while the same action in Gaza could provoke deadly repression toward himself and bystanders. Protecting one another is important, but war is governmentally organized violence. We wish to be faithful

to what we are called to do and worry less about what we're not called to do and what is beyond our control.

Another Friend related the process her son used when he decided to register for the draft. He explained he didn't feel right about taking the route of conscientious objector status, as this privilege is afforded to members of historic peace churches, but not to others. He couldn't live with himself knowing that others, primarily those from lower social-economic and minority groups, would have to take his place. While our children certainly reflect on the examples and values we live, we want them to learn how to discern their own truths. As this happens, it is incumbent on us to respect their choices.

As Friends, we should honor the historic contributions to peacemaking we have made through our heritage and ongoing witness.

Many Quakers have been involved in the Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP), which is presented in prisons, a context saturated with violence. AVP is not considered pacifism. It teaches us to find another way that can shift the situation's energy and change the outcome of a conflict. AVP, developed by members of Syracuse Monthly Meeting, is Quakerism 101 – it uses every tool Quakers have elaborated to deal with navigating conflict.

**Iowa Yearly Meeting has asked each monthly meeting to consider what, if anything, could be changed in the**



### queries. Suggestions for Query 12:

- Under causes of war, include climate change, migration and poverty and remove the reference to overpopulation.
- After the query: "Do we recognize that we can be perpetrators as well as victims of violence? How do we deal with this," add, 'How do we respond to violence being perpetrated by others?'
- Add a line in the advice about the naturalness of conflict; in the query add a question about how we deal constructively with conflict.

### 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 and would appreciate donations. The donation bin is in the foyer, and lists of preferred donations are with the bin.

-- Dorothy Lifka

### Funds from Roots of Injustice Workshop Support Meskwaki Projects

At the January workshop "Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change" DMVF raised \$700 in free will offering to go to the Meskwaki Nation as a gesture of friendship. After some months of discernment and respectful outreach, the funds raised are now finally on their way! Three checks totaling \$280 made out to Meskwaki Nation have now been sent to the tribal offices as a gift to be used however the tribe chooses.

The cash raised (\$420) has been sent to Shelley Buffalo to support her documentary project about the last all Indian high school football team. Shelley wrote: "I want to record conversations held between the three remaining Meskwaki football players who had an all-Indian football team in high school and would call their plays in Meskwaki. I will also take photos and video, with permission and if I have enough

ongoing financial support, will create a short documentary."

Friends - We hope that these gestures of friendship and support will possibly lead to a deepening connection. Gratitude to Bill Deutsch (Decorah Friends) for his support as I sought the right way to move forward.

### Update on Leo & His Family in Canada

By Carol Dixon, Clerk of the multi-meeting, bi-national support committee for the Ramazani Family

Overall, the family is settled in nicely and adapting to their new life in Ottawa. Officially our year of sponsorship was completed at end of November 2024. However, local committee members continue to support the family where needed.

Leo graduated from another one-year program in cyber security at the local community college in May. He is working in the field for a local agency and enrolling at RMC (Royal Military College in Kingston) so that he can eventually get a university degree. He is moving along well towards his goal. And always able to find a job in his field or close to it as his schedule evolves.

Both Gullandam [mother] and Nawroz [father] are moving towards English language proficiency as well as numeracy. Gullandam is moving ahead nicely, but Nawroz is finding it harder. Some of the committee visit them each week to provide extra tutoring, both in English conversation and in basic arithmetic. Gullandam especially

### Charlie Brown's Carrot Cake, a DMVF potluck favorite

4 Eggs, 2 Cup Sugar, 1-1/2 Cup Mazola Oil, 2 Cup Sifted Flour, 2 Tbl. Baking Soda, 1/2 Tbl. Salt, 2-1/2 Tbl. Cinnamon, 3 Cup Grated Raw Carrots

Beat Eggs, Add Sugar & Oil, Beat Well. Sift Flour, Soda, Salt & Cinnamon together. Add to first mixture. Fold in Carrots.  
Bake in 13X9 Cake Pan at 350°, 45 Minutes

#### *Cream Frosting*

1 Stick Butter, 8oz. Cream Cheese, 3/4 lb Powdered Sugar, 2 Tsp Vanilla  
Cream Butter & Cream Cheese, Add Powdered Sugar & Continue Creaming until Smooth. Add Vanilla. Spread Over Cool Cake.

Note: You can substitute 1/3 Less Fat Creamed Cheese and/or margarine for the butter.

appreciates the socializing bonus as she gets lonely.

Nawroz has a part time job on Sundays working for a cleaning agency, and I am now hiring him and Hassan to look after my perennial beds in hopes of helping them get more work along that line during the summer.

The children are all in school (day care for the littlest one). She is registered for 4-year old kindergarten next fall. Two of the boys are in high school and the other two in elementary school, which is just a few blocks away on the street where they live. There is a community centre across the street where two of the boys spend much time on the basketball court. The two older ones are now looking for summer jobs. Hassan is working on developing English, math and other skills to help him move toward becoming a pilot.

The family has basic income from the Ontario government and local utilities. Mainly a shoe-string budget but they are good at budgeting and cooking healthy meals.

### **SAVE THE DATE**

Iowa Yearly Meeting  
Conservative Annual Sessions,  
July 23-27

### **Upcoming Hosting List**

June 8 – David & Claire  
June 15 – Petra & Tyler  
June 22 – Petra & Tyler  
June 29 – Steve & Kari  
July 6 – Jim & Catherine  
July 13 – Peter & Andrea

### **5calls.org makes is easy to express views to Congress**

By Jim Dietz-Kilen

Nora's boyfriend, Max, recently told me about the website, "5calls.org" and I have been really impressed by what an effective tool it is for making my views known to my elected representatives in Congress. I would guess that it could be helpful to others, as well, so here is some brief info about how it works.

First, go to the website 5calls.org. Then allow it to use your location, so it can load your members of Congress for your use. Next, select an issue to call about. You will be provided a summary of the issue and its updated status.

I'll use the example of the issue, "Opposing limits in the 'One Big Beautiful Bill Act' to the authority of federal judges to hold U.S. government officials in contempt of court."

When I select that issue, I am given phone numbers for just Senators Grassley and Ernst, since the bill has already passed the House, with that provision. It gives me numbers for Senator Grassley's offices first.

After I call, I am asked to indicate whether I spoke with someone, left a message, etc. Once I indicate that, I get the phone #s for Senator Ernst's offices.

If I selected an issue that was still also before the House, I would also receive the office #s for Rep. Zach Nunn.

I hope others will find this tool as useful as it has proven for me.

### **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](mailto: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:**

June 15 - DMVF Picnic

06/22 – Meeting For Worship with Attention to Business (re-scheduled due to Pride parade)

06/29 – Jeffrey Weiss will speak on the topic of "We the People Need a Divorce"

**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](mailto: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 July FL to Ann Robinson at [anny.robinson1@gmail.com](mailto:anny.robinson1@gmail.com) by Friday, June 27.

**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](mailto:jfalb0326@yahoo.com).