

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

FRIENDLY LINE

March 2025



Mid-Year Meeting - Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative, April 12-13, will focus on Quaker Discernment, Action for Palestine

Iowa Yearly Meeting's 2025 Midyear Meeting will be held on Saturday and Sunday, Fourth Month (April) 12-13 at Bear Creek Meeting near Earlham, Iowa.

The special guest for this year's midyear gathering will be Steve Chase, from Friends Meeting of Washington, on The Fierce Urgency of Now: Quaker Discernment and Action for a Just Peace in Israel / Palestine.

Additional schedule and registration information will be posted soon on the [Iowa Yearly Meeting \(Conservative\) website](#).

Steve Chase is a member of the Friends Meeting of Washington and the Quaker Palestine Israel Network. He has also served as an interfaith ally of the DC Chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace. Chase is working on a book titled Faith, Zionism, and Palestinian Rights: A Discernment Guide for Quakers and Other Peace and Justice Christians. He was selected as the Pendle Hill's 2024 Henry Cadbury Scholar to aid his research.

Updates from the American Friends Service Committee

How to create a mutual aid network

Everyone deserves to have access to food, housing, and other essentials. But government safety net programs have long fallen short of what's needed. As we advocate for essential services, we can also take direct action in our own communities. By forming mutual aid networks, we can help each other right now while continuing to push for policies that meet everyone's needs. Read [more from Mary Zerkel](#), AFSC's Associate Regional Director of the Midwest Region.

Short Takes

AFSC alums with Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice (MMJ) share a recent [movement update](#). . . . Read AFSC's take on the need to cut Pentagon spending and guidance to [take action](#) to support human needs over militarism AFSC's [Third Tuesday webinar on March 18](#) will focus on economic policies that disproportionately affect women and target the care economy. . . . Also, read the latest AFSC news on [providing humanitarian aid to Gaza](#).

-- Excerpts from AFSC's *Midwest Region Newsletter*, by Jon Krieg



Photo from [Iowa Immigrant Movement for Justice \(IMMJ\)](#) Press Statement: *Immigrants' Rights Group Says Iowa Governor Fails Iowans by Signing Anti-Immigrant Bill into Law*

Queries for Our Time from Fayetteville, North Carolina, Monthly Meeting

How may we best reach out to those immigrant families who will most need temporary homes or places of sanctuary?

How do we best meet their needs?

How else might we seek to have the most meaningful and practical impact for helping the oppressed now?

How might we best address the fear or lack of clarity that inhibits good people around us from stepping up alongside us to do the right thing for those in need?

How can our effect be broadened and spread?

Des Moines Valley Friends MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS 2/9/2025

Attendees:

Carol Spaulding-Kruse, Clerk;
Forrest Determann, Recording
Clerk; Jim Dietz-Kilen,
Catherine Dietz-Kilen,
Katie Jacoby, Petra Lange
Peter Clay, Dorothy Lifka
Liz Oppenheimer, Andrea
Holveck, Jack Holveck
Brock Wommack, Fred Nelson
Steve Shivers, Billie Wade

The meeting opened with
moment of silence and a
welcome by Clerk, Carol
Spaulding-Kruse.

Review of minutes from January
2025. Minutes approved.

Announcements

1. Liz Oppenheimer: Midyear
meeting meeting is April 12 and
13th at Bear Creek Friends
Meeting, near Earlham, Iowa.
Dorothy noted that there are
flyers related to this at the
meeting house. Katie noted there
are also details regarding this at
iymc.org.
2. June Picnic will be planned for
third Sunday, June 22, in lieu of
a soup lunch.

Ministry and Council Committee

(Jim Dietz-Kilen)

The meeting discussed
messages given during meeting
and proposed experimental
change to move 2nd hour back an
additional 15 minutes to 12:00
(from 11:45) to allow for more
socialization time, with the
exception of meeting for business
to remain at 11:45 and revisiting

this in June to discuss how the
experiment has gone.

Katie shared appreciation of
the extra social time after
worship on days we haven't had
scheduled second hour and
suggested occasionally planning
to have a second hour without a
scheduled program for additional
socializing time.

Clerk's Minute: We returned to
a concern about appropriateness
of length of messages given
during meeting for worship and
during sharing of joys and
concerns. The sense of the
meeting regarding meeting for
worship is that we can exercise
grace and patience and we can
continue to refer friends to our
existing materials. Regarding
joys and concerns, a number of
ideas were discussed, and we
refer it back to Ministry and
Council for further consideration.
Clerk is grateful for the work of
Ministry and Council and for Jim
Dietz Kilen's convening.

Finance Committee

(Katie Jacoby and Catherine
Dietz-Kilen)

Katie noted there were no
unexpected expenses. Only spent
59% of what was anticipated, but
Catherine noted although
expenses were lower than
anticipated, donations were also
lower than expected.

Accounts are moving from
Community Choice Credit Union
to E-Bank. CD rates are higher
and the contents of the safety
deposit box will also be moved.

Outside bookkeeper, Katie
Ulin, has resigned effective 3/1.
Katie Jacoby will be taking over
role as bookkeeper. Katie Ulin
has volunteered to assist Katie

Jacoby with the transition as
needed.

The Finance Committee asks
that committees follow up on any
checks they've written that have
not been cashed in a timely
manner.

Clerk's minute: The treasurer
presented the December
financials report. The Finance
Committee expresses gratitude to
Katie Ulin for her assistance
during the transition to the new
calendar year bookkeeping and to
cash accounting, which is now
complete. A friendly audit is
planned for February 14 2025 at
1:30. We are grateful as ever for
the work of the finance
committee.

Report from Committee for Migrant and Refugee Concerns

(Dorothy Lifka)

The committee is to be named
"Committee for Migrant and
Refugees Concerns" (from
"Immigrant and Refugee Support
Committee"). They do not yet
have a convener for this meeting,
which is to be discussed at next
meeting. They are requesting to
become a standing committee
instead of an ad-hoc committee.

Clerk's minute: The Committee
for migrant and refugees
concerns (CMARC) was changed
from an ad-hoc to a standing
committee. Therefore the funding
support suggested by the
committee are now agenda items
for the first meeting of the
standing committee. In this time
of urgent and ongoing needs of
the migrants and refugees in our
community the robust actions
and discussion evident in the
minutes are most welcome.

**Buildings and Grounds
Committee** (No report)

**Religious Education
Committee** (No report)

Friends House Board
(Dorothy Lifka)

Clerk's Minute:

We received the official minutes for the January board meeting. The key points were discussed in the January meeting for worship with attention business. We are grateful of the ongoing work of the Friends House Board Committee.

Outreach Committee
(No report)

Library Committee
(No report)

Nominating Committee
(Andrea Holveck) Andrea has provided an updated roster of committees for 2025. Peter and Billie will be present for the friendly audit.

Clerk's Minute:

The nominating committee presented the 2025 roster. Several minor amendments were made resulting in a new list to be presented for March business meeting. The Committee for Migrants and Refugee Concerns was added as standing committee; a convener has not yet been determined. We are grateful for the work of the Nominating Committee.

Peace and social concerns
(Billie Wade) Request for us to sign AFSC's Apartheid-Free Communities Pledge, which was discussed by the meeting.

Clerk's Minute:

Peace and Social Concerns presented the opportunity to sign on to the AFSC affiliated Apartheid-Free Congregations Pledge. A number of concerns were expressed. We balance the acute sense of urgency we feel to act in solidarity on this issue with our concern for safety. We request that Peace and Social Concerns consider our concerns and present a list of recommendations on how to follow up to business meeting in March.

New Business

Carol asked us on our own time to review the "Intent to Protect" letter shared by clerk of IYMC.

1. Claire had concerns to discuss with Migrant Movement for Justice. Claire was not present, but Dorothy indicated the Committee for Migrant and Refugee Concerns would like to review this and bring it back to business meeting for next month. There had been a meeting on the topic presented by Polk County Community Defense network.

2. Brock has shared a note with Carol that he has asked to be read. Carol will share this with a future business meeting.

3. Peter would like to share a follow-up letter regarding the *Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change* workshop from January. Peter has since revised the letter and asks is to affirm the minute shared in the letter. It was agreed to remove the minute and take it back to committee for further input to be communicated at a later time, and send the letter without the minute for now.

Clerk's Minute:

A letter to the Meskwaki Nation was presented by Peter Clay that contains a minute and cash gifts obtained by a free will offering at meeting for the *Roots of injustice, Seeds of Change* workshop. The letter contains a minute intended to acknowledge historic Quaker involvement in efforts to eradicate Indian culture. The minute therein will be forward to peace and social concerns for additional consideration. The letter may be sent by Peter with the minute removed. We are grateful to Peter for bringing the letter and minute for our consideration.

The meeting ended with a moment of silence.

**February Query #8
Discussion: Personal
Responsibility**

Present – Fatima, Dorothy, Linea, Deb, Susan, Charlie, Patty, Billie
Convened by Billie; Recorded by Susan

Life is meant to be lived from a Center, a divine Center – a life of unhurried peace and power. It is serene. It takes not time, but it occupies all our time.

-- Thomas Kelly

How do we center our lives in the awareness of God the Spirit, so that all things may take their rightful places? We wish to be aware of all that is good and beautiful even in the midst of the mess of our lives.

In Jewish tradition, one of the greatest sins is to deny ourselves permissible pleasure. So, perhaps we need to find delight where we can. We are aware that having

daffodils emerge in February is an ominous sign of climate change, we can still enjoy the beauty as it appears to us. As the Toni Morrison states in the Color Purple, “God made the color purple for us to enjoy!”

We can find inspiration in John Woolman’s life. By attending to what was rising within his spirit, Woolman discovered he could no longer write bills of sale for other humans. Attending to our own leadings, we can explore the things that keep us too busy and distracted from our own true purpose. Today, what might be the equivalent of that bill of sale? We need to find a balance between maintaining a reservoir of forgiveness for ourselves and others and being open to the Spirit as it searches and prompts one to do better.

We shared how challenging it is to live life from an unhurried center. Many of us share the sense that at the very least, we are able to refresh ourselves in this sense of stability and peace on Sundays when we attend meeting for worship. The Spirit searches us when we are in the deep quiet of which Woolman and Kelly speak.

While we are driven to accumulate more and more, we discover that the resulting clutter becomes a weight that must be borne. We yearn to be free of excess and clutter and often struggle to know how to unburden ourselves. One strategy is to bring a new item into the household only if one has also shed at least one item.

We seek to enjoy celebrations and fellowship together. We considered choices regarding the

use of alcohol. While we would not want celebrations to center on alcohol, we don’t believe sharing an occasional beer or wine is excessive. We don’t want to fall into an ascetic trap in which we are closed to enjoying the celebrations of being fully human. Still, knowing the devastation of alcohol and drug dependence, we are responsible for moderation and addressing excess when it interferes with healthy relationships.

We considered other addictive substances such as fat and sugar, both of which offer immediate reward and challenge our commitments to moderation. Use of alcohol, sugar, caffeine and tobacco may also represent impediments to becoming the persons we wish to be.

Considering social media, to what extent does our compulsive use of social media dissociate us from personal experience? Social media seems both to make us self-centered and at the same time serve as an escape from over-focus on self. We must remember we have options. One friend shared she quit Facebook in 2014. She does not have a TV. She finds she is now re-creating the peace that comes with silence, which helps her maintain her values in her private and public life.

We need joy, celebration, and all the emotional registers that keep us healthy and aware of the larger reality in life beyond what we read in the headlines. Life remains full of delight. To enjoy the small pleasures, the meal, the wine – we need to slow down to savor, which allows us to be

fully present to the people we are with and ourselves.

One friend shared a mantra, “I’m a point of light, within a greater light... and thus, I stand.”

Our years are short; how do we want to spend them? One shared a story about a woman jogging through a cemetery. She noticed that each headstone was marked with a date for the birth, a dash, and then a date for the death. She realized one essential question is, “How do we live our dash?”

March Query #9 Discussion: Civic Responsibility

Present: Deb, Ann, Andrea, Susan, Cheryl, Stan, David, Billie, Dorothy, Peter, Fatma
Facilitated by: Billie.
Recorded by: Susan

Friends believe in the divine within all people and strive for a world of freedom, justice, and equality. Progress depends on those committed to shaping a just society, urging Friends to be informed, engaged citizens who hold power accountable. While speaking out can be difficult and even dangerous, it can inspire justice.

Our ultimate allegiance is to the Holy Spirit. While we generally follow state laws, we may be led to oppose those that conflict with our convictions.

When considering civil disobedience, we must discern its spiritual basis and accept its consequences.

This query feels especially urgent today. What makes our Meeting unique in addressing these issues? How do we

navigate conflicts between state laws and our faith? How can our discernment ensure our responses go beyond reactionary? Effective action requires balancing courage with wisdom. What is needed now? What role do we each play? While it's easy to feel unheard, we must resist assuming we have no impact—especially when engaging with those who disagree.

Listening with understanding, rather than shaming, can open paths to change.

Overwhelm is common, but we are not called to do everything. Discernment, guided by Spirit and community, clarifies our role. Community provides courage to act.

One member shared the encouragement found in attending rallies for trans rights, where singing “We Are a Peaceful, Loving People” contrasted with harsh legislation.

John Woolman waited years for his Meeting's unity before writing for his ministry—time that deepened his spiritual clarity. Silence in Quaker worship nurtures both individual integrity and collective wisdom.

History shows that those unaffected by injustice often remain silent. How do we maintain integrity in today's world? Recognizing our complicity is key—something as simple as using Amazon strengthens power structures. Can we resist by seeking ethical alternatives?

Speaking out carries risk, especially for marginalized groups. Often, silence implies consent.

How do we reconcile fear with our responsibility to act?

Transformation requires stepping into discomfort. Allies—especially white, cis, straight people—must stand alongside marginalized communities, as Jesus sent disciples in pairs.

A member recalled, “Don't just do something—sit there.”

Discernment is crucial. Nadia Bolz-Weber's prayer reminds us to seek divine guidance: “May God guide us to know when to work, when to fight, when to rest, when to feast, and when to just go ahead and order Crumbl cookies.”

When the governor signed anti-trans legislation, she said, “We're all children of God.” What did that mean in this context? How do we express faith-based opposition with both courage and love?

Query #10 for April: Environmental Responsibility

ADVICE

All of creation is divine and interdependent: air, water, soil, and all that lives and grows. Since human beings are part of this fragile and mysterious web, whenever we pollute or neglect the earth we pollute and neglect our own wellsprings.

Developing a keen awareness of our role in the universe is essential if we are to live peacefully within creation.

The way we choose to live each day—as we manufacture, package, purchase and recycle goods, use resources, dispose of water, design homes, plan families and travel—affects the

present and future of life on the planet.

The thought and effort we give to replenishing what we receive from the earth, to keeping informed and promoting beneficial legislation on issues which affect the earth, to envisioning community with environmental conscience, are ways in which we contribute to the ongoing health of the planet we inhabit.

Preserving the quality of life on Earth calls forth all of our spiritual resources. Listening to and heeding the leadings of the Holy Spirit can help us develop qualities which enable us to become more sensitive to all life

QUERIES

- What are we doing about our disproportionate use of the world's resources?
- Do we see unreasonable exploitation in our relationship with the rest of creation?
- How can we nurture reverence and respect for life?
- How can we become more fully aware of our interdependent relationship with the rest of creation?
- To what extent are we aware of all life and the role we play?
- What can we do in our own lives and communities to address environmental concerns?

Friends are Invited to Say Goodbye

A Celebration of Life will be held for **Charles (Chuck) Day** on Saturday, April 19, at 10:30 a.m. at the Bear Creek Meeting, 18058 Bear Creek Road, Earlham, IA 50072.

A Celebration of Life for **Cris Douglass** will be held Friday, May 2, at 2:00 p.m., at the Raccoon Valley Nature Lodge, 2500 Grand, West Des Moines. Bring stories and memories to share.

Upcoming Events

March 29 - Bishop Dingman Dinner and Peace Award, which this year honors IMMJ.

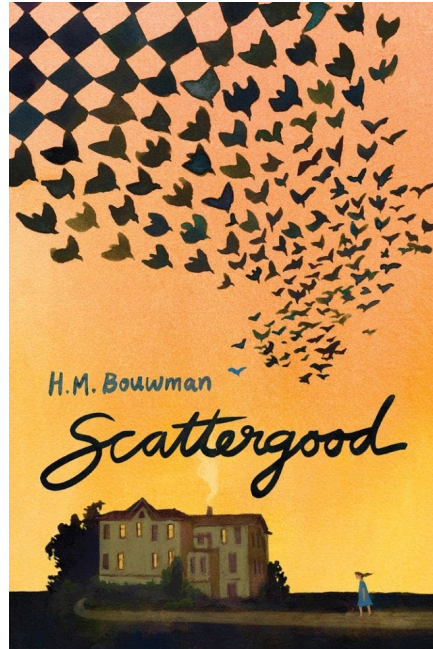
Mid-Year Meeting - Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative, April 12-13, 2025

Theme: Quaker Discernment and Action for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine.

April 13 - Palm Sunday Procession and Service for Peace, sponsored by the Des Moines Faith Committee for Peace. Procession starts at 3:00 p.m. starting at New Beginnings Christian Church, 8631 Hickman Rd, returning to the church with a service at 3:30.

Upcoming Hosting List

March 9 – Steve & Kari
March 16 – Ann & Carol
March 23 – Peter & Andrea
March 30 – Charlie & Dorothy



Have you read the new book, Scattergood? Set in West Branch, Iowa, the historical fiction by Midwest author H.M. Bouwman and published by Neal Porter Books, is getting positive reviews from many sources including the New York Times, Booklist, Goodreads and Kirkus Reviews.

The coming-of-age novel centers on the experiences of a 12-year-old girl named Peggy in 1941. The book explores themes of loss, community, and life's randomness that feel as alive and present as today.

Scattergood offers a fascinating glimpse of World War II history, far from the battlefields of Europe and the shores of New York City.

-- book recommendation
contributed by Osh Anderson

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 11:45 a.m.

Upcoming Second Hours

3-16 Soup lunch potluck

Query Discussions: First Sundays, Noon - 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, 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 March FL to Ann Robinson at anny.robinson1@gmail.com by Friday, March. 28.

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.